

Our resource people: biographies and presentations, Western Intercultural Ministries Network AGM and conference, October 19-21 2023, St Albert AB, Treaty Six.



October 19-21, 2023

Daring justice

intercultural and
decolonizing lenses
on truth and
reconciliation

Western Intercultural
Ministries Network in person
conference, Star of the North
retreat centre, St Albert AB,
Treaty Six. Full details:
<https://tinyurl.com/WIMN2023>
All welcome!

[Click here for the main conference page](#)

Charlene Burns and Russel Burns

At our gathering, Cree Elders Russel and Charlene Burns wish to share their traditional knowledge, language, and cultural practises through the oral tradition.

Russel Burns has been an entrepreneur for the majority of his life. Currently, Russel owns Burns Tribal and is a visionary at Interconnect, a non-profit family services agency. Mr. Burns is a member of the James Smith Cree Nation in Treaty Six Territory. Russel and his wife, Charlene, reside in Ponoka and have three grandchildren, Jacob, Jenny and Birdie. Russel and Charlene have been married for 46 years!

Charlene Burns Nitsikason. My name is Charlene Burns. I live in Treaty Six Territory. I'm from Maskwacis Cree Nation in Alberta and I'm a member of the James Smith Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. I taught school in my home community of Maskwacis for many years. I've been Community Capacity

Development Coordinator (CCDC) in Western Canada for Indigenous Ministries and Justice, United Church of Canada since Feb. 1st, 2011. Over the years, I've served as a member on a number of Provincial Boards. Most recently, I completed 2 terms on the Red Deer Polytechnic Board of Governors. I reside in Ponoka and have three grandchildren. Hai Hai (Thank you)!

Rev. MiYeon Kim is the minister at Fort Macleod-Granum pastoral charge. Originally from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), MiYeon was admitted to the ministry of the United Church in 2018. She has previously served in two pastoral charges in Northern Spirit Regional Council: Edgerton-Paradise Valley, and Spirit River (where she did her internship). Currently, MiYeon serves on the Admissions Board for the national church, which interviews ministry personnel from other denominations seeking admittance into The United Church of Canada. She is also passionate about music in the church, leading the United We Dance children's music project, and recently she has begun writing her own hymns. Her focus at our gathering: **Magpie, You Bring the Good News: Interculturality and Creativity in Ministry.**

Rev. Lloyd Nyarota was born and raised in Zimbabwe. He has been in the ministry since August 1989 and served in the Zimbabwe United Methodist Church till he came to Canada and started ministry in the United Church of Canada from September 2015.

Lloyd is married to Tazvioneji, a United Methodist Church ordained clergy serving as a missionary in Canada. Lloyd and Tazvioneji are blessed with two children, a son, Lloyd Tinotenda Nyasha, and daughter, Lorraine Tinovimba Chiratidzo.

Lloyd is a holder of diplomas in theology and religious studies, a Bachelor of Divinity and a Masters in Peace, Leadership and Governance. He is currently completing a Ph.D. in Theology with MF, Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society. His thesis research is on: The Mission of Reconciliation: The Church's Message in Zimbabwe 2000-2009. His focus at our gathering: **Toward a Better Society: The Church's Mission and Ministry of Reconciliation: A study from Zimbabwe discussed in a Canadian Context**

Rev. Murray Pruden Living on the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territories in Vancouver, BC. Rev. Murray Pruden is Nehiyaw, Cree First Nations from the Goodfish Lake and Saddle Lake First Nations. He grew up in the rural community of Smoky Lake. And his family's history come from that area based on his ancestor Rev. Henry Bird Steinhauer. Rev. Pruden has studied theatre at the University of Alberta, received a theatre performance diploma from Keyano college in Fort McMurray and an undergrad BFA from the University of Lethbridge. He completed his Master of Divinity at the Vancouver School of Theology at UBC and studies at the Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre in Manitoba.

Murray's path to Ministry has taken him to many good uses of his talents and spiritual gifts- dramatic works on theological topics, workshop presentations on storytelling, ecumenical representation on Indigenous theology and sermon reflections to various communities of faith across Canada. Rev. Pruden is the current National Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice for the United

Church of Canada.

His focus at our gathering: **The Act of Storytelling - Collective Street and Community Theatre, "Approaching Intercultural & Decolonizing Lenses on Truth and Reconciliation"**.

Collective theatre is a creative and experimental type of active movement through the arts. But most of all, within an Indigenous lens, it creates the art of storytelling from a unique community perspective. From this active movement a collective group displays their stories, images and performance to an audience. The work and themes created collectively in a group has an impact on others in sociopolitical themes. As activist and leaders we have an opportunity to share our stories through street theatre that influence an unspoken community message with 3 ideals- visibility, simplicity and promotion. Share our stories through Collective storytelling that influence an unspoken community.

Chris Pullenayegem is an immigrant from Sri Lanka specialized in law (specializing in refugee and Immigration law and policy), psychology, leading change and innovation and in adult education. Chris grew up in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic context among communities fractured along these lines. In Canada he worked as a Refugee Policy Analyst which adds to the wealth of knowledge and experience he brings to the area of migration and Diaspora.

His current work as Director of Congregational Vitality at the Vancouver School of Theology includes building a vision for a new and emerging church in Canada co-created by established and migrant communities of faith, which involves researching and developing resources to facilitate this evolution. His interest in inter-faith work motivated him to lead an Ontario inter-faith coalition on social reform for a while. He is a trainer in cross-cultural competencies and multi-faith awareness and is a keen observer of people movements. Chris has decades of experience working with the Church in matters relating to church renewal, leadership and new ministry development and discipleship/faith formation. He has lots of experience in leading startups/new initiatives and brings passion, people skills and sound strategy to help them grow. Chris finds recreation in music and outdoor activities. His focus at our gathering: **Hiding in Plain Sight: the Impact of Immigration**

Becca Whitla is the professor of practical ministry and the Dr. Lydia E. Gruchy Chair in Pastoral Theology at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where she teaches worship and liturgy, preaching, religious education, and practical theology. Her book *Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird* was released in December, 2020 (Palgrave MacMillan). From her White Euro-Canadian settler perspective, she examines ways to decolonize liturgical practices, especially community singing. She worked in Toronto for many years as a music director in both Anglican and United Churches (Church of the Holy Trinity, and Trinity St Paul's United Church). She also co-directed Echo, a 70 voice women's choir, and worked in the trade union movement developing leadership through choral singing. Her focus at our gathering: **Singing and Praying Justly**