



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC45 Prairie to Pine Regional Council Report for Summer 2025

True Document Date: June 22, 2025

Origin: Prairie to Pine Regional Council

Geographic Location

Prairie to Pine Regional Council is comprised of the pines of Northwestern Ontario and Northern Manitoba and the prairies of Southern Manitoba and encompasses all of the central time zone.

Celebrations & Challenges

Prairie to Pine Regional Council, an Affirming ministry, has exemplified its commitment to deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice across Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario. Through inclusive ministry, climate advocacy, leadership development, and Indigenous justice initiatives, the Regional Council continues to embody its faith in action.

Deep Spirituality

Prairie to Pine fosters spiritual growth through resources like the annual Prairie to Pine Prayer Cycle, which integrates prayers for local ministries with global concerns. In 2025, we are also preparing for the United Church's centennial celebrations, encouraging communities to reflect on their spiritual heritage and future. Prairie to Pine is encouraging congregations to join together to commemorate the centennial and groups have taken up that challenge with a variety of gatherings and worship services happening across the Regional Council.

Ministry personnel gather regularly for collegiality and support with the leadership of our Ministry Personnel Support Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee. Prairie to Pine has a high number of Licensed Lay Worship leaders offering leadership, particularly in rural and remote congregations where their ministry carries on the United Church legacy. Our Lay Leadership Support Committee and Community of Faith Support Committee work hard to provide opportunities for learning and connection for our lay leaders and communities of faith.

Bold Discipleship

The work of the Regional Council could not happen without the many volunteers who step forward and offer their gifts and skills for our committees and commissions. Their tireless dedication to the Regional Council and the United Church is what enables our regional council to continue to do the good work it does. Our Nominations Committee has held several online gatherings to encourage people to talk about why they volunteer and to encourage others to find the place where they can offer their talents. A HUGE thank you to all the volunteers who have served over the last triennium and those who will carry on into the next.

Daring Justice

Justice work is struggling with a reduction in numbers, as many who offer justice leadership have been called to spend more of their time offering leadership in their own communities of faith or others, largely because of a drop in both membership and the number of paid accountable ministers. Nonetheless, the work continues: persistent, creative, and Spirit-ed.

The Regional Council joined Indigenous leadership to call on the government of Manitoba to Search the Landfill in 2022. In August 2023 the Moderator arranged for her fellow national church leaders to visit Camp Morgan, located at the Brady landfill near Winnipeg. This was done in light of the deeply painful and racist refusal of the then-provincial government to search the landfill, despite funding from other levels of government and a task force report that said the search was risky but feasible. Regional staff worked to support this, using our channels to invite all in the Region who could come to Winnipeg to join the leadership of Camp Morgan and the church leaders. At least 200 people came out from the community, despite it being a workday and poor weather.

In June 2023 Prairie to Pine approved a call for fossil fuel divestment, and a task group to create resources and support. While take-up on the call for communities of faith to visit their financial institution with questions and concerns has been limited, the group continues its work and its focus on root causes of Canada's poor record on reducing fossil fuel production and use. In November 2024 they hosted an ecumenical climate justice strategy gathering.

Leadership and Youth Engagement

Prairie to Pine Regional Council through its YAAY Committee offers multiple opportunities for youth and young adults to gather, fostering engagement and spiritual growth. With a strong focus on inclusion and creating safe inclusive spaces, regular summer events like Neechi camp and our long standing ALF and ZEEBU retreats have become more diverse and provided education on climate justice, reconciliation and more.

Through these initiatives, Prairie to Pine Regional Council continues to live out its faith with depth, courage, and a commitment to justice, embodying the principles of deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice.

Staff

A big thank you to the dedicated staff who resource Prairie to Pine! The staff compliment is: Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister; Twila McNair, Youth and Young Adult Minister; Cherry Abad, Administrative Support; and Keeper of the Archives, Erin Acland. Prairie to Pine also shares staff with Living Skies and Northern Spirit: Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister; and, Chantal Winslow, Executive Assistant to the Executive Minister.

Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator retires at the end of June 2025, we offer thanks for her dedication to this ministry and wish her well in her retirement.

Respectfully Submitted:

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

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