President's report, 2025-26

The Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M) Board of Directors held 5 regular meetings by Zoom since our AGM in Oct. of 2025. I warmly thank all the members of the Board, each one bringing unique talents and life to the Board. Shawn Sandford Beck has taken over the Secretary's role and maintains the CiRCLe M website (circle.m.ministries@gmail.com) to receive that correspondence. Iain Luke has remained official treasurer, and Kristi Baxter, the Chief Financial Officer of St. Andrew's, continues to keep our books and pay our bills. Tim Wray is Co-Chair, and Margaret Peters is Vice-Chair. Many thanks to all these officers.

Daranne Harris and Robin Haensel had to leave the CiRCLe M Board of Directors this year. Rick Krofchek, Glenda Crawler and Trudy Wesley make up the rest of the Board, and thank you for your thoughtful and committeed partnership.

We have had the support of Churchweb Global Support for maintaining our website (www.circle-m.ca). This year we have decided the website is getting a little out of date as it is not being monitored by the Board as assiduously as would be desirable, and so we are hoping CiRCLe M will be included in the new joint website for the St. Andrew's College and Lutheran Theological Seminary. The Board is looking forward to this initiative. Watch for it.

The main task of this year has sharing our monetary gift from the Joyce Sasse estate with congregations who have applied for our offer of Seed Money to be a catalyst in their communities. If you have seen our notification, we hope you are considering a ministry to initiate. This is the letter offering our support to your dreams:

CENTRE FOR RURAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY
OFFER FOR SEED FUNDING

Do you have a dream for an innovative project in your rural community? CiRCLe M can help!
The Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M) is an interdenominational non-profit organization dedicated to rural ministry leadership development. We work with clergy and lay leaders in rural and remote places to help their churches become catalysts for the development of healthy Canadian communities. You can find out more about our work right over here: https://www.circle-m.ca/

Thanks to the generosity of a legacy gift from the late Rev. Dr. Joyce Sasse, CiRCLe M is now able to make modest seed grants available for rural churches seeking to discern and join the Spirit's healing and revitalizing work in their communities. Projects and "experiments in grace" which contribute to the well-being and restoration of rural life and faith will be considered for funding up to $4000.

What type of ministry could you accomplish with a bit of imagination, some help from your friends, and a little seed funding in your money-bag? This is not the grant for large-scale, big-budget operations, but rather for the type of creative and faithful innovation which small churches and small communities are famous for. This is "small is beautiful" funding. And we know that God honours the mustard seed and the speck of yeast.

For more information, feel free to contact Catherine Christie (christiecatherine4@gmail.com) for guidelines and an application form.

And may the Spirit move you…

There have been 4 organizations which came forward with a plan in response to this invitation.

Grace United Church, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan

Trinity United Church, Fort McLeod, Alberta
Mennonite Central Committee, Saskatoon
Calvary United Church, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

You will find the reports of these projects in the News section of the website

As the Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry continues to go forward in its ministry we look forward to working with the leadership of LTC and St. Andrew's, as well as other theological colleges and our judicatories in Saskatoon and the west in working to support rural communities of faith.

The Board is always interested in recruiting new members. We were reminded the constituency of CiRCLe M is from across the entire prairies, and so we seek make inroads into ecumenical communities across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Again, I continue to give warm thanks to all the members of the Board and supporters of our ministry throughout the prairies. God bless all those in Rural Communities.

Catherine Christie, Chairperson
October 1, 2026