



Contact

President's Message: Changing Seasons

Friends,

Thank you so much for your prayers for our ninety-third General Meeting of Hamilton Conference at Port Elgin, May 25 to 27. Our meeting began with inspiring worship led by the Affirm Network in recognition of the many years it took for us to become an Affirming Conference. Our speakers left us with wonderful stories of joy tinged with hurt and anger that it has taken so long to take this step, and an invitation to continue the affirming process if we move into Regional Councils after General Council 43.

I am grateful to our Staff and all the volunteers who shared in leadership during our meeting, to our gracious hosts at the UNIFOR Centre, and to Port Elgin United Church for hosting our New Ministries service. Our meeting was filled with wonderful music, inspiring conversation and worship, opportunities for learning, and prayer. Our Moderator, the Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, inspired us with stories of United Church congregations and people from across Canada. General Secretary Nora Sanders and Peter Hartmans helped answer some of our questions about the changes our church faces.

Our meeting ended with sharing stories and feasting as we celebrated the work of our Conference over the past ninety-three years. While our celebrations held some sadness, the wonderful conversation when we divided into the Regional Councils we may become assures me we have much to look forward to. Our Gifts of Gratitude challenge raised \$6,081.35 for the continuing work of our church through the Mission and Service Endowment Fund in the United Church Foundation.

In the coming months, I encourage you to follow these changes at <https://www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/remit-implementation>. Join the road to GC43 by taking part or watching the recordings of the webinars <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars>. Plan to attend the <https://generalcouncil43.ca/festival> Saturday and Sunday, July 21–22, 2018, beginning each day at 10 am at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Durham College, Oshawa, Ontario. The Festival of Faith kicks off GC43. It's a celebration of our work and witness through the arts. It is free!

Please continue to pray for...

- our staff and volunteers in presbyteries and Conferences across our church as they seek to serve faithfully in the midst of uncertainty about the future
- our Executive Secretary Peter Hartmans as he continues to serve us, while at the same time co-chairing the Remit Implementation Task Group and serving as Provisional Executive Minister for Regions 6 and 10
- Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, who is provisional Executive Minister for Regions 7, 8, and 9, and our Regional Council Commissions in this time of transition
- our Moderator, General Secretary, and the staff, volunteers, and commissioners as they prepare for General Council 43
- justice and peace for all God's people

Blessings,

Heather Leffler



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EDITOR

Barbara Hampson,
Communications
Program Support

Please send submissions to
Barbara Hampson,
(905) 659-3343, x226
P.O. Box 100,
Carlisle, ON
LOR 1H0
E-mail:
bhampson@hamconf.org

DEADLINES

Oct. issue—Sept. 15
Jan. issue—Dec. 15
Mar. issue—Feb. 15
June issue—May 15

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www.hamconf.org

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Regions 7, 8, and 9 Welcome New Provisional Executive Minister

Hello Regions 8 and 9!

This year, the Annual Meeting of Hamilton Conference fell on Trinity Sunday. It is a Sunday many worship leaders would not mind missing! It is no small feat to unpack a theological tenet in a way that inspires! Admired preacher Karoline Lewis confesses to having the same struggle—which led her to wonder if “maybe the Trinity is not so much about who God is but reveals more about to what God is committed. Yes, God is God, God is Jesus, God is Spirit—that’s the who. But together it’s all about relationship” (www.workingpreacher.org). Dr. Lewis challenges the church to live as if the Trinity matters, as if relationship matters.

General Council 42 made two choices when drafting Remit One that proclaim “relationship matters.” The first was to replicate the bond that a community of faith has with the presbytery to one with the Region. The Region will be engaged in several matters including pastoral relations and property. No community of faith lives in isolation and the ministry of each is connected to the ministry of all. The second was to add the modifying words “in cooperation.” Pastoral relations, property, and so forth will be decided together. The connection we know is to continue but in a new way.

If enacted, Remit 1 invites us to *transition* from four courts to three councils, and to *transform* the relationship between us. In my experience, presbyteries and Conference are often helpful but, also in my experience, that is rarely what communities of faith expect them to be! Is this a moment where that might change? Is this a time when we might live into Dr. Lewis’ insight that relationship matters?

This will be one of the questions before the Transition Commissions for regions 8 and 9 when they meet in late June. It is one of the challenges before all of us as we move into these changes. Let’s embrace the challenge! Let’s take up this next chapter in the life of the United Church being clear that relationship matters.

Looking forward to the relationships we’ll be forming together! Please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Cheryl-Ann
Provisional Executive Minister, Regions 7, 8, and 9
CSampa@united-church.ca



Presently the Executive Secretary of London Conference, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa has over twenty-eight years of long-term pastoral ministry; the health and vitality of congregations is dear to her heart! Cheryl-Ann is honoured and excited to be moving into the role of Executive Minister and hopes that the changes ahead will help the church shift its energy from the demands of internal processes to the demands of discipleship. She is looking forward to meeting the people with whom she will be serving in the new partnership that is regions 7, 8, and 9 (southwestern Ontario up to the Bruce Peninsula).

New Ministers from Hamilton Conference



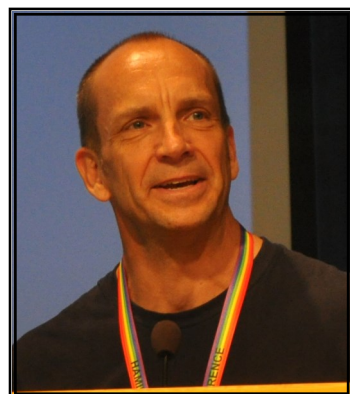
ROBERT LAWSON, a candidate from Harmony United Church, Erie Presbytery, was ordained to the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care. Robert has been called to Harmony United Church, Erie Presbytery.

“My dream for the moment is to help people come to see that they need a faith community. I am struck by the growing inability of many to see others as themselves. I think that churches can become training centers to help people relearn this skill. I want to reposition my faith community as a teaching centre for love and compassion – as a place where people can truly become human.”



ANDREW MACPHERSON, a candidate from Westdale United Church, Hamilton, Hamilton Presbytery, was ordained to the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care. Andrew has been called to St. Luke’s United Church, Toronto Southeast Presbytery, Toronto Conference.

“My hope within my future pastoral charge is to be part of a radically inclusive ministry. I want my church to engage all the neighbourhood’s communities, as Christ did. An area of specialization is interfaith collaboration and demonstrative Christ in a multi-religious, secular world.”



GERT JANSE VAN RENSBURG was admitted to the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada from the Renaissance Christian Church in Pretoria, Africa. Gert has been called to Sydenham-Heritage United Church, Erie Presbytery.

“I have only one dream and hope: To be an instrument in God’s hand to bring about the Kingdom of God within and without.”

Congratulations!

This past winter, Hamilton Conference minister Miriam Spies won a competition for junior scholars to present her paper, "Ministry with Youth with Disabilities: What Can the Church Learn from the Medical Practice?" at Princeton Theological Seminary's Disability and Youth Ministry Conference, February 1-2. Miriam is a student in the Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry program. Congratulations, Miriam!



Hamilton Conference,
The United Church of Canada
P.O. Box 100
Carlisle, ON L0R 1H0

Phone: 906-659-3343
Fax: 905-659-7766
E-mail: office@hamconf.org



Miriam is pictured at the centre with Dr. Ben Conner behind her, along with three other award winners and the faculty for the event.

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www.hamconf.org

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We want to hear from you!

Contact, a newsletter for Hamilton Conference, is distributed four times annually through HamPack (HAMilton PACKage). The purpose of *Contact* is to share news throughout the Conference about our life, work, programs, policies and communities. We welcome stories about events or programs that are unique or new; it is helpful to include details that will help another congregation or group if they choose to embark on the same activity.

Please send submissions to Barbara Hampson at bhampson@hamconf.org. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity. Digital photos are welcome; make sure you have **permission to publish** pictures of people, especially photos of children.

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