

Commissioners and alternates, General Council 44, Living Skies Regional Council of The United Church of Canada



Emily Carr

Growing up on a dairy farm in Eastern Ontario, I was the sort of child who used to play church with my stuffed animals and dolls. When I was around five years old, my family made a move from our United Church, to the Anglican Church, because that year the Anglican Church happened to have a fantastic Sunday School program on the go. My love for worship and the Church never seemed to leave me, and in my 20s, I began the journey towards ministry formation in the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa and began studying at the Montreal Diocesan Theological College. I moved to Saskatoon in the spring of 2009 to work as a youth a family minister at what was then called St. James Anglican Church. Here in Saskatoon, I completed my MDiv. at the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, was ordained to the diaconate and later to the priesthood in the Anglican Church. In this beautiful province, I have had the honour of serving a variety of ministries including congregations, university chaplaincy, community outreach in gang prevention, and chaplaincy with incarcerated youth. Currently, I serve on the Board of Directors at The Micah Mission, and am the chaplain at Kilburn Hall Youth Centre. In October of 2020, I began working with the Northern Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincy of the Living Skies Region of the United Church and at Knox United Church in Langham.



Jen Dresser

I'm a Diaconal minister, commissioned in 2009. I was settled into Kapuskasing in northern Ontario and spent three years there. I served Strathclair-Newdale-Cardale Pastoral charge in Manitoba for one year. I've been in ministry with the folks at St. Andrew's Yorkton for eight years. I've always had a passion for justice work and commitment to inclusion. Throughout my time in ministry, I've been involved in ecumenical ministries, building connections with the work crews at the provincial corrections training center, food shelf. My sabbatical in 2019 was focussed on creating intergenerational community in all aspects of our communities of faith.

I've been a United Church person my whole life. Over the years I have been involved in many different aspects of wider church work. I co-chaired Youth and Young Adult ministry committee in Alberta. I've served on education and students committees, supervised students, served on General Council Mission and Service Advisory committee, attended General Council in 2003, chaired Good Spirit presbytery and am currently serving on the Pastoral Relations committee of Living Skies.

I am originally from Alberta and grew up on a farm. I have a diploma in Social Work and another in Farm and Ranch management. Before following my call to ministry, I worked with people with disabilities, farmed with my family and raised grass-fed chickens for a few years. I currently live with my partner Roland, our aging beagle, Abby, and our friend Roshni.

I'm looking forward to an opportunity to continue serving the wider church. We are in a time of change in the church and in society which creates a moment for reshaping and imagining where the spirit might be leading us in the years ahead. I look forward to being involved the possibilities for our church and God's world.



Allan Gairns

It was Mary Robertson and Su Laverty that got me thinking about Diaconal Ministry. I served as a Tent-Maker the summer of 1989 at Naramata Centre. We had a chat in late August and they recommended I look into a new ministry program—The Western Field Based Diaconal Ministry Program. Betty Marlin contacted me but she said the program is full. She said I will keep your name on my list; and in 1991 I was entered into the second intake.

That is how it has unfolded for me over the years to this point, living, learning and teaching in community. I have served communities of Robson Valley Shared Ministry (BC), Hanna United Church (AB), Manning-Deadwood Shared Ministry (AB), Deloraine-Melta-Tilston Pastoral Charge (MB), Prairie Points Pastoral Charge (Fillmore/Creelman) (SK), and now Rosetown Pastoral Charge (SK). I have been to a few General Councils as Lay and Clergy Commissioners. And all the way I have been supported by my partner of 44 years Teresa (who is a huge part of the technical side of things for live streaming).

I enjoy and feel the necessity of meeting as gathered followers of Christ in this national setting, even though, we are not gathering in person as we did in the past, due to the pandemic, it is still worthwhile to get a real feeling for the pulse and health and direction of the United Church. I hope this gathering will provide the knowledge and innovation and energy to go into the future.



Tricia Gerhard

My name is Rev. Tricia Gerhard, minister at Sunset United in Regina and current Chair of Living Skies Regional Council Executive. I've been ordained since 2004 and have lived in Saskatchewan since landing at my settlement charge in Wolseley. A born and raised Vancouverite, it took a bit of learning to adjust to prairie life, but after being here for so long, I almost consider myself fully settled. I've been involved in lots of church stuff from my teen years to my adult years. Each and every opportunity has offered me growth and joy. My first General Council adventure happened at the 43rd GC in Oshawa, Ontario, and I am very much looking forward to this new way of doing the work of the church at the 44th GC. I am married to David, mother to Sophia and Jacob, favourite person of Sparky. I craft, read, play, and do

my best to be thankful in each day. It is my honour to be one of many representing Living Skies at our next national gathering.



Bob Hayes

Greetings – my name is Robert (Bob) Hayes and I live in Prince Albert. I have been married for 45+ years. Linda and I have three married children and eight grandchildren. We enjoy our family (especially the grandchildren), travel, and our involvement at Calvary United Church. My hobbies include music (drummer with three groups – before covid) and volunteering. I am retired after 35+ years with the Federal Government.

I am involved with the Prince Albert Shrine Club – director on the Shrine Executive and the Shrine Representative on the Masonic Temple Corporation.

I have been active in the United Church of Canada for many years. My involvement includes:

Calvary United Church Prince Albert

- Rev Nora Vedress’ advocate on the M&P Committee
- Calvary Council – Living Skies Regional Council Pastoral Charge Representative
- Percussionist with the Calvary UC Gospel Band

Living Skies Regional Council

- Pastoral Charge Supervisor Knox United Church Shellbrook
- Pastoral Charge Representative for Calvary United Church
- Affirming Process Task Group
- GC 44 Commissioner

General Council

- GC 41 Commissioner (Ottawa)
- GC 43 Commissioner (Oshawa)

I have participated in many Saskatchewan Conference Gatherings and at the LSRC inaugural gathering in Swift Current. I have also served as Chair of the Prince Albert Boys’ Choir Parent’s Association, the Camp Tapawingo Board of Directors, the Saskatchewan Conference Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Committee, and the Calvary Affirming Journey Committee.

I applied to serve as a Commissioner as I felt that with my involvement in the United Church of Canada and my experiences I would be an asset as a GC 44 Commissioner.



Trina Hodgson

Hello, my name is Trina Hodgson (she/her). I was baptized, confirmed and married in the United Church. I am, with my husband David Stearn, raising our children, Nicholas (5) & James (2) in the Sunset United Church Community (Regina, SK). I am a registered Social Worker and have a private practice focussing on senior mental health and caregiver supports. I find myself in the privileged position to be able to give of my time and resources to support the life and work of the church. At a congregational I am the Chair of our Affirming Ministry circle and I am looking forward to the serve as a Commissioner to General Council. I enjoy travelling and experiencing cultures around the world. No matter where I’ve travelled or lived, I have been blessed with many cultural experiences. I love to read and bake and enjoy time with my family.



SunDo Hyun

Born and raised in South Korea, Rev. SunDo Hyun moved to Canada in 2009 when he began his study at St. Andrew’s College in Saskatoon, SK. After graduation he joined the ministry of The United Church of Canada as an ordained minister admitted from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and has been in congregational ministry in Saskatchewan since 2014.

Rev. SunDo is passionate about working toward Truth & Reconciliation in Canada, helping young generation find home in Christian faith and community, welcoming people of different cultural backgrounds & gender identities, and making wider community a better place for everyone. He is also interested in wider church matters

as he has experience of working at the General Assembly Office of the PROK when he served in South Korea.



Sheila Ivanochko

Preeceville-Sturgis Pastoral Charge, Living Skies Regional Council.

I am a wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, retired teacher and active substitute in rural Saskatchewan.

I grew up in Newfoundland, at a time when churches played a major role in all aspects of school and community life. I have been an active member of Trinity United in Preeceville, SK since 1982. Over the years I have been and continue to be extensively involved in local church life.

During my Presbytery involvement, I came to love the work of the Education and Students Committee, a task that has led to my current involvement in the Lay Leadership Support Committee of Living Skies Regional Council. As rural churches rely increasingly heavily on (Licensed) Lay Worship Leaders, I find it energizing to be part of a team that forges new paths to determine how to meet the needs of our rural charges. I have been a delegate to LSRC for many years, serving on various committees; in 2015 I was a delegate to GC42.

As the COVID19 pandemic restricts many facets of church life, it is exciting to see the UC moving beyond traditional boundaries, “trying church” in new formats, and learning valuable lessons about moving beyond traditional structure.

A part of me is selfishly excited about the opportunity to be part of the 44th General Council, and to participate in the positive energy which I know will be renewing and invigorating. Another part is a little overwhelmed at the demands of representing Living Skies Regional Council, and yet another part is humbled at the thought of being one small part of the changes that are forthcoming. With God’s help I will make every effort to do justice to this task!



Beth Johnston

Beth Johnston was born in PEI and received a BA from Mount Allison University and an MDiv from Atlantic School of Theology. Ordained by Maritime Conference in 1988 she has served 5 pastoral charges in the Maritimes and currently lives and serves in Nipawin SK in Living Skies Regional Council. She has served on all levels of church governance from congregational committees to Presbytery, Conference and General Council. She looks forward to “attending” GC 44 with her new perspective as a “prairie preacher”.



Jeri-Lee Jones

Hi, my name is Jeri-Lee Jones. This will be my second consecutive term as a commissioner for General Council. When I served for GC43, I was a lay representative preparing to become a student minister. I utilized the opportunity to learn how the United Church of Canada really functions. I was excited to be apart of all of the decision making, and truly enjoyed learning and being engaged in the process. I am excited to serve you again, but now as a candidate ready for recognition through the DLM program.

I currently reside in Midale, and have spent the last two years as a student minister at Radville Pastoral Charge. I live with my boyfriend and our five children who keep us very busy with all their school and sporting activities. I also work part time as a school bus driver, while volunteering within the school that our five children attend. When I am not busy, I like to craft making epoxied cups, wooden signs and everything in between.



Frances Kitson

Hello! My name is Frances Kitson. I was born in England to parents Hilary and Neil, moved to Vancouver (unceded Coast Salish territory) when I was one, worked in both theatre and construction before being called to ministry, and until coming to Lanigan in January 2021, had not lived through a real winter since 2005.

I did not grow up in the church. My mother was raised in the Church of England, my father in the United Church, but church did not play a significant role in their adult lives. Growing up in Vancouver, possibly the place where Christendom had the least hold in Canada, I was quite scornful of Christians. Buddhists, Muslims and Jews were fine, but Christians were nice but boring at best; fundamentalist bigots at worst.

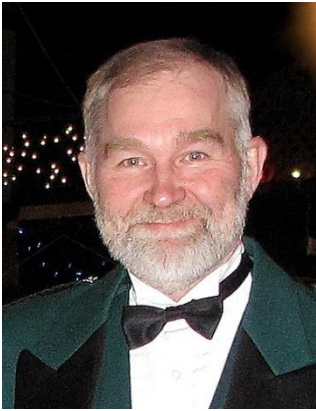
Imagine my surprise when, in university, I found within myself a longing to become part of a church! My father was appalled, as was I. *Church?! With Christians?!?*

Luckily, God is gracious as well as hilarious. A university friend of mine recommended a Catholic theology course she had taken, whose focus was – wait for it! – human sexuality and marriage. Our prof, however, was fabulous: a thoughtful, intelligent feminist Catholic, who introduced me to a range of thoughtful, incisive, exploratory texts on Christianity that I had not known existed. Knowing that faith could also include my critical thinking faculties put my fears at rest.

From there, it wasn't long until I joined the United Church – it was familiar through having attended with my grandparents, and I had no interest in joining a denomination in which female leadership or the affirmation of LGBTQ+ folk was any kind of issue.

In 2005, I began attending Canadian Memorial United Church in Vancouver, a congregation I still love and cherish for having formed, supported, encouraged, and launched me. I graduated from VST this past spring with my M.Div, and am greatly enjoying my time here in Living Skies.

Thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility and privilege of representing you at GC44!



Bill Pollock

I was baptized in Saint Andrew's United Church, Cory and raised on a farm just west of Saskatoon. In grade twelve, my Dad sold his farm and moved into Saskatoon. I was confirmed at Mayfair United Church and participated in Kairos, an externally focused youth group which served as a mating club. I met my wife through Kairos and began attending Second Street United Church where I was Secretary of the Board of Stewards, Treasurer, member of Buildings and Grounds Committee, Sunday School Superintendent, graduating to Chair of Council. After twenty years at Second Street, when there was no programming for our children, we moved to Grace-Westminster which we have attended for almost thirty years, serving on Council and Property Committee, becoming Presbytery Representative, then Representative to Living Skies Regional Council, and a Trustee.

I live in Saskatoon with my wife and two toy poodles. I have two grown sons, one of whom is married. I am retired. I serve as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader and am a member of the Committee on Community of Faith Support for Living Skies Region. I am currently a member of GC43, and a candidate for GC44



Michele Rowe

I am Prairie-born and raised, proudly Métis, and currently serving in ministry with the grace-filled people of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. I entered ministry later in life after a career in social work and adult education. In 2004, my 17-year-old daughter died suddenly, and the church was there for me in the aftermath (shout out to St. Thomas Wesley in Saskatoon). Before I knew what had happened, Jesus had ruined my life in the best possible way and I was off to St. Andrew's

College.

I have always thought that I would like to serve the church at General Council before I retire, and the time seems right. Of course, the snacks will not be as good online, but the bathroom lineups will be shorter. I am so grateful for all that the Creator and this beautiful, broken, blessed, and beloved United Church of ours has given the world. Maarsii for the opportunity to be part of this process.



Janelle Shaw

My name is Janelle Shaw and it is my honour to serve the Lafleche-Limerick Pastoral Charge. I was born and raised in Oshawa, Ontario, but always knew that I was called to the Prairies and rural ministry, so I was eager to accept a call to Saskatchewan in February 2018...yes, I really moved to Saskatchewan in February! Since then, I have been warmly welcomed by the community and am happy to call this place home.

I've sometimes been called a "church nerd" and have attended parts of the last three General Council gatherings (Ottawa, Cornerbrook, and Oshawa) as a visitor, so I'm excited to make my attendance official this year as a Commissioner. I strongly believe that the work of the church requires the discernment and input of the people of the church and I look forward to being a part of that process at

General Council 44.

Yvonne Terry (*bio to be posted later*)



Owen Wright

I'm 59 married have three children one grandchild. I've been with the church for 44 years at Mayfair United church in Saskatoon.

I've served on Christian Education, stewardship, worship and affirm committees. Work many events at church from fowls suppers to dinner theatre cookie

walk church bbq's and everything in between. I served as living skies regional rep for two years and figure I should help out with regional and the reason wanted to be commissioner is to help out the wider church on a national level to see how we work at that level.



Diane Thurlow – Alternate Commissioner

Attended General Councils in 1992, 2006, 2012

Have been involved in Presbytery since 1983 including chair from 1991 to 1994

I started as a UCW rep then named as delegate from Meadow Lake pastoral charge I have been on the Congregational Life and Ministry and Personal committees as member or as chair, and corresponding secretary for the Presbytery.

I was on the transition team when Battleford and Rosetown Presbyteries became Prairie Pine Presbytery.

When the Presbytery changed to Living Skies Region I was named as Delegate by the Meadow Lake Pastoral Charge. I was on the Living Skies Nomination

committee for its first year.

I have chosen to remain off of committees till this year when I was installed as 1st vice chair for the United Church of Canada Women group starting January 2022 at the November 7, 2021 Annual UCW meeting by Zoom.

George and I are also Pastoral charge supervisors for the Northern Lakes Pastoral Charge. We attend their Unified Board meetings, 3 annual meeting as there are three charges and one three point charge annual meeting.

I have been involved in UCW since shortly after I came to Meadow Lake in 1976 having over time been treasurer, secretary, chair and catering convenor

I attend all local Official Board meetings sharing the news of the Living Skies region.