

# How Do We Make a World of Difference?



The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada

*We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.*

# Looking Back

For 100 years, The United Church of Canada has been a beacon of justice, leading the charge on social issues. Here are some highlights:

1936: Ordained our first female minister, Rev. Lydia Gruchy.

1980s: Championed universal health care.

Welcomed: 2S and LGBTQIA + individuals, affirming that all humans are made in the image of God.

Thanks to donors like you and **Mission and Service** partnerships, we've

- Partnered with 80 + organizations to provide education for women and children.
- Raised over \$1 million for emergency relief in war-torn areas.
- Sponsored 5,139 refugees over 10 years.
- Supported nearly 10,000 full COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Empowered 45 youth projects on social justice and anti-racism.
- Raised over \$20 million annually for vital programs in Canada and abroad.

*Your support makes a world of difference!*



Hillhurst Pride parade: Alberta & Northwest Conference, Lydia Gruchy, United Church Archives, 011P7779, Refugees: Paul Jeffrey / ACT Alliance

# The Way Forward

“Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship and daring justice.”

Our Call and Vision statement proclaims a bold present and future for the United Church. In a world yearning for love and compassion, **Mission and Service** embodies our faith, guiding us to loosen “the chains of injustice” (Isaiah 58:6).

Through enduring partnerships, **Mission and Service** strives for a better world. In a time such as this, our faith and hope drive us to be the church the world needs, leading us to our Call to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. To channel our efforts, the General Council Executive approved a Strategic Plan focusing on:

- Strengthening congregations, seeding new ministry, and nurturing a robust United Church.
- Make meaningful progress on Indigenous Justice, Racial Equity, 2S and LGBTQIA + Rights, and Climate Justice within the church and beyond.

*Together, we can make a profound impact.*

Photo: William Miller, Gibimishkaadimin 2024





# Making Strong Communities of Faith

Our community of faith supports us through life's highs and lows, even while facing challenges in connecting with those they serve. Together, we can overcome these obstacles and ensure our communities remain beacons of God's love.

*“Be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.”*

(Romans 12: 11–13)

## Fostering Leadership



As the church of the future, we focus on attracting and nurturing leaders who are diverse, collaborative, curious, adaptive, innovative, and faithful. **Mission and Service** helps to support our churches by fostering strong ministers and leaders. “Ministry formation and leadership is about character, as well as the knowledge and skills that people develop through their learning and throughout their ministry,” says Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Executive Minister for Theological Leadership at the United Church. “Our vision for leadership is a ‘servant leader’ who is emotionally intelligent, communal, collaborative, and accountable.”

Your generosity helps to educate ministry leaders for today and into the future.

Photo: Courtesy of St. Stephen's College



## Supporting Congregations and Faith Communities



Regionally-based Growth Animators offer support for ministers and congregations. They work with leaders to help cultivate the conditions that will rejuvenate and invigorate communities of faith so they don't just survive, but thrive.

For example, five United Churches in Regina are collaborating on Sunday morning worship leadership in a way that frees up ministry personnel for other tasks. Conversations with their Growth Animator clarified their deeper purpose and how to use their assets effectively. This renewed their sense of purpose and excitement for ministry growth, and together, they proposed a "Strong Towns Event" to address community gaps and foster collaboration.

"You've made a difference," ministry personnel told Sharon Ballantyne, a Growth Animator for Atlantic Canada, after a conversation held at a rural pastoral charge in Nova Scotia. "You've helped us focus on how to engage the congregation in our outreach vision." This dialogue created hope and renewed possibilities. Our faith calls us to love and serve. We need vibrant, hope-filled congregations to live out that call.

## Supporting Faith Stewardship



Another direct support for congregations and communities of faith are the *Called to Be the Church: The Journey* programs, developed by the Community of Faith Stewardship Support Staff who work alongside leaders to support learning of Christian Stewardship.

Minnedosa United Church in Manitoba participated in the Stewardship Best Practices session, and had three coaching sessions with support staff over six months. Even though they

were not in financial crisis, they were experiencing low median gift amounts and had not engaged in regular Stewardship conversations or programming for many years. The team crafted a letter inviting the congregation to participate in a full giving program and developed “stewardship moments” during worship. As a result, the goal for donations was met, 12 people increased their PAR gift amount, and there was no negative feedback on the “stewardship moments,” which had been a concern.

Afterwards, the board chair was ecstatic about the team’s success. “It has transformed the congregational culture to one of greater gratitude and hope.”

*Your generous gifts help us to strengthen, support, and equip congregations and communities of faith to thrive now and into the future.*



Photo: Wolf Kutnahorsky, Bolton United Church.

# Bold Justice to Create Dignity for All

Each of us has been wonderfully created by God. Our call to do justice is clear throughout the Bible, and we are committed to a future where everyone has a voice and a seat at the table.

*“...to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8b)*

For decades, our church has condemned all forms of racism and worked to eliminate systemic discrimination.

Thanks to your support of **Mission and Service**, the United Church has educational initiatives, programs, and partners dedicated to dismantling racism and discrimination.

## Committing to Anti-Racism



The 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism program tackles internalized, systemic, and anti-Indigenous, anti-Asian, and anti-Black racism. “There are some people who don’t want to talk about racism in the church,” notes Adele Halliday (Anti-Racism Equity Lead for the United Church). “However, it’s important. There is work the church has committed itself to do as part of our faithful response to this call.” Jesus and his disciples ministered to non-Jewish peoples too. If we are truly followers of Jesus, we recognize the face of God in all our siblings here in Canada and around the world.

## Protecting Sexual and Gender Minorities

**Mission and Service** donations also help to protect sexual and gender minorities around the world.



Did you know same-sex attraction is a crime in 63 countries, with 12 imposing the death penalty? “One of our partners in Kenya advocates strongly for the human rights of sexual minorities and that has caused him to be in jail,” says the Rev. Michael Blair, the United Church’s first openly gay General Secretary. “When we hear these stories, we can see this is a life and death matter.”

Your support enables us to hold consultations globally, learning how to best protect sexual and gender minorities. These gatherings offer safe spaces for our Christian partners to discuss creating change locally. Thanks to your generosity, we also help shelter refugees escaping repressive regimes. This solidarity fosters peer learning, renewed energy, and powerful advocacy.

## Fighting for Climate Resiliency and Justice



Hardship due to climate change is a major issue in today’s world. Thanks to your support of **Mission and Service**, we help build climate resiliency in communities all over Canada and around the world.

For Siloam United Church in London, Ontario, establishing a community garden was their way of connecting with nature. Partnering with a non-profit, they turned vacant land into an urban farm, growing fresh produce for local food banks.

Photo Courtesy of Siloam United Church



This effort enhances food security, demonstrates good land stewardship, and strengthens community ties. Your gifts make this possible.

How far would you go to protect the climate resiliency of your community? Marita and Ester travelled from Guatemala to Japan to learn how they could better support their Indigenous Mayan communities.

“There are many difficulties that the Indigenous Mayan people, especially women, face. Poverty is still a significant issue. Problems such as alcoholism and discrimination among ethnic groups is high,” Ester and Marita shared. “These problems leave many people in difficult financial and nutritional situations.”

With your support, Marita and Ester were able to travel to Japan to learn sustainable agriculture and community development.

“We are growing varieties of vegetables, taking advantage of



each vegetable’s characteristics, and we look forward to learning more about this during the training. We can improve nutrition in the local market by growing vegetables in multiple varieties,” Marita and Ester shared.

Will you join us in providing education, training, and support to leaders fighting climate change within their

communities—like Marita and Ester? With our **Mission and Service** partners, we will work together to create climate justice.

*Join us in this vital work to make justice a reality.*

# Indigenous Justice, Healing, and Reconciliation

Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in a society filled with harmful and untrue stereotypes with historical roots that are reinforced through generations. As a result, they face overt and systemic discrimination in all areas of their lives.

*If one of you wrongs another in any way, you must confess your guilt and pay full restitution.*

(Numbers 5: 6–7)



Thanks to your support, we are making a difference. Since 1994, the United Church Healing Fund has provided grants to support initiatives addressing the intergenerational effects of the residential school system. Indigenous communities receive funding for healing, language education, and culture projects.

## Protecting Indigenous Languages

Inuinnaqtun is the native language of the Inuinnaqtun people, who live in Canada's central Arctic region. Like many Indigenous languages, it was traditionally passed on through everyday interactions. But many Inuinnaqtun were removed from their communities and sent to residential schools. As a result, less than 500 Inuinnaqtun can speak Inuinnaqtun fluently today.

For the Pitquhirnikkut Ilihautiniq/Kitikmeot Heritage Society in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, the Healing Fund has supported Inuinnaqtun language mentors with resources to offer one-on-one language immersion sessions.

Your gifts help to bring healing and justice to Indigenous Peoples by preserving Indigenous languages.

## Working with the Community

The Regina Native Outreach Ministries (RNOM) partners with First Nations and Métis Services as well as the local hospital and library to support new mothers. The mothers were asked if they would like a Mother and Baby Welcome Bag and most are pleased to receive one. “Many of the mothers are surprised to find items in the bag for them and are moved by the personal card enclosed.” A knitting group also provides blankets for the bags.

Also in partnership with RNOM, the Regina Public Library created a new space in its downtown location. Community Commons was created to break down barriers and connect library visitors with cultural and social resources such as language and literacy programs, harm reduction counselling, and training. RNOM’s board worked with library staff to set up regular offerings of traditional Indigenous teachings, Christian teachings, Indigenous voices, and knitting circle sessions. The library has encouraged RNOM to propose more programming for the Community Commons.

*Thank you for walking with us on this journey to bring healing and transform lives.*

Photo: The United Church of Canada





Photo: Joni Shawana



Photo: Joni Shawana



Photo: Phayimikukit Iliautinaq/Kitkmeot Heritage Society;



# How do we make a difference in the world?



Photo: Antti Yrjönen / FCA

In a world that is hurting and becoming more and more polarized, we can share God's light and love by working together through **Mission and Service**. We can do this by answering God's call to go out into the world and show Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice!

The Bible calls us to not only be listeners of the Word but to go out into the world and be the hands and feet of Christ. To be a blessing to the Earth, that all might have abundant life. (James 1: 22–25).

Join us in living out our faith through Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice.

Together we can nurture and strengthen communities of faith and our partners to create a better world.



Photo: Paul Jeffrey / ACT Alliance



Photo: Frank Schulze / Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe



# Mission *and* Service

**Transform** lives.

**Inspire** meaning and purpose.

**Build** a better world.

*Your support fuels and sustains our mission.*

*Together, we can achieve more than*

*we ever could alone.*

*Join us to transform lives, inspire purpose,  
and help to build a better world.*

Scan this code to  
donate now



**Make your gift to Mission *and* Service today.**

## Three ways to make a gift!

 Call 1-800-465-3771

 [united-church.ca/donate](https://united-church.ca/donate)

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## Questions? Feedback? Let's talk.

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