

# Learning Pilgrimage Delegation – Middle East

*The United Church of Canada Learning Pilgrimage delegation to the Middle East is visiting Mission and Service partners in Palestine and Israel in May 2025.*

## M Chorney



M Chorney (she/they) currently resides in Treaty One territory and is a policy analyst with the Manitoba government during the day and the Communications Coordinator for Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble by night. Their other time is spent volunteering for the church (Selkirk United Church, Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive, General Council Executive), spending time with their spouse and friends, and cuddling their new puppy, Minerva. They are passionate about human rights and look forward to learning on their Pilgrimage. (Photo: Selfie taken of M with orange hair and a black T-shirt. A filter over the photo adds sparkly freckles.)

## Larissa Kanhai



Larissa Kanhai, MBA, B.A. (Hons), B.Sc. is a strategic leader, community advocate, writer, and speaker. She has worked and studied across Canada as well as travelling and volunteering across continents. Larissa grew up in Regina but has made her home in Winnipeg, along with her partner and three children. With passions for environmental justice, anti-racism, and intersectional feminism, Larissa brings expertise and lived experience to all her endeavours. She aspires to offer faithful leadership in her community, to teach her children how to be global citizens, and to champion justice through building relationships *and* strategic planning. Larissa identifies as a cis-gender female, first-generation Canadian, and person of colour (pronouns: she/her/elle).

## Mark Laird



Mark Laird is a third-generation United Church minister. He grew up in the United Church and started attending the Center for Christian Studies in 2008-2009. He has served two pastoral charges from 2011-2024 and is currently the Executive Minister for Horseshoe Falls, Antler River Watershed, and Western Ontario Waterways Regional Councils. Mark lives with his wife and two children in the village of Harriston, ON. He enjoys curling and baseball.

## Randy King



*Aanii*, my name is Randy King, also known as *Niigan'zit Maiingan*, a name gifted to me in ceremony, which translates to Leading Red Wolf. I am from Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation in Hagersville, ON. I am a student minister for The United Church of Canada and study at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba on a quarterly basis.

My wife and our children are active members of Grand River United Church.

I am passionate about history and learning my Indigenous culture and language. I believe that understanding our past is essential for building a stronger, more just future. My work and studies reflect my dedication to fostering reconciliation and mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, ensuring that the stories and wisdom of my ancestors continue to guide us forward.

In this photo, we are painting a stand for a drum that was being made at Sandy Saulteaux during a gathering called *Mamawe Ota Askihk* which is Cree and translates to "sharing life together here on earth."

*[Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Randy could not travel to the Middle East.]*