

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

To the Venerable, the 149th General Assembly:

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee facilitates the national and international ecumenical and interfaith relationships of the denomination and is accountable to the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The committee also consults with other committees, the Principal Clerk who is our ecumenical officer, the Life and Mission Agency and the Moderator of the General Assembly to participate in advocacy work through our partnerships.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is the annual global ecumenical celebration (traditionally held January 18–25 in the northern hemisphere) when Christians around the world are invited to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly organized ecumenical services and to share in fellowship.

Each year, the Canadian Writing and Animation Team for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity develops resources for Canadian churches. Its members contextualize international resources that are developed by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The writing team also produces original material for the Canadian setting. The representative for The Presbyterian Church in Canada is Kenn Stright.

Resources are available around mid-November at weekofprayer.ca on the Canadian Council of Churches website. Congregations are encouraged to review this material from 2024 so that they can develop plans for January 2025 that may include Bible study events and worship opportunities.

The theme for the 2024 Week of Prayer was “You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbour as yourself”, which was prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso.

COUNCILS AND DIALOGUES

We are blessed by and grateful for the contributions of so many lay, designated and ordained members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who volunteer their time to further our ecumenical and interfaith work.

World Council of Churches

oikoumene.org

The World Council of Churches (WCC) held its last Assembly in 2022 in Germany. The work of this council is carried out by its different departments and commissions during the interim years between Assemblies. During this current period, our denomination has no one directly serving on any of its commissions or committees. Our connection is through the WCC Relations Committee, a Canadian gathering of member church representatives that keeps abreast of the WCC’s work as it relates to Canadian church members.

The WCC website provides updated information on its work as well as holding many studies and statements of the council.

World Communion of Reformed Churches

wrc.ch

The Word Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) will hold its 27th General Council in Chiang Mai, Thailand in October 2025. The theme is “Persevere in Your Witness” (Hebrews 12:1).

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee is currently seeking nominations for delegates to the General Council. Presbyteries and the theological colleges have been invited to submit names. The delegates will be selected at the end of June 2024.

Caribbean and North America Area Council of the WCRC (CANAAC)

The WCRC is divided into regions so that church members can connect with each other and to find ways to live out the work of the WCRC within those regions. The Caribbean and North America Area Council is the region to which our church belongs. As with other councils, CANAAC holds an Assembly every few years. From October 27–30, 2024, CANAAC will meet in the Cayman Islands. The Rev. Victor Kim will be our delegate. This will be an important

connection for him as our church's ecumenical officer. This Assembly will also focus on the input that CANAAC will have in the preparations for the WCRC General Council in 2025.

The Rev. Kenn Stright is the church's representative on the Steering Committee which carries out the work of CANAAC between Assemblies.

Canadian Council of Churches

councilofchurches.ca

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), founded in 1944, is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body representing 24-member churches including Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox and historic Protestant traditions. Together, these member churches comprise 85 percent of the Christians in Canada. The mission statement of the Canadian Council of Churches declares that it responds to Christ's call for unity and peace, seeks Christ's truth with affection for diversity and acts in love through prayer, dialogue and witness to the gospel.

Attending the 2023 CCC Governing Board meetings, held November 15–17, 2023 at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga and at Le Monastère des Augustines in Quebec City from May 24–26, 2023, proved to be an enlightening experience. Through the presentations by Professors Gilles Routhier and Solange Lefebvre, we deepened our understanding of the religious landscape in Quebec, particularly in relation to pluralism, laïcité and secularism. We actively engaged with MNA Jean-François Simard's discussion on the principles and specifics of Bill-21, asking questions and offering comments. Our participation in prayers, an interfaith tour and dialogue, as well as a visit to the Grand Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center in Sainte-Foy, provided valuable insights. These experiences were complemented by presentations from the Rev. Darla Sloan of the United Church of Canada, Jean-Yves Cardinal, Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada and others. Throughout both events, we participated in prayer and song. Collaborating with the Peace and Reconciliation Network of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the CCC organized a poignant hour of prayer for peace in response to the conflict in Ukraine. The Rev. Fr. Zareh Zargarian from the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church shared profound insights on their history, the ongoing tragedy in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and their aspirations for the future. We also joined in the "You Shall Love the Lord Your God...and Your Neighbour as Yourself" (Luke 10:27) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) service. Furthermore, our interaction with Dr. Reina Neufeldt, Chair of Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies department, during a reflective session, left us inspired and motivated.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is privileged to participate in the CCC through its Executive Committee, Governing Board, committees, commissions, reference groups and Project Ploughshares. The triennial meeting of the Council will occur in May 2024. The officers of the Council will be appointed at that time. Many Presbyterians from across the country have been and continue to be involved in the work of the CCC and are members of the various bodies of the Council. At the time of preparing this report, our representatives include:

- Governing Board – Victor Kim, Laura-Lee Campbell
- Executive Committee – Norm Creen (Treasurer), Amanda Currie (Vice-President), Stephen Kendall (Past-President)
- Personnel Committee – Terrie-Lee Hamilton
- Constitution Committee – Maureen Walter
- Commission on Justice and Peace – Will Ingram
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Kenn Stright
- Commission on Justice and Peace – Allyson Carr
- Working Group on Ending Sexual Exploitation – Deb Stanbury
- Management Committee, Project Ploughshares – Matthew Lingard
- Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group – Joan Masterton
- Christian Interfaith Reference Group – Andrew Johnston
- Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network – Allyson Carr
- Church Leaders Event – Mary Fontaine
- WCC Relations Committee – Victor Kim
- Ecumenical Coalition for the International Decade for Peoples of African Descent – Allyson Carr

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

evangelicalfellowship.ca

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has observer status with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Each year our representative attends the President's Day that is typically held in the autumn. The Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, who is the first appointed observer, has served in this role since 2004. Over these past 20 years, he faithfully attended the annual event and shared with the Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee the activities and studies prepared by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The committee expresses its appreciation to Dan Scott.

The Rev. Nick Renaud is our current denominational observer and will attend his first President's Day in the fall of 2024.

CONCLUSION

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee is grateful for our denomination's commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. We pray for the unity and the diverse expressions of Christ's church. We pray for constructive relationships with all Canadians of other faiths.

Laura-Lee Campbell
Convener