

2025 11 26 APPROVED Brechin United Church Council Meeting Minutes and Monthly Reports

Attendance: Gloria Le Gal, Katherine Brittain, Keith Allen, Darlene Darby, Lee Mason, Grace Skomorowski, Susan Ward, Vickeri Cochrane, Rob Russell, Blaine Wilkins, Linda Wilson, Linda Braid, Eileen Carolan, Marilyn Huffman.

Trustees: Rob Russell is representing the trustees

Welcome and call to order by Gloria Le Gal at 10:00 am

Devotional: Linda Braid read "I Hope" by Monique Gray Smith and led us in prayer.

Approval of Agenda as amended. M/S Darlene Darby/Linda Braid. Carried.

Adoption of Minutes.

Motion: That minutes of the October 22, 2025 Council meeting be approved as distributed.

M/S. Rob Russell/Darlene Darby. **Carried.**

Correspondence received –

1. Val Neilson re: use of our Mission Statement
 - Linda Braid will advise Cindy to add the Mission Statement to her email signature so that it will appear in the Friday emails
 - Gloria will contact Doug Cochrane to request the Mission Statement be added to the website and Matt to ask that a slide with the Mission Statement on it be added to the Sunday morning announcement slides
 - Gloria will modify the Brechin letterhead to include the Mission Statement. She will send this to Cindy for distribution.
 - Worship team will provide information to Readers to help them frame the announcements using the Mission Statement.
2. Charlotte Richardson re: Bulletin board use.
 - There was a lengthy discussion about development of a strategy to facilitate decisions about what will be accepted for posting.
 - Marilyn Huffman and Katherine Brittain will develop a draft strategy for review at the January Council meeting.
 - Ongoing conversation about communication will continue in January.

Correspondence sent –

None

Minister's Report – Katherine Brittain offered her thanks for support and prayers during her medical leave. The devotional that will be used for advent is "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" Copies will be available to the congregation.

Financial Report – Lee Mason

- Financial Reports are pending and should be available for distribution early next week.

PMR report – Susan Ward - see attached

Motion: To accept above reports - **M/S** Linda Braid/Grace Skomorowski. **Carried.**

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Old Business

1. Heritage Brechin Sign
 - City bylaws only allow one sign on each street.
 - Keith will continue to explore options for sign placement with the city
 - A thank you note will be sent to Bob Reid for restoring the sign.

New Business

1. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 - Members email addresses – congregation will be informed (via an announcement) how their address will be used and advised how they can opt out if they wish to.
 - The above information will be available at the Welcome Table. Worship Team will make this change.
 - Header will be added to the email list that reads as follows: Brechin United Church CONFIDENTIAL- Do Not Distribute to outside organizations. Linda Braid will advise Cindy to make this change.
 - Brechin calendar – no names will appear in association with private events. Linda Braid will advise Cindy to make this change. It was suggested that renter’s names would be given a number/ code to make tracking easier.
2. Nominations for 2026 – Darlene requested suggestions for nominations for Vice chairperson and PMR alternate.
3. Date for 2025 AGM is February 22, 2026.
 - Team reports need to be submitted to Eileen Carolan by January 15, 2026 for inclusion to the annual report.

Leadership Team Reports

Spiritual Formation: Darlene Darby - White gift Sunday is December 7. Darlene will make an announcement.

Ministry and Personnel: Linda Braid - see attached

- Technical (computer) support has been provided to Cindy by Geoff.

Brechin 4 Action: Vickeri Cochrane -See attached.

- Since Paddling Together workshops are now being offered by Nanaimo Family Life. B4A has not decided if they will continue to run these workshops.
- Request was made for “Blanket Exercise” to be facilitated at Brechin.

Pastoral Care: Marilyn Huffman – see attached

Property: Keith Allen - see attached

- Discussion of insurance premium – to be addressed by property and finance teams
- Innov8 has provided a quote for photocopier replacement. Darlene Darby offered to investigate other options for comparison.

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Worship: Grace Skomoroski - see attached.

- Concern raised that chairs are not being returned to their original places prior to Sunday worship.

Stewardship and Finance: see attached

- The bookkeeper has not been approached to ask if they are able to take on more of the bookkeeping duties. She currently does monthly reconciliation.
- Stewardship and Finance Team will take on the task of finding a new person to look after the Brechin Wall.

Fellowship: Linda Wilson - see attached

- After service events are running into Unity's time. Will try scheduling events for later in the day on Sunday.
- Looking for new members join the Women's retreat planning team. Nanaimo Yacht club is being considered for next years event. Linda Wilson will speak to Keith Allen about liability insurance.

Motion to accept the Leadership Team reports **M/S**. Darlene Darby/Linda Braid. **Carried**

Intentional Communication

- Linda Braid
 - Advise Cindy to remove names from the calendar bookings for private events
 - Advise Cindy to add CONFIDENTIAL header to email directory
- Gloria LeGal
 - Letter to Val in response to her email
 - Doug Cochrane re Mission statement on website
 - Matt Haapala re Mission statement on Sunday morning announcement slides
 - Add Mission statement to letterhead
 - Letter to Bob Reid thanking him for restoring and gifting back the Brechin sign
- Darlene Darby
 - Investigate price options for photocopy machines
- Keith
 - investigate placement of heritage sign

December Council Meeting: at the call of the chair on zoom.

Next regular Council Meeting: January 28, 2026.

Devotional: Rob Russell

Adjournment of Business Meeting at 12:15 a.m. on a motion by Rob Russell

Gloria Le Gal, Chair

Eileen Carolan, Secretary

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November 26, 2025 Team reports

PMR

There wasn't a meeting this month, but I received this update form the Regional Executive and thought I would share it with those of you who do not receive emails from PRMC.

Susan



Dear friends and colleagues,

As we move into November, I wanted to send you an update on what the Regional Executive has been up to. Half the Executive is brand new this year, representing communities of faith across the region from Terrace and Burns Lake, all the way to Armstrong and Comox. With so many new voices, I knew that we'd have a lot work to do. What I didn't know was how good that work would be.

NEW CULTURE

"I feel like I'm leaving this first day having made new friends." That sentiment was echoed by more than one Executive member as we wrapped up our first of three days of meetings.

Much of our work on day 1 was about moving into a new culture and way of being together as an Executive. I've experienced over the years in different church contexts a certain sense of competitiveness and antagonism as we go about doing the work of Church, which often creates a climate that isn't conducive to being attentive to the Spirit. While we still have some work to do, I told my spouse when I got home that that first day was quite possibly the best Church meeting I'd ever been a part of! There was a pervasive sense of hope and optimism that makes me excited about what will emerge through this group.

LISTENING

One of the principal tasks of the Executive is to first and foremost listen - to all that is going on in the region, to how we sense the Spirit moving, and to best position the region at the intersection of both. This is the basis upon which we make decisions and what informs our direction and vision.

Becoming Church

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To that end, we regularly spend time with different communities of faith hearing about their joys and challenges. At our last meeting, we heard from the ministry team in Bella Coola. This month, we spent time listening to the team from Becoming Church, one of the new church plants in the region. We heard about their relentless commitment to being a Christian presence in their neighbourhood, despite the headwinds and uncertainties they are facing. I had the pleasure of attending their one-year anniversary a few weeks ago in New Westminster and it was clear that, through their ministry, they have cultivated a space for the felt presence of the Spirit.

Indigenous Ministries

Part of our time involved hearing about Treena's time in Kitimat for the Indigenous Ministries Annual General Meeting where she also attended the raising of a residential school memorial totem pole. We also heard about some of the hopes and struggles facing some of our Indigenous ministries in the region. Their embodiment of the way of Jesus is such an important facet of our region, and we continue to pray for and work towards renewal in their communities.

Annual General Meeting Table Responses

We also spent considerable time going through the responses that participants at the June Annual General Meeting in Nanaimo submitted through table discussion groups. We had asked attendees to share with us what they were celebrating, where they were experiencing challenges, and what we, the Executive, could be praying for.

Here's what we heard: We heard that many of you are tired and, in many instances, wrestling financially. We also heard how this quickly changing world is really affecting the local church. To respond to these changes, we also heard that many of you are feeling energized by an emerging willingness to take risks and rediscover what the risen Christ is up to in your neighbourhoods. Others are discovering renewed faith through new partnerships, welcoming new people, and leaning into a renewed commitment to radical inclusion. And perhaps more importantly, it's important to name that all of us across the region are holding both challenges and celebrations together. We're in a new season of adaptability, and we're in this together.

You'll see in the word cloud below that there was so much more. Please know that we hear you, and that your responses will help shape areas of focus. We are praying for you - for discernment around future planning, for revitalization and reinvigoration, and for the Spirit to continue to deepen our commitment to justice in this world. I know it sounds trite sometimes, but you aren't alone.

Spiritual Formation

Ministry and Personnel

The Ministry and Personnel (M+P) Committee acts under the guidelines of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada. The committee functions around three roles, which are the consultive and supportive role, the healthy relationship role, and the supervisory role. We provide resources and support for the staff and the community of faith with respect to any issue affecting staff of the church, including ministry personnel and lay employees. The committee works to build positive and trusting relationships between staff and members and adherents of the community of faith.

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If members of the community of faith have praise or concerns about staff, both ministry personnel and lay employees, these can be shared in signed correspondence with the committee. The issues will be considered confidentially by the M+P committee, who will recommend action.

(Taken from The Manual of the United Church of Canada.)

The M+ P team is grateful for all those who conducted **Sunday** services while Rev. Katherine was on leave. We look forward to meeting with our minister, Cindy and Tim in the near future.

We are very pleased to welcome Isabel Colebrook to our team.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Braid

B4A

1. Truth and Reconciliation

Paddling Together for Community Workshop, Kathi Camilleri – Sat., Nov. 8/25

A successful workshop was hosted on Nov. 8; 11 registrants attended; \$90 in cash donations was received (cash given to Lee on Sun. Nov. 9/15)

2. Youth Reconciliation Mixed-Media Collab Event

Future Date TBD: Spring event (probably February) 2026 is being considered as a partnership with SD68 talks are being planned with SD68, Indigenous Learning Dept.

Location: John Barsby Secondary, Nanaimo

A recent meeting on Oct. 30 between B4A members and the John Barsby V.P., and Indigenous Learning Coordinator was positive. Next steps are being taken by the school to work on details. UC Vision Fund has given us the green light to go ahead and pursue this opportunity. Updates will be shared as they become known.

3. Social Justice

Palestine and Israel – Information Session

Event sponsored by Hope Lutheran Church – Men's Group. Sun. Oct. 19/25

Guest Speaker: Sara Kishawi, Palestinian/Canadian and VIU graduate, Nanaimo resident

Three (3) B4A members attended this excellent info session.

4. Climate Change/Climate Action

a. Solar Panel Update: Project is still on hold

b. 100 Mile Diet Potluck – In partnership with the Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo there will be a potluck dinner held at the Unitarian Fellowship on Townsite Road on Fri. Nov. 21 at 5:00.

Promotion ongoing.

c. COP 30 Climate Change Vigil – Fri. Nov. 14 in Parksville – Event details and poster in announcements.

5. Brechin Donor Wall

Marg Barrie gave an excellent history of the Brechin Donor Wall and her prior involvement with assisting past donor wall champion, Anne Manikel. After Anne's departure Marg volunteered to

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take on the task and has been doing so for the past year or so. Our group had a fulsome discussion, and has agreed, that this successful project and its campaign would be a more appropriate task for the Stewardship and Finance team. We recommend the responsibility for this project be passed on to Stewardship and Finance their consideration. Marg will gladly support the transition and provide any help and guidance from her previous experience to the new team.

Report respectively submitted by Colleen C.

Pastoral Care

Thank you to Council members for voting to eliminate the suggested donation for Memorial Teas; I'm sure that will make life simpler for a number of people.

There is not a lot to report this month although I might say that the Prayer Shawls are being very well distributed and received. We continue to have many in our congregation experiencing difficulties in their lives.

By the time you have received this, there will be a new congregational list out and our team will have addressed the Christmas cards. If we haven't begun to distribute them at church already, that will be happening very quickly in hopes of getting most of them out without having to mail them. We had an enthusiastic group meet to get them done and many hands make light work! Thanks Team!

Linda Braid will be hosting a home coffee party in November and Diane Morris will do one in December. There will be sign up posters on the bulletin board. If you are interested in hosting one, please get in touch with Linda Braid or Mary Boyd.

Pastoral Care workshop is scheduled to go ahead January 24, 2026.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Huffman

Property

1. Contents and Liability Insurance: UCC Protect United Premium payment on a financing basis includes a 1.65% monthly financing charge. Our premium is approximately \$3000/annum for this policy. We have not received the new premium
 - a. Question: Do we want to continue with the monthly payment or pay out the premium and avoid the financing charges?
2. Photo Copier Options
 - a. Status Quo – current Sharp photocopier has at least one year on the lease. It is working ok; however, Katherine's computer can not communicate with it.
 - b. New lease on a Canon imageRUNNER Advance DX C3826i
 - i. 66 month lease @ \$99 + taxes \$6534 + taxes total
 - c. Canon printer outright purchase \$5295 + tax

This photocopier will allow color printing Letter, legal and 11 X 17 paper. Quoted prices include pay out of the remaining lease.
3. Allied Plumbing completed the service of the HVAC systems on November 20.

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4. The refurbished Brechin sign was recently delivered by Bob Reed. We will need to decide where to place it on the property.

Respectfully submitted, Keith Allen

Worship

- Worship Team met October 29 in the Arbutus Room.
- Tim gave a report on all the wonderful things he wants the choir to do in the near future and the special pre-service music coming up. The choir is working on Advent and Christmas music.
- Since Rev. Katherine was unable to attend our meeting, Grace shared the report Rev. Katherine had submitted to Council on October 22nd.
- Queer Vespers, October 19th was a complete success; 20 people attended.
- Blue Christmas will be at Trinity United, December 18th at 6 PM.
- We received three submissions against our theatre like seating arrangement. We also received many positive comments. Only chairs for the tech team will be situated on the side wall. Val created a poster-board for people to express their opinions. The results of that poll will be discussed at our next meeting on December 3rd. No further decision will be made until Rev. Katherine returns.
- We had a discussion as to whether someone needs to be hired to assure that the chairs are set up properly for Sunday morning. Tim often arrives to much disarray.
- The sale of church calendars was impressive this year.
- We are pleased to have Jane Wiebe back on the reader's roster.
- Thank you to Rev. Sally Bullas, The Stewardship Committee, Gloria Le Gal and Justine Etzkom for leading worship during Rev. Katherine's medical leave. Their services were inspiring.
- Church Christmas decorating will take place Saturday, November 29th at 9:30 AM.
- December 5th at 4:00 PM is the annual Christmas Carol Sing.
- The editing of stored music was deferred to 2026.
- Membership classes and membership Sunday also deferred to 2026.

Respectfully Submitted, Grace Skomorowski

Stewardship and Finance

FINANCE

Financial statements have been delayed but every effort will be made to forward the statements to the Stewardship Team and Council prior to Council meeting.

We had been approached by a congregant about pre-paying for her Celebration of Life. After researching this important issue, it was determined that Brechin could not comply with this request. She has been informed.

We are having challenges with our photocopier as it is rather old and does not have the capabilities our busy church requires. Among other issues, it cannot reproduce color copies so we would need to make

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a trip to Staples - which of course is not cost effective over time. In addition, it cannot link to Katherine's computer. Hence, we are exploring options that will fulfill our growing needs and will report back.

In order for the Treasurer to complete regular duties, it is necessary to access the office computer remotely. Currently we have a license with AnyDesk software which allows us to work remotely. Unfortunately, the licence limits the number of computers allowed to use the software and as a result, our treasurer cannot access the office computer remotely. Consequently, we will need to upgrade our license. AnyDesk has made an offer to upgrade which will facilitate our needs currently and in the near future.

A special meeting to begin the budgeting process has been tentatively scheduled for Dec 10.

STEWARDSHIP

Our Stewardship Campaign is completing and appears to have been well-received. There are still some Stewardship letters to be handed out and any still remaining will be sent by mail. The Team recommends that we undertake the *Month 13* initiative which we have done in the past. Once the January financials are completed, we will be able to assess the increase in donations.

ADMINISTRATION

As our ministry continues to grow, the impact on our administrator has become untenable and the situation could impact our finances. Together with M&P, we are exploring ways to address the issue. One of the biggest challenges is handling our increasing rental activities. Consequently, we are considering the possibility of removing the rental piece from the administrator's job and assigning it to another person. As there are a myriad of moving parts to this role and various options to explore, careful assessment must be completed before a decision can be considered.

Over the past several months we have experienced significant and serious problems with our e-transfer donations program. (donatebrechin@shaw.ca) **It is important to note this is only the bookkeeping function. The financial transfer is unaffected.** After assessing our options, the best solution would be to change our e-transfer donations from donatebrechin@shaw.ca to donate@brechinunited.org.

Finally, after exploring options relative to our music license, it has been determined that the cost of changing or adding an additional licence would outweigh any benefit gained. there are no benefits to changing licenses.

Respectfully submitted, Stewardship & Finance Team

Fellowship

Nothing planned until the new year. There was some assistance given for the Chili Lunch. Some challenges are noted with a problem running into Unity's time. The last two meals we were still in the

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kitchen at 1:00 even with volunteers. Some of which didn't show for one reason or another. Meal was made by donation and just over \$400.00 was raised. Thanks to all the volunteers.

Women's Retreat

The team is quite happy with positive feedback about this year's retreat. We have two openings on our team for volunteers to plan next year's retreat. Peggy Jensen, Diane Knight and Colleen Weir are stepping down. Salome Carey and Linda Wilson are staying on. A different venue is being looked at.

Report submitted by Linda Wilson