



## Western Intercultural Ministry Network of the United Church of Canada

### Report for the Annual Meetings of the Western Regions 2021

(Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, Northern Spirit, Chinook Winds, Pacific Mountain Regional Councils, and the Indigenous Church)

The Western Intercultural Network is a relatively 'young' network of communities in the United Church of Canada committed to a fully inclusive and intercultural church, covering the five Western Regional Councils.

The network holds gatherings and online conversations that focus on intercultural discussions. Network members are engaging in and promoting action in their regions towards living out the UCC's vision of being an intercultural church ([Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church | The United Church of Canada \(unitychurch.ca\)](https://www.unitychurch.ca)), and come together occasionally for educational events and other opportunities for dialogue. An executive from the five Western Regional Councils of the United Church offers us leadership.

Our vision of becoming an intercultural United Church encompasses:

- Racialized people and communities, which includes ethnic churches within the United Church, racialized lay leaders and ministry personnel, and more.
- Indigenous people and communities, within the United Church and beyond, of all traditions.
- People with disabilities.
- LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people and communities.

We honour these identities, and the spaces where they intersect. Our ministry includes courageous (and awkward!) conversations about our diversity, and about the social privilege and history that hinder right relationships. We believe the Good News of Jesus Christ calls us into such conversations and relationship.

#### **2020-21 Activities**

In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic required the WIMN's Interim Executive to change its plans for holding an in-person education event in September. We instead offered a highly successful online event – **New Wine: Western Intercultural Ministry Gathering** over three Fridays - September 25, October 2, and October 9, 2020. The gathering focussed on presentations and discussions on creating missional, sustainable, intercultural ministries together, with leadership provided by Rev. Tony Snow, from the Stoney Nakoda First Nation and Coordinator for Indigenous Right Relations, Chinook Winds Region, and Rev. Dr. Eric Law, Founder/Director of the Diverse Leadership Inst., Los Angeles, California. The online format allowed us to expand the reach of this education event and we had over 60 persons attending the sessions on each day.

#### **Annual Meeting**

WIMN hosted its Annual meeting on November 17, 2020, in conjunction with one of its Chai/Coffee Sessions.

At that meeting the members of the Interim Executive that had guided the Network's activities for 2019-20 were pleased to welcome new members to lead the Network.

The new Executive for 2020-21 comprises:

*Co-Chairs:* Deborah Richards (Pacific Mountain) and Kurt Katzmar (Northern Spirit)

*Secretary:* Kathy Yamashita (Chinook Winds)

*Elder:* Kay Quon

*Chinook Winds:* Alwin Maben (past chair)

*Northern Spirit:* Chelsea Masterman

*Living Skies:* Mathias Ross, Salesi Takau

*Prairie to Pine:* Kwang Beom Cho, Damber Khadka, Bill Millar

*Staff support:* Julie Graham, Chris Mah Poy, and Emo Yango (General Council).

The Executive meets monthly for about 90 minutes, and this provides an opportunity for us to connect about activities in our region, as well as engage in planning discussions. The sessions are lively!

### **Looking forward**

The new Executive has been discussing how the Network will engage in supporting and living out the call within our regions to be an Intercultural Church, as well as how we build intercultural social values and communities by working with other organisations in our provinces like Multicultural Councils and Multifaith bodies. Those discussions will continue throughout the year and we hope to find ways to engage the network in these engaging conversations. We have been heartened and energized by the engaging conversations that we have had during our New Wine intercultural gathering in fall 2020 and various Network Chai/Coffee times held in 2020 and early 2021.

The following decisions have been made about Network activities for 2021:

- Given ongoing uncertainty about in-person gatherings and church building re-openings this coming fall, we have decided not to hold a longer in person or online gathering in 2021. Instead, shorter programs and other opportunities will be the focus. We pray that in 2022 we will be able to be together again in a larger in-person gathering.
- The Network's Intercultural conversation (Chai/Coffee) times will continue through 2021. Our hope is to have 3 or 4 such conversation times during the year. In February we enjoyed a really rich national and intergenerational conversation focussed on the question 'Who do we want to be as we re-open our communities?'

### **Upcoming Events**

Our next Chai/Coffee gathering in this series will be **Thursday June 3**, likely at 9:00AM Pacific, 10:00AM Mountain Daylight (AB)/ Central Standard (SK), 11:00AM Central Daylight (MB and NW Ontario), and noon Eastern.

### **Contact Us**

If you would like to be contacted about WIMN events you can [sign up for occasional updates here](#); you can unsubscribe at any time, and we don't share your information with anyone else.

Respectfully Submitted by

**Kurt Katzmar and Deborah Richards**

Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Executive of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network

April 9, 2021