



Nominees for GC45 Commissioners

LAY NOMINEES
(in alphabetical order)

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[Mark A. Grenon](#)

[Qian \(Erika\) Liang](#)

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Norman Robert Boie *(ex officio)*

MINISTRY PERSONNEL NOMINEES
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Celestine Alimasi

Nominated by: Shanna Bernier

Seconded by: Rev. Samuel Vauvert Dansokho

Biography

Celestine is a 17-year-old francophone young woman. Celestine brings a deep faith and hard-working attitude to her church life. She is an active member of the Plymouth-Trinity community of faith, where she frequently volunteers to assist with Worship leading, music, and technology and helps with the Children's church. Celestine would be an excellent representative for the youth of our Regional Council, bringing numerous facets of her identity, her Congolese roots, her journey as a refugee and her linguistic minority in the church.

Experience and skills

Sunday School teacher and reader. Celestine has been a counsellor for the United Spirit Camp, and has participated in both Youth Forum and Worshiplude. She doesn't have a lot of experience yet, because she is a young person. But she is enthusiastic about participating!

Other gifts

I (Shanna Bernier) am nominating Celestine and she is a very hard-working young person, with a lot of leadership potential, and she will bring a lot of interesting perspectives to the group.



Marc A. Grenon

Nominated by: Fred Braman

Seconded by: Rev. Helen Hliaras

Biography

I feel deeply called to serve as a commissioner for GC45 because of my strong faith and the profound impact as commissioner to GC44 has had on my life and leadership. Rooted in my commitment to Christ, I have always sought to engage with others in ways that embody the values of justice, compassion, and community. Serving in this role would allow me to contribute again to the broader vision of the church and ensure that its future is guided by both spiritual insight and practical wisdom.

Throughout my years of service within the church, I have had the privilege of leading in various capacities as expressed in the biographical sketch I provided, whether through direct pastoral care, involvement in local outreach programs, or fostering congregational development. Beyond the church, my professional and personal experiences have further shaped my perspective. In my work, I have navigated complex challenges, built relationships across diverse communities, and worked toward solutions that reflect a deep respect for people's lived experiences. These opportunities have equipped me with the ability to listen, collaborate, and engage in thoughtful decision-making.

One of the attributes that gives me a unique perspective is my ability to bridge gaps between tradition and innovation. I have seen how the church's rich history can inform its future, but I also understand the need for adaptability in a changing world. My approach is rooted in respect for our foundational values, while also being open to new ways of engaging with both members of the church and the wider world.

My particular passion for social justice and advocacy aligns closely with the mission of the General Council. I believe that faith must be lived out in tangible ways that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable among us. Whether it's addressing inequality, fostering inclusive communities, or championing environmental stewardship, I am committed to making sure that the church continues to be a voice of hope and transformation.

Experience and skills

I have been chair of the official board of my CoF for 15 years if not more. We have had at least 4 ministers in that time and have sold the manse and church in Bedford (Wesley United); the church in Mystic (with the disbanding of the congregation); and the old marble church in Philipsburg (endpoint of the Underground Railroad).

- President of Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council (2022-2024)
- Members of the Pastoral Relations Leadership Team (Liaison Officer)
- Member of the Board of Saint Columba House
- Commissioner to GC44
- Chair of the Québec & East Ontario Candidacy Board. (? – 2022)
- Member of the Board of Regents, St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon)
- Co-chair of the Board of the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU)

Other gifts

I strive to be faithful, a listener, innovative, I love the United Church, I am an educator, I lean on my faith to think outside the box — in ways that are practical, logical and financially sound. I am, so some say, a 'quiet sage' who brings out the best in others.



Qian (Erika) Liang

Nominated by: Rev. Read Sherman

Seconded by: Rev. Tami Spires

Biography

I feel deeply called to serve as a commissioner for GC45 because of my strong faith in Christ and my unaltered commitment to disability, inclusion, and Church. I am called to develop a guideline on how to welcome autistic and other neurodivergent people with the United Church of Canada. Serving in this role would allow me to learn and appreciate the effort made by the Church communities, raise awareness to those uncredited effort, and seek innovative incorporation of the United Church theology to the United Church life as a life of discipline in response to God's love.

Throughout my years within the United church, I was granted the privilege to pursuit a ministry that is both learned and holy. I feel called to make the invisible visible--the invisible grace will be made visible by word and sacrament. Equally important, I believe the practice of Christian ethics and social justice must make the invisible injustice visible.

My life as a seminary student and an academic in training is an ongoing practice of Lectio divina with Scripture, theological reflections, prayers, and contemplation. What is in the centre of my everyday life is the Christian practice of faith and reason, public worship, sacrament, personal devotion, and communication with God.

Living the life as an autistic person with ADHD has brought me a new perspective with a fervent passion: My life is a life of constantly "coming-out"--It is to live out the calling of God to "turn around" and embrace who I am and accept it as God's gift, on the one hand; on the other, it is to lift up our hearts to God. My life as a neurodivergent ministry candidate, then, is my Christian response to the perfect love of God and to the perfectly imperfect self and others (my neighbours). My life is there my bold discipleship in response to the General Council's calling. My vision to become a commissioner and my dreams to further the theology of welcoming and inclusion, then, is my response to God's calling, revealed in Scripture and the theme of the GC 45: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young shall see visions, and your elders shall dream dreams."

Experience and Skills

I have become a communication team member of my faith community (Trinity United Church) since I became a member in 2016. I was sometime volunteer of Trinity Pride 2018 and of the Sunday School, helping in various activities, including the Worshiplude 2019 to Ottawa. I have been offering pulpit supplies since 2020.

- Voting Member at Large—Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council Executive (May 2023 till now)
- First Third Ministry Team Member (since Sept 2023)
- Nomination Team Member (since Jan 2024)
- Sunday School and Youth Group Coordinator, Mount Royal United Church, Town of Mount Royal, QC (Sept 2023 -- April 2023)

Other gifts

Autism has brought me the gift of honesty, faithfulness, dedication, a determination to learn, and to get things right. ADHD has brought me the gift of creativity and innovative thinking. I love and feel belonged to the United Church of Canada, and therefore I am motivated to continue my identity as a learner/teacher on how to love her (the church) right and properly serve God as God requires me to do--seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Several years of rigorous theological and academic trainings have brought me the gift of reflective, reasonable, and logical thinking with strong intellectual empathy. My particular interest and strength is theological reflections and incorporation of the former to life practices.



Carolyn Linde

Nominated by: Rev. Lee Ann Hogle

Seconded by: Rev. Mead Baldwin

Biography

I was involved quite a bit with my home church for many years. With increasing care needed for my mother and working full time I gave up those duties. Now that my Mom has passed away and I am on a pre-retirement schedule (4 days per week). I am interested in taking on a more active role in my faith.

A brief life history. Born and brought up in a small village (Austin, QC). My parents were Dutch immigrants. I have 1 brother, 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren. 2 times divorced. Not in a relationship at this time.

Experience and skills

- LLWL serving various charges over the Eastern townships
- I have served on sessions.
- Also was president of our UCW for approximately 15 years, until we had to disband

Other gifts

- I am an organized person.
- Not prone to drag things out.
- Worked on/ off for 25 years as a caregiver.
- 21 years as licenced practical nurse, with some teaching during these years



L. E. Moir

Nominated by: Rev. Rosemary Lambie

Seconded by: Nancy Stewart

Biography

As a life-long member of the United Church of Canada in Montreal, I have a deep understanding of the uniqueness of our bilingual culture in Quebec, of the linguistic experience, and the continued effort to welcome individuals from other communities and cultures into our faith group. Having served on the Governance Body at the local level, as well as the National level, I am mindful of how decisions made at General Council meetings affect the ministry locally and "back home" where the decisions are acted upon. Having followed the many extensive changes in UCC governance over the last decade, and seeing them come to fruition, the ongoing adaptation to and with our development remains a strong interest to me. Seeing the process through as it continues to develop and be implemented is important to me. Learning how I can help communities of faith adjust and progress, through the knowledge that comes from being a Commissioner to General Council, is a strong part of my faith picture. One major interest of mine is to develop and implement policies that will help those with challenges and disabilities be part of our communities, though adapting our physical sacred spaces.

Experience and skills

Session, Official Board, Lay representative to Regional Council (and Presbytery before), book studies, worship participation, tours of historical church building, and more.

Presbytery, Regional Council, Finance Task Group for Regional Council, Granting and Enabling committee for grants and financial assistance (GELT), Erskine and American Trustee.

Other gifts

Organisational skills; good knowledge of The Manual and Governance Structure of UCC; experience on many committees (Session, Regional Council, Grants and Enabling, other).

Ozioma Obijiofor



Nominated by: Rev. Linda Buchanan

Seconded by: Rev. Cathy Hamilton

Biography

I am male, born in Nigeria. My parents were devout Christians, so I grew up in the church with my siblings. I had my elementary, high school, and university in Nigeria. My faith and gifts have been formed by my many experiences with churches, devotion, and God throughout the stages of my life.

I am married to my wife, and we are blessed with three joyful children (11-year-old boy and 9-year-old twin girls).

I migrated to Canada in August 2022 to begin my theological education at Montreal Diocesan Theological College (Dio@UTC) as I felt called to ministry. I was seeking an institution to learn theology, ministry, and Scriptures. I want to be ordained and be able to serve the church by preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments.

In the secular organization, I have worked for more than ten years in the federal government agency in my country, Nigeria, where I worked my way from the bottom of the civil service cadre to a higher cadre, having to climb the rank and file of public service. The civil service in Nigeria is very administrative and makes policies for the welfare of the people.

My duties include ensuring clients and stakeholders abide by the government's rules and regulations. I ensure their businesses are registered, licensed, and documented to operate and do business. I held meetings with various groups, associations, and stakeholders in the industry we regulated. We also carry out media literacy to schools, markets, and religious worship centers to enlighten and educate children, young people, adults, parents, and spiritual leaders on what the laws say to avoid endangering young and vulnerable people.

I have sat in the pews, listening to church leaders speak about God and other religious discussions. My faith grew, and I couldn't continue to sit in the congregation, but I volunteered myself to lead in any capacity I was privileged to serve in any church setting I have found myself. I have volunteered to lead in Home Cell Centres as a Cell Leader coordinating a cell of 15-25 mix of adults and children in a weekly worship service. After some years, I became a Zonal Leader, looking after a zone comprising ten cell centres. The duties involve cell visitation, newborn baby naming ceremony, organizing streets and neighbourhood outreaches, attending home cell executive meetings, and attending training.

I want to serve as a commissioner for GC45 because it is an opportunity to hear many voices across Canada through online and in-person meetings. I will get to read a lot of material concerning many proposals brought by many commissioners and have the opportunity to ask questions. I want to be part of this very enriching experience..

Experience and skills

- I am currently a board member of my community of faith.
- I was a temporary admin assistant at BUC, handling the church's administrative duties, such as preparing newsletters, bulletins, and PowerPoint presentations for worship.
- I am a student minister at BUC, where I, our ordained minister, and musician prepare weekly worship outlines to ensure it is ready for Sunday worship.

I have not been privileged to serve in other courts of the United Church of Canada. However, I attended the Regional Council online meeting and worship during the winter of this year, where I presented my story as part of the BUCRISP program of Beaconsfield United Church (BUC). I am willing and excited to serve if given the opportunity. I will put my experiences into the GC45 meeting and be open to learning from colleagues and friends.

Other gifts

- Sound character: Honesty, integrity, fairness, compassion, service to others, a life of prayer, and I have depended upon God for guidance.
- Emotions: Ability to manage my emotions and motivate myself.
- Motivation: I am self-motivated to do my job effectively and efficiently
- Enthusiasm: I am always excited about taking on new opportunities as I am passionate and enthusiastic about my work.
- Flexibility: I am an open-minded person and willing to try new things. I can adapt to new challenges that occur with a positive attitude.
- Teamwork: I value everyone's experience and what they bring to the team. We work together and win together.



Adedeji Sunday Akintayo

Nominated by: Rev. Linda Buchanan

Seconded by: Rev. Helen Hliaras

Biography

As I seek the role of Commissioner for General Council 45 (GC45), I am driven by a deep sense of purpose and passion for the United Church of Canada's mission. My faith journey, marked by resilience and gratitude, has prepared me for this moment.

Born in Nigeria, I began my academic journey with degrees in Business Management and Business Informatics in European universities, laying the groundwork for my future endeavors. On arrival in Canada, I responded to my call to ministry, pursuing theological studies at McGill University, where I earned a Bachelor of Theology, and subsequently, a Master of Divinity from United Theological College. These degrees equipped me to serve the United Church of Canada, where I currently serve as a Student Minister.

As Coordinator of Beaconsfield United Church's Refugee Integration and Support Program (BUC-RISP), we have directly impacted hundreds of refugees, creating a welcoming Christian community. My work here has earned recognition in media as one of CBC's 2024 Black Changemakers.

My global perspective, shaped by living, working, and studying in Africa, Europe, the US, and Canada, grants me an experiential understanding of the 'outsider' mindset of a refugee and the benefits of integrating them into mainstream society. It is this unique perspective that I humbly seek to bring into the discussion on intercultural ministry of the Church.

I now seek to serve as a Commissioner for General Council 45 (GC45), leveraging my experience to enhance the Church's outreach and inclusivity. I plan to present a proposal addressing important aspects of intercultural ministry and how it can be positioned as the future of the United Church. I also seek to deepen my understanding of church governance and contribute to the Church's future. Through this role, I aim to share my unique perspective, promote meaningful discussions, and collaborate with others to build a more inclusive, compassionate, and vibrant United Church of Canada.

Experience and skills

When I came to Canada in 2017 as a refugee and joined Beaconsfield United Church, I was its first Nigerian member. As I got integrated into church administration structure, the church leadership encouraged me to design a refugee program which led to the establishment of the Beaconsfield United Church Refugee Integration and Support Programs (BUC-RISP). To date, BUC-RISP has supported over 500 refugees, promoting belonging and inclusion for diverse individuals. It has also received recognition from Canadian media and other civil society groups. As Coordinator of BUC-RISP, I utilized my administrative, communication, and interpersonal skills to efficiently manage program logistics, effectively convey goals and updates to diverse stakeholders, and build trust with refugees, church members, and community partners.

- I was appointed into the board of the Beaconsfield United Church in 2018.
- I was appointed into the board of the West Island LGBTQ2 Centre in 2018.
- I was appointed into the board of the United Theological College in 2019.
- I was appointed into the board of the Montreal School of Theology in 2021.
- I was appointed into the executive council of Nakonha:ka Regional Council in 2023.
- I was appointed into the board of Montreal City Mission. in 2023.
- I was appointed into the council of Riverside United Church in 2023.

Other gifts

With a heart devoted to serving others, I've been blessed with the gift of service. I possess a keen eye for identifying needs within ministry settings and the strategic ability to mobilize resources to bridge these gaps effectively. This enables me to help ministries achieve their objectives and make a meaningful impact.

My motivation stems from a deep desire to support others in finding balance in life, empowering them to realize their aspirations. I draw inspiration from the selfless examples of the early apostles in Acts 6:1-7 and strive for the commendation described in Romans 16:1-2.

As a skilled organizer and community leader, I effectively manage people and resources, harmonizing my natural abilities with the spiritual gift of service. My Nigerian and African heritage deeply influences my approach, instilling a sense of community, compassion, and cultural understanding in all aspects of my work. The Canadian impacts on me open my eyes to qualitative leadership that I have been practicing since I joined United Church of Canada.

This blend of the two cultural perspective, skills, and experiences enables me to serve with sensitivity, empathy, and effectiveness, ultimately glorifying God and edifying others.



Rev. Samuel Vauvert Dansokho

Nominated by: Ann Fowlis

Seconded by: Rev. Pierre Goldberger

Biography

Drawing on my Senegalese cultural roots, I see the General Council as a vast gathering under the palaver tree, lasting not just a few hours but three years! It's a remarkable "gathering of giving and receiving" to which I aspire with all my heart.

It's fascinating to combine experiences, education, gifts and skills to evaluate and better understand in order to rectify, reconcile and envisage a common future full of hope, while keeping our eyes open to the realities experienced, the fears felt and the potential to be translated into promising and concrete projects.

My peregrinations across three continents (Africa, Europe and North America) and my experience as a national of a long-colonized country have made me particularly sensitive to the injustice and misdeeds of neo-colonialism, racism and the shameless exploitation of creation and its children.

As a member of a tiny religious minority in a country where 90% of the population is Muslim, I've learnt a lot about an Islam as a practical way of life that celebrates peace, solidarity, fairness and conviviality, while still remaining, in ways, distinctly homophobic and male chauvinistic... not unlike in certain ultra-conservative Christian circles. The challenge is to live together with a sense of diversity that goes beyond the usual considerations of color, social class or sexual orientations.

In my present community of faith and in the increasingly secular larger Canadian society, we live in a gloomy ecclesial environment enbided by the fear of decline and lack of resources, I hope to be able to instill the pugnacity of someone who believes in the resurrection and refuses to make despair acceptable; of someone who knows how to be content with little in material terms while celebrating the munificence of equitable sharing : "I am because we are; we are because I am".

If some readers wonder why such a lengthily sharing about my life "over-there", it is simply because that experience is part and parcel of how I stand in the world and see myself as an active part of God's Creation; it sustains my duties toward Mother Nature and my responsibility to spread the blessings I have been so generously showered with.

Experience and skills

I've been the minister of Word, Pastoral Care and Sacrament at Plymouth-Trinity United Church since November 2014 because the original community, English-speaking and mainly from European immigration descent, realized that if it was to have a future, it was by opening up to the surrounding French-speaking population making up more than 90% of its environment. I was greeted by this forecast: "Samuel, we'll run out of people before we run out of money". Almost ten years on, here we are, having to learn how to ask for financial help as the ministry has expanded with people, largely, of African descent, with much younger and much larger families. Of course, this comes with its share of growing pains, difficulties, discomforts and misunderstandings, but also moments of pure grace and mutual enrichment, on the way to becoming one big intercultural, anti-racist and anti-colonial family.

From the moment the journey with the United Church of Canada started, I have had the rare and great privilege of serving the United Church of Canada in all its courts:

- member of the executive committees of what had been the Laurentian and Quebec Presbyteries, as well as the Conference, and completed two terms on the executive of the Nakonha:ka Regional Council.
- At the moment, I'm finishing my second and final term as a member of the General Council executive.

Other gifts

I was born on the banks of the Senegal River, in Saint-Louis, and married Selma Teresa Chipenda on January 3, 1987. Saint-Louis is a city full of history, but one whose days are numbered as it is threatened with extinction by the combined effect of the advancing Sahara Desert and the rising waters of the Atlantic Ocean due to global warming. This reality check makes obvious, I hope, that the ecological concern is a real matter of life or death for me, one that is inscribed in all the fibers of my being: guts, mind, soul and actions.

Politically, Senegal gained independence in 1960, after approximately 400 years of French colonization; it is one of the few African countries never to have suffered a military coup. Socio-economically, it is going through very difficult times, marked by a massive and often fatal exodus, especially to European countries, and a double-digit unemployment rate among university graduates.

For the most part, Senegal's religious communities live in harmony and enjoy a high level of mutual esteem. Over 90% of the population is Muslim, less than 5% Christian (mostly Roman Catholic, with Protestants accounting for less than 0.1%), and almost 20% still follow traditional practices.

I'm the third of eight children (five girls, three boys). Our parents were civil servants (my mother was a primary school teacher and my father a post office clerk) in Kelle, a small village with an elementary school, a railway station, a dispensary and a post office. We were one of only two Christian families in Kelle. My grandparents were very much a part of my life, as I did all my secondary schooling in Saint-Louis with them.

I did my Masters at the Protestant Theology Faculty of the Université des Sciences Humaines in Strasbourg, before being ordained and installed as the first Senegalese pastor of the Église Protestante du Sénégal on December 2, 1982. It was nine years of intense and often trying work, during which I accumulated a wealth of human and ecumenical experience at local, regional and global levels, with organizations such as the AACC (All Africa Conference of Churches), CEVAA (Communauté Évangélique d'Action Apostolique), WARC (World Alliance of Reformed Churches) [now it is the World Communion of Reformed Churches], WCC (World Council of Churches).

1991 marked a turning point in my life, as it was then that Selma and I left Dakar for Chicago on scholarships from the World Council of Churches. Our stay away, originally intended to last the time it took to complete a PhD and resume my ministry, metamorphosed into something, an exile, more permanent. I obtained my PhD at Chicago Theological Seminary in 1998 and worked with University Church as the part-time minister for international affairs. In September 2001, I left Chicago to teach theology in Salisbury, North Carolina, as Associate Professor of Religion, Society and Culture at Hood Theological Seminary, an AMEZ (African Methodist Episcopal Church) graduate seminary. Eleven years after, in 2012, we left North Carolina for Quebec to take the position of pastor of Saint-Pierre et Pinguet United Church. The financial predicament of the pastoral two years after, in November 2014, Plymouth-Trinity United Church called me as their minister for Word, Sacraments and Pastoral Care.

Selma and I became Canadian citizens in 2019.

The journey continues...



Rev. Rosemary Lambie

Nominated by: Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Seconded by: Rev. Joëlle Leduc

Biography

Having dedicated my life to the UCC, and attended many General Council meetings as staff, I would like the opportunity to support my Regional Council as a bilingual commissioner with a passion for lifting up the many cultures, languages and traditions that are part of us in Quebec. I have spent 42 years supporting the ministry of church communities and the ministry personnel in Quebec and Ontario.

I bring an understanding of the history of the church, the roads we have travelled, the many areas which need to be addressed as well as the many ministry personnel and the communities of faith needing support to navigate these changing times. There needs to be some stability in the midst of transitions.

I have a thorough knowledge of the UCC Manual and handbooks, and the governance structure of the church, including understanding how and in some cases, why these have changed over the years.

Those who know me appreciate why the Consistoire Laurentien affectionately named me "Mère Poule" as I have the experience of being a mother of 4, provided leadership to 5 presbyteries, then 3 Regional Councils and now am the loving grandmother of 10 wee ones.

Matt 23:37 "How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings".

Experience and skills

- 18 years in pastoral ministry with the Montreal Presbytery Group Ministry (initially 5 churches), then St. Andrew's in Chateauguay for 13 years both of which were partly team ministry
- Five years working with local churches and clusters of congregations providing leadership for the Montreal Presbytery as Minister of Development
- VAM with St Andrew's, Delson for about 17 years, helping as required
- Currently Pastoral Charge Supervisor for Delson, Rawdon, Armenian and having just completed 5 years with Union, I have just begun with Harrington Harbour
- 42 years in ministry with Montreal Presbytery Group Ministry (5 years), St. Andrew's Chateauguay (13 years), MP Nominating Committee, staff of Montreal Presbytery (5 years), M&O Staff Committee chair 1997-2005, Exec Sec for M&O Conference, then three Regional Councils (2005-2022 total 17 years) plus lots of committee work at levels, General Council (1992, 1994, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2022)

Other gifts

Born and raised UCC, mostly in Quebec, I have dedicated my life to working with all ages and stages of people, to help them find a better quality of life, in whatever circumstances they were living... I taught in the public school system, working in summer camps as a lifeguard/swimming teacher and counsellor, and served my congregation by being a Brownie Leader for young girls, a Youth Group Leader for teens, and later as Chaplain for the Cubs and Scouts. I have also served for 30 years as Chaplain for the Royal Canadian Legion. I was on the founding Board for La Resource, a shelter for battered women and children, strong supported by the congregation.

I am patient, understanding, compassionate and a teacher at heart... a teacher of many things, including life skills taught to my 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

I have organizational skills, good knowledge of the both the UCC Manual and the governance structure of the UCC with its various changes over the years.



Rev. Marie- Claude Manga

Nominated by: Rev. David Clinker

Seconded by: Innocent Kofi

Biography

Marie Claude Manga holds a Master's degree in Social Work (Université de Montréal) and another in Theology (McGill University). As a social worker, Marie Claude began her career in Montreal at the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants and continued it at the CLSC (CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal).

As a pastor, she served successively at Boyd's & St. Paul's Pastoral Charge in Ontario, St John's United (Quebec) and Église Unie Saint-Jean as interim pastor.

Wherever she served, Marie Claude brought the perspectives of a French-speaking, racialized woman. Within the United Church, she has served on numerous working committees such as the General Council of the United Church of Canada, the Ethnic Ministry Council, the United Theological College Board of Directors and many others... Currently, she sits on the MAC-Moderator, the Board of Admissions, the Nakonha:ka Regional Council Executive and many other committees and working groups at the national and regional levels of the church.

Currently, Rev. Marie Claude Manga is responsible for the Communauté Francophone de Mont Royal United Church (CF-MRUC), in conjunction with the English-speaking community. She provides pastoral care to new members, accompanies them in their integration into their adopted country, and welcomes and accompanies those in search of spirituality.

Her passion for peace and social justice has taken her to the Philippines and the Democratic Republic of Congo to better understand the realities of people's lives in these countries, to support the efforts of civil society organizations fighting for social justice, and to lend her support to populations suffering from the shameless exploitation of their natural resources and workforce by multinationals, particularly mining companies. She is a member of ICHRP Canada and took part in the Commission of Inquiry into violations of International Humanitarian Law in the Philippines.

Marie Claude Manga is currently a member of the KAIROS Partnership and Rights Circle, which she had the honour of representing as deputy commissioner in the Ph campaign (Independent International Inquiry into the Human Rights Situation in the Philippines).

Experience and skills

- Ability to collaborate with the French-speaking community in a spirit of mutual respect
- Online French worship for CF-MRUC and other occasions
- Bilingual worship for branches of the MRUC parish
- UCC 100th anniversary worship service
- Admission Board team
- MAC team
- French ministries table executive

Other gifts

Listening and analyzing complex crisis situations.

I'm interested and available to learn more and participate in sharing/discussions that will help us find new seeds that can help us achieve individual and collective growth within our Church.



Rev. Aron Molnar

Nominated by: Rev. David Clinker

Seconded by: Eniko Orban-Nagy

Biography

My name is Aron Molnar, I have immigrated to Canada over a decade ago, before that I served as a Reformed Protestant minister in Transylvania, Romania. I have lived in Montreal for over 6 years when I was called as a minister to the First Hungarian United Church of Montreal. After my complementary studies I was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Canada. My passion is music and languages. I play a lot of instruments and like to teach music as well, also I work as a court translator, where I use my knowledge in French, English, Romanian and Hungarian. I am married, and have one daughter, who is pursuing the calling of becoming a professional musician, she studies cello.

What gives me a unique perspective as a GC45 commissioner is that I represent one of the few ethnocultural and language specific congregations, that was founded almost a century ago, by the United Churchs mission board. The calling in 1926 was, to gather all the Hungarian immigrants and form a congregation under the umbrella of the UCC. This is a rich legacy, that I want to pursue and make it grow, in my ministry, with the blessing of the Region and the General Council. God Bless us All!

Experience and Skills

I am in ordained ministry since 2006, working in Montreal since 2019. The First Hungarian United Church of Montreal is an Ethnocultural and Linguistic specific ministry, we have bilingual services every Sunday, and all other activities are bilingual too. The community is in the middle of a generational change, there is an evolving group of church members whose intention is to move forward this congregation that celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2026.

I am currently taking part of the Moderators ReGenerate program.

Other gifts

My personal qualities are that I like to have conversations with people, I am a good listener.



Rev. Angélika Piché

Nominated by: Rev. Samuel Vauvert Dansokho

Seconded by: Norman Robert Boie

Biography

I believe God is with us and continues to speak to us. The church has still an important message to tell, even when the secular world around us doesn't seem to want to hear it. Seeing the distress of people who feel increasingly isolated and fearful, as we face armed conflicts, ecological and economic threats in our times, the good news needs to be lived out and proclaimed. To me, church is the best place to do that, because we can create a welcoming and inclusive community. In listening to Christ's words, we can open ourselves and grow into loving community. This is not a given, nor easy, but it takes a lot of faith and effort. The conciliar structure in the United Church allows us to wrestle together with the challenges our dramatically changing society and culture presents to us. General Council is one place to come together in our "big tent" and listen to each other, struggle with the questions before us, and listen to the voice of the Spirit ever challenging the church's privilege and power and calling us back to serve as disciples.

I grew up in Germany and came to Montreal in 1995 with my Quebecois husband and our first child. Two more children followed shortly after. I completed my theological training with the United Church of Canada and was ordained in 2006. After three years in congregational ministry, I accepted a position at the United Theological College teaching ministry-related courses. I am passionate about bringing ministry experiences and theological reflection together, so that our communities may continue to deepen their understanding of where the Spirit wants to lead us. Meaningful and innovative worship with all ages, faith development and outreach to people in need of hearing good news for their lives is at the heart of my calling. I bring my creativity and passion to it.

In 2022, I went back to congregational ministry and accepted a position at the Ayer's Cliff, Magog, Georgeville Pastoral Charge in the Eastern Townships. Small communities facing the challenges of dwindling resources and status, yet faithful and determined to continue to celebrate God in their towns, to stand together and support each other in their joys and sorrows, and to bring good news to the poor in whatever way they can.

My experience of living in and with different cultures, my gift of three languages - German, English and French – and my long-standing passion for ecumenism and interfaith work opens me to dialogue across diverse perspectives. I bring experience in working with both, the French and English communities in our church, as well as an understanding of the needs of the distinct generations present. I hope to find ways to secure a comforting church presence to our seniors, while showing creative and open-minded approaches to faith to the younger generations. New ways of being and living church have long been part of my research and teaching. Let us listen to where the Spirit invites us to move to.

Experience and Skills

I returned to pastoral ministry 2 years ago after 12 years of teaching (see below). Currently, I'm a minister in a pastoral charge with three small, predominantly English-speaking faith communities in a French-speaking, Québécois context. I'm discovering the complexity of a pastoral charge with different levels of governance and multiple links. The faith communities represent three distinct realities with rural, urban and seasonal residents.

All three communities are experiencing decline. This position gives me a better grasp of the realities and challenges facing small communities in the regions today. And as a part-time position with little administrative support and no musical backing, I also see the difficulties faced by leaders in these environments. I'd like to bring this knowledge to the General Council.

That said, we also continue to have wonderful Church experiences, such as “family celebrations” once a month where all generations find their place and we experience more creative and interactive liturgies. This summer, for the second time since my arrival, we organized a children's Bible camp, which is much appreciated by children and parents alike. With the members of my councils, we're looking to establish new partnerships in our cities.

My interest in ecumenism enabled me to be part of the bilateral dialogue between the United Church and the Roman Catholic Church from 1999 to 2006, followed by a term from 2006 to 2012 as a member of the Theology and Interfaith and Interreligious Relations Committee. Since 2020, I have represented the United Church of Canada on the Faith and Witness Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches. The crest of our church with the words of John 17:21 “That all may be one” guides my commitment, and I will discern any decision before the General Council in the light of this wish of Christ.

Before returning to pastoral ministry, I taught for 12 years at the United Theological College for a varied public, in English and French, to lay people and ordained colleagues. In this context I was able to meet many people from different backgrounds and with varied perspectives on the life of the Church. I've come to understand the expression “the United Church is one big tent”. And as we continue to diversify and welcome people from different backgrounds, I'd like to help build the Church of tomorrow where everyone can find their place.

My teaching position evolved and eventually became a General Council position dedicated solely to French language training. In this role, I've been privileged to work closely with my colleagues in the General Council offices, and I'm very familiar with how the Church works. I'm also aware of the major challenges it faces in the face of ever-dwindling resources.

As Director of French Formation, I've had the pleasure of getting to know the French-language ministries within our Church. I myself identify as a Francophone, and the development of French-language ministries continues to be a priority for me.

In recent years, intercultural work has been at the forefront of French-language ministries. I've learned a great deal from my colleagues from other countries. Together we've organized several training sessions and events on issues of interculturality and white privilege.

Racist and colonial structures continue to preoccupy me, and I know that every General Council must face the question of how to decolonize the Church. There's still a lot of work to be done in this regard!

Other gifts

Originally from Germany, where I studied theology before immigrating to Canada, I bring a knowledge of churches and the religious situation in Europe. This broadens my understanding of the situation, history and context of churches today. I've also had the chance to travel to many countries, most recently Africa. I spent six months at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland in 2016 with church representatives from all denominations and 21 different countries, from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. I identify myself as a migrant who is aware of the cultural diversity present in the Christian family. I continue to have two nationalities and live in an ecumenical couple, having married a French-speaking, Catholic Quebecker. In the United Church, I have worked on both the French and English sides. Bridging different cultures, languages, religious practices and understandings is essential for me.

I'm the mother of three grown-up children and grandmother of two young children. Passing on the faith and working with families are particularly close to my heart.

I love being creative and try to combine my creativity with my biblical knowledge to develop innovative ways of entering into the message of the Good News. I've been lucky enough to follow a specialized training course in Germany over the last few years, which enables me to make Bible stories my own by acting them out. In workshops and retreats, I've led groups using this method, which enriches our reading of the Bible. Creativity opens us up and releases our potential, our dreams and our hope. In my ministry, I try to live out this creativity as much as possible.



Virginia Wallace

Nominated by: Rev. Lee Ann Hogle

Seconded by: Norm Haslam, LLWL

Biography

I am a Candidate for Ordained Ministry in my final year of study at the Atlantic School of Theology (AST, Halifax NS) in their Summer Distance Master of Divinity program. My goal is to graduate in May 2025 and be ordained in June 2025 which coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the formation of the United Church of Canada.

I am currently serving in a partially funded (half-time) ministry position with Mount Bruno and Richelieu Valley United Churches as their student minister. You could say that I am in bi-vocational ministry as I also work part-time as a Handicapped Student Assistant aiding children that have various challenges in learning. This bi-vocational experience serves me well as I head into what possibly could be the way ministry is lived out in the future.

I served as a Licenced Lay Worship Leader (LLWL) for 8 years offering Sunday worship leadership to over 15 United and 1 Presbyterian churches in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and one congregation in Montreal. I continue to serve these communities as Candidate supply where needed.

Working with children is a passion of mine, and one of my favourite times during worship is Children's Time. I believe wholeheartedly that we need to engage the children/youth in our churches as they are our denomination's future.

I am very outgoing and love to connect with people in many ways. These are gifts that serve me well as I connect with the community surrounding the church I serve. Being an active participant in community activities is one way in which my congregation can be relevant. I, representing my community of faith, am a member on the local Community Non-Profits Groups Committee (La Table Solidarité du St. Bruno), a local ecumenical Refugee Support Committee and a resource for the area's English Speakers Association. Reaching out into the community surrounding us shows that the church has an interest outside of our four walls. I believe that demonstrating God's love should not be confined to a church building but out in the wider community.

I was raised by a mother who taught me to give back to the community, so I am an avid advocate for volunteering in the church, the community and the world. I was not raised in the church but found my faith later in life after the birth of my first child and for over 28 years continues to grow and strengthen. My faith gives purpose to my life and the work I do for the church.

The COVID pandemic taught us that the church needs to adapt to a changing society, and this includes ways of providing worship. I have become well acquainted with/skilled at leading worship on Zoom whether from the sanctuary or my kitchen. Though I do prefer worshipping in my church's sanctuary where we can be physically together, I believe that the future must include some sort of on-line/hybrid service to enable a wider connection to those who cannot physically attend church. My personal theology is that God is relational and thrives in community, and while I prefer that relationship to be experienced in in-person community, I believe that there is space for virtual community also.

In my final year of study, I am undertaking a research project. Living in the Eastern Townships of Quebec for over 30 years, I have decided to concentrate the subject of my research project in this unique area. The general question I will be researching is "Is there a future for the United Church of Canada in the Eastern Townships of Quebec?" The majority of the churches (Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist) that joined Union in 1925, no longer exist and those that remain find it harder and harder to remain relevant in an increasingly secular world and in a province where the English language is being attacked at the government level. My hope is that my research will provide some insight into how the United Church of Canada's vision of Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice will be lived out in this area.

Experience and skills

I am currently going into my 3rd year of serving my community of faith as a Student Minister. I reach out to the local community in which my congregation resides participating in ecumenical Easter sunrise and Remembrance Day ceremonies, Justice Walks, La Table de Solidarite member and most recently I joined the local English Choir which happens to practice in my church. For the community of faith which holds my membership, I offer pulpit supply and participate in activities when possible.

- Regional Camp Committee member
- First Third Ministry community rep
- New member of my Region's LLWL leadership team
- Regional Rep for my Community of Faith when we were in Presbyteries

Other gifts

- starting my final year of study as a Candidate for Ordained Ministry
- 8 years as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (now Candidate supply)
- 22 years as church administrator (secretary and treasurer)

I am outgoing and personable. I enjoy organizing events and getting people involved. I am functionally bilingual (English/French). I am a mother of two amazing daughters.

At the Atlantic School of Theology (where I spend 6 weeks in the summer for my studies) I was the VP of Fun for 2 years, bringing moments of joy and community activities into what is a stressful and study heavy time. I am a representative on our AST Student Union and for the past 2 years have been the student representative for the Faculty Review Committee.

With my belief in the importance of music to the worship experience, I recently began taking Djembe lessons, in my hopes to eventually bring a different style of music to worship.

It is for the reasons listed above that I feel I would bring an interesting perspective to GC45 and I in turn I would benefit from being part of the church's future discussions and planning as I begin my own future as a newly Ordained Minister in the UCC.