



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

Pastoral Letter to the Church

Anticipated Leadership Changes in June 2025

1 September 2024

To members and friends of Community of Christ:

In March 2023, President Stephen M. Veazey announced his plan to retire in June 2025, relinquishing his role as Community of Christ's prophet-president. The church will celebrate Steve's twenty years of courageous, visionary leadership as its eighth prophet-president at the 2025 World Conference. On 31 May 2025, after faithfully serving in full-time ministry for more than forty-two years, Steve will be honored as he transitions from the burdens and responsibilities of prophet-president to continue his ministry in retirement as president emeritus.

Steve's legacy will live in countless ways through our identity, mission, message, and beliefs to which he brought increased clarity as expressed in *Sharing in Community of Christ*. The church is profoundly grateful for Steve's leadership in sharing the peace of Jesus Christ and living Christ's mission. We look forward to his ministry in the years to come.

As part of Steve's announcement to retire, he invited members and friends into an intentional process to discern the next prophet-president. Several events following this announcement led to the Council of Twelve Apostles finalizing the calling process. On 17 January 2024, the Council of Twelve Apostles, with support of a Joint Council, presented to the church my name as the one called to serve as the next prophet-president.

Since then, the focus of my ministry has shifted to learning and preparing for the responsibilities of prophet-president should the 2025 World Conference approve my call. Part of this preparation has been prayerfully discerning the needs of the leading quorums of the church in collaboration with current World Church leadership and presidents of seventy. I also have been blessed by the prayers and support of numerous people from around the church who have shared ideas and suggestions.

As I prayerfully pondered the challenges and opportunities before the church, the Spirit impressed on me calls to the leading quorums that bring the right giftedness and experience to help the church faithfully embody God's vision of shalom and live Christ's mission into the future.

With deep respect for the prophetic voice of the people in the calling process, I humbly present the anticipated leadership changes that the Holy Spirit has confirmed to me, allowing time for the church's prayerful consideration. I am still discerning related to one position in the Council of Twelve Apostles. As clarity on this call emerges, I will share it with the church.

Each time we approach a World Conference, current World Church leaders prayerfully weigh the need for some existing leaders to stay for continuity and experience while others move on. As we have witnessed over time, some individuals serve in the leading quorums of the church until their retirement. Some serve as volunteers after their retirement. Others complete their employment and fill critical needs after being released from the quorums.

One common motive shared by the ministers transitioning from the leading quorums next Conference was the desire to create space for fresh perspectives and increased diversity within the leading quorums, enriching the church's direction and growth potential. Guided by the Holy Spirit, I have tried to honor that desire as much as practical.

Identifying leaders is a daunting task, especially when considering all the faithful priesthood ministers who tirelessly serve God and lead Christ's mission around the world. In humble reverence for the way God works, I share these calls and ask for your prayerful consideration. It is my testimony that they are sacred calls discerned through the depths of my heart, guided by the gentle movement of the Holy Spirit.

If my call is approved by the 2025 World Conference, following my ordination I will formally submit a letter of counsel for consideration by the World Conference delegates.

Upon the ordination of a new church president, the Quorum of the First Presidency, as previously constituted, will be dissolved.

K. Scott Murphy, responding to the leading of the Holy Spirit, expressed his desire to retire from full-time church employment, making space for new leadership. As this option was prayerfully considered, the prophet-president designate recognized Scott's broad experience and knowledge as critically important for preparing and training the newly forming Presidency and Leadership Council. Scott's passion for mission, openness to new ways of being the church, and first-hand experience of operations are invaluable as new leaders respond to their calling. As a high priest, Scott graciously has agreed to serve one more year as a consultant with the Presidency, training and mentoring the new members of the World Church Leadership Council.

In June 2026, Scott will retire from full-time church ministry after twenty-five years of faithful service and respond to his sense of call to provide ministry in a local context. Scott's unwavering commitment to the church's mission has been reflected in every aspect of his leadership. Scott faithfully made difficult decisions for the benefit of mission, even when those decisions were not popular or well understood. Through his ministry, he helped the church embody our Enduring Principles in culturally appropriate ways. His leadership significantly strengthened the church's approach to discipleship, ministry, and leadership through spiritual formation and the local embodiment of the mission of Jesus Christ.

To achieve the reorganization of the Quorum of the First Presidency, the following calls are presented:

Bunda C. Chibwe is called from the Council of Twelve Apostles to serve as a member of the First Presidency and a counselor to the president. Bunda's faithful service since 2000 as an apostle has prepared him for this important opportunity in the life of the church. Before Bunda retires, he is called to bless the Presidency and the church through his breadth of worldwide vision, theological depth, multicultural perspective, and passionate invitational witness. Bunda will focus on helping the church

balance healthy independence with faithful interdependence, building a resilient, supportive, and united worldwide church. This approach honors the diversity and contributions of all Community of Christ members and friends.

Bunda will guide the church in embracing Unity in Diversity, leading us to extend the Blessings of Community to all God's children. He will help the church enculturate the best worldwide traditions, strengthening the identity and calling of Community of Christ while challenging us to release cultural norms that are not faithful to whom God calls us to be. Through Bunda's leadership and focus, people who never set foot in the Temple will be blessed through ministries that spread peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit.

Janné C. Grover is called from the Council of Twelve Apostles, where she has ministered since 2016, to serve as a member of the First Presidency and a counselor to the president. Janné's ministry around the world, experiencing different worship styles, discipleship formation, and ways to live Christ's mission, has prepared her for this leadership as we are challenged to discover and embrace new ways of being the church in various contexts. As the church grows in some areas and struggles in others, Janné's steadfast hope will inspire disciples to sing a new song. This hope will empower the church to do the courageous—and sometimes difficult—work of becoming what God needs us to be where we live and serve.

Janné will guide the church in sharing the gospel message to people of all ages through words, music, and creative worship. This will help the church grow spiritually, laying the foundation for exploring and embracing new ways of living Christ's mission. Through these ministries, Janné is called to bring vision of the Temple as an ensign of peace and a place where reconciliation and healing of the spirit can be experienced tangibly by the local community while connecting with places near and far.

Through collaborative prayerful reflection, **Jane M. Gardner** is released as presiding evangelist, serving since 2016 as the position's first woman. She has prepared the way for the calling of an employed presiding evangelist to further develop the role's vision. Jane began her full-time ministry in 1998, driven by a passion for worship. Throughout her ministry, she has faithfully guided the church's understanding of worship and individual and collective spiritual formation. In 2007, Jane became the first woman to serve as president of the High Priest Quorum while continuing her devotion to scripture-based worship. One of Jane's most significant contributions was her leadership from 2008 to 2013 in blessing the church with *Community of Christ Sings*. Throughout her twenty-seven years of service to the church, Jane wrote and edited many church publications, including *Sermon & Class Helps* and *Worship Resources*.

In 2019, Jane retired from full-time employment, continuing to sacrificially serve as the presiding evangelist. Jane helped the church experience the fullness of spiritual blessings offered through the sacraments, including evangelist blessings. Jane has organized the Order of Evangelists and the sacrament of blessing in ways that will enrich the church well into the future. Her gift of insight and broad perspective will be missed around the leadership council table, but the church will continue to be blessed through Jane's volunteer support of Temple and evangelist ministries.

Mareva Arnaud Tchong, who has served since 2013 on the Council of Twelve Apostles, currently as its president, is called to take on the full-time position of presiding evangelist. Mareva's exceptional gifts in language, music, cultural diversity, administrative leadership, pastoral presence, and tireless

encouragement have greatly blessed the Council of Twelve Apostles and her mission field. Now, she is called to extend these gifts to the entire church.

She will assume the traditional responsibilities of the presiding evangelist, bringing her gifts of hospitality and evangelism to bless the Order of Evangelists and the church. Mareva also will serve as a spiritual companion to the First Presidency, following the legacy of some predecessors. She will foster a culture of continual discernment in leadership, ensuring a faithful focus on the spiritual needs and opportunities of the worldwide church. Mareva also will serve as a chaplain for the World Church Leadership Council and the Council of Presidents of Seventy. Mareva's spiritual guidance will inspire and nurture these councils, helping them become living examples of wholeness, faith, and integrity, providing ministry that will enrich and uplift our worldwide community.

In addition to the vacancies in the Council of Twelve Apostles created by the calls of Bunda Chibwe and Janné Grover to the First Presidency and Mareva Arnaud Tchong to presiding evangelist, two other members of the Council of Twelve Apostles have discerned the timing is right for their release.

Robin K. Linkhart, faithfully serving in the council since 2016, will be honorably released from her responsibilities of apostolic leadership and ministry. Robin will serve as a high priest, focusing on disciple formation and worship-resource development until her retirement in September 2026. Her passion for living Christ's mission and inviting others to join that journey is evident in all she does. Her extensive field ministry in various roles and her effective invitational witness have equipped her to create resources that embody the Mission Initiatives and Enduring Principles in practical, actionable ways. Robin's continued service to the church will help move forward several key strategies through resources and ministries. These strategies will focus on developing disciples who invite others to join and serve in Spirit-led communities dedicated to justice and peace. Although Robin's presence and expertise will be missed in the World Church Leadership Council, her commitment and expertise will continue to bless the church as she develops material to nurture and inspire future generations of disciples.

David M. Nii, after serving the church for nearly twenty-nine years, is honored with retirement from World Church employment at his request. Dave is released from the Council of Twelve Apostles, where he has served since 2019, to minister as an elder, focusing on mission in his local area. Dave has provided critical leadership, most recently as apostle for the Southern USA Mission Field and as the team lead of the USA apostles. Dave's extensive ministry includes roles such as USA Field bishop, Asia Mission Field bishop, and apostolic assistant for the Western USA and West Central USA mission fields, among others. His seasoned leadership, openness to diverse perspectives, and passion for finding common ground through Christ's mission have blessed the church and its mission. While Dave's presence on the World Church Leadership Council will be deeply missed, we are grateful for his continued service as an elder in his congregation and the life of the church. His enduring commitment and contributions will continue to bless the church community in countless ways.

To fill four of the five vacancies created in the Council of Twelve from the other leadership changes, the following calls are presented for consideration:

Matthew J. Frizzell is called from his position as director of Human Resource Ministries to serve as a special witness of Jesus Christ as an apostle of Christ's peace and a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Matt's ethical and theological training, service as a mission center president, time away from church employment as dean of Community of Christ Seminary, and service on the World Church

Leadership Council have been instrumental in his preparation. Throughout his experiences, Matt has learned to advocate for the most vulnerable and those on the margins of society. He has developed a deep passion for how the ethics of Christ's peace can unite and guide the church in pursuing its mission. As an apostle, Matt is called to help the church focus on living in communities that reflect God's reign, emphasizing the importance of repentance, wholeness, justice, and peace. His leadership will be vital in guiding the church to embody these values more fully and faithfully.

Adam R. Wade is called from the Council of Presidents of Seventy to continue ministry as a special witness of Jesus Christ as an apostle of Christ's peace and a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Adam skillfully has guided disciples in living Christ's mission across a diverse array of countries and contexts, developing a profound understanding of the challenges and promising opportunities the church faces as it moves into the future. His insights will drive his innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, empowering him to lead prophetic people in fully embracing the church's identity and mission in local contexts. Whether exploring the ocean floor, engaging in challenging discussions, or simply being present, he brings a sense of peace, empathy and divine connection. Adam's unwavering passion for the church's identity as a welcoming, loving, and justice-oriented sanctuary of Christ's peace will shine through his apostolic witness, lighting the path with compassion and conviction, inviting others to follow.

Carrie L. Welch is called from her position as bishop and team leader of the USA Field support ministers to serve as a special witness of Jesus Christ as an apostle of Christ's peace and a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Throughout her ministry, Carrie has shown unwavering dedication, serving in various leadership positions across the USA. She has a remarkable ability to connect with people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and life contexts, helping them embrace and live Christ's mission. Carrie's extensive experience includes prioritizing missional opportunities, strategically aligning resources to support what matters most, and fostering an environment where groups can make important decisions collaboratively. This experience uniquely equips Carrie to help navigate the way into the future. She understands the challenges ahead and is blessed with prophetic insights that help others envision possibilities. Carrie's deep commitment to serving others and her adeptness at guiding communities will bless the church and its mission.

Joey S. Williams is called from the Council of Presidents of Seventy to continue his ministry as a special witness of Jesus Christ as an apostle of Christ's peace and a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Joey's gifts of language, music, and navigating a variety of cultural settings have flourished through his ministry in the worldwide family of Community of Christ. These gifts uniquely prepare him to stand in solidarity with the voices and viewpoints of often-marginalized cultures. Joey is called to orchestrate a harmonious blend of diverse perspectives, amplifying the peace of Jesus Christ and inviting others into Spirit-led diverse communities of justice and peace. With innovative strategies for inviting and nurturing disciples, Joey will empower those he serves to embody fully the identity, mission, message, and beliefs of Community of Christ in ways that are meaningful across cultures. Joey will help create Christ-centered groups where every voice finds resonance, and every soul finds belonging in the shared symphony of faith, acceptance, and fellowship.

Through collaborative discernment about the needs of the High Priest Quorum, **David N. Anderson** is honorably released as president, a position he has held since 2016. Dave previously served as director of Human Resource Ministries, apostolic assistant for the Eurasia Mission Field, president for the Western European and Eurasia mission centres, and president of the Chesapeake Bay USA Mission Center. After

fourteen years of faithful service, Dave retired from church employment in 2020 while continuing to serve as a volunteer president of the High Priest Quorum, generously sharing his time and talents.

Through his leadership, Dave has fostered connections and support among high priests, utilizing technology in ways previously unimagined. His vision for high priests helped others innovate new ways to support the church's mission and established a legacy that will shape the church's future. Dave's ministry will continue to evolve as he lives into his role of pastoral presence and one who walks with others, helping them connect with the Divine. Dave will be a blessing to many as he embraces this next chapter in his priesthood ministry.

To fill the vacancy created by Dave's retirement, **Jennifer L. Killpack** is called to serve as president of the High Priest Quorum in addition to her full-time role as director of Communications for Community of Christ International Headquarters. Jenn possesses a remarkable gift for prophetically imagining the world as God desires it and inspiring others to embrace this vision. Through loving and empowering relationships, Jenn helps people overcome their fear of change, motivating them to become leaders who guide others toward fulfilling God's vision of shalom. Jenn steps into this role at a pivotal time for the church, as high priests are being challenged to explore new ways of fulfilling their call and guiding groups in discerning innovative ways of being the church. Jenn will lead the church's ministers of vision by fostering a supportive environment where they can train, mentor, and inspire each other. Jenn's leadership will bless the quorum, and by extension the church, with fresh perspectives about the faithful ministry of high priests for a new era.

In closing, I appreciate the church's prayerful consideration of these calls as we journey toward the next World Conference. I trust in the prophetic voice of the people in the calling process. Should my call be approved by the 2025 World Conference and circumstances remain unchanged over the next year, I then will formally submit a letter of counsel regarding calls to the leading quorums for consideration by the delegates of the World Conference.

Onward!

Stassi D. Cramm
prophet-president designate

Background on New Leaders

Bunda Chibwe

Bunda, nurtured on the soil of his African homeland, brings to the various councils he has served the perspectives of his culture. He carries a testimony of incredible hope from those countless people who share Christ's mission amid hardship, sacrifice, and unnecessary suffering. He is excited to advocate for the marginalized and the downtrodden. He's also passionate about sharing the richness of diverse African traditions, so that God's human family can be embraced more fully in all areas of the church.

Bunda previously served as president of the Sixth Quorum of Seventy; Africa Region associate administrator, treasurer, and president of the Zambia National Church. He also was an elementary school headmaster in the Zaire National Education System.

Bunda received a master of arts in religion from Park University, Parkville, Missouri, USA. He is fluent in several African languages, including French.

Janné Grover

As a teacher and lifelong learner, Janné brings a passion for music and all that forms us as disciples in sacred community. As a church employee, Janné's apostolic responsibilities included the Central USA Mission Field, Temple Ministries, Campus Ministries, and Formation Ministries director. Earlier, she served as disciple-formation specialist and Daily Prayer for Peace coordinator. As a self-sustaining minister, Janné served as a pastor team member, worship team leader, music coordinator, Sunday-school teacher, and worship coordinator for reunion.

Before church employment, Janné served as a high school and middle school band and orchestra director, then enjoyed dedicated time at home with her three children. She earned a master of arts in religion from Community of Christ Seminary; an education specialist in secondary administration and superintendency from Northwest Missouri State University; a master of arts in instrumental conducting from Florida State University; and a bachelor of science in music education from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Mareva Arnaud Tchong

Mareva is a daughter, mother, grandmother, and wife. Like the Polynesian navigators, Mareva is guided by the strength of the wind, movements of the tides, signs of the birds, presence of marine animals, light of the stars and sun, and direction of the clouds.

In the French Polynesia Mission Center, Mareva led young adults, choirs, and priesthood groups. She served as assistant pastor then became congregation pastor. She pioneered conflict resolution ministry and served as assistant in the local bishopric, assistant to the Temple school director, director of the Pastoral School, and counselor to the Mission Center president.

Mareva charted the way for others becoming the first woman to serve as Mission Center president and simultaneously hold roles as president and financial officer. She was counselor to the President of the High Priest Quorum. Currently, Mareva serves as president of the Council of Twelve Apostles, apostle for the Pacifikasia Mission Field, and member of the World Church Leadership Council and World Church Finance Board.

Matthew Frizzell

Matt is a father, advocate, and life-companion. In employment, Matt served the church as Human Resource Ministries director, dean of Community of Christ Seminary, Graceland University faculty, campus minister, mission center president, pastor, and youth minister. He is co-chair of the Community of Christ's Human Rights Team and a member of the Theology Formation Team. From 2009 to 2018, Matt served on the Standing High Council. From 2018 to the present, Matt has served on the World Church Leadership Council.

Matt is an educator, theologian, and ethicist. In addition to church employment, Matt has worked in higher education and social services. He began theological education at Graceland College. He holds a master's degree from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. He earned his PhD in theology and ethics from Chicago Theological Seminary in 2010.

Adam Wade

Adam is known for his boundless compassion, cultural sensitivity, and methodical-yet-tender approach to ministry. His life's work is a testament to his deep-seated commitment to understanding and embracing the Spirit. Adam, with the loving and supportive guidance of his family, friends, and fellow disciples, has devoted more than twenty years to full-time ministry. He has been blessed to serve the church in Australia as a youth minister, pastor of the Seoul Congregation in South Korea, and East Asia Mission Centre president. He currently serves as president of seventy for the PacifikAsia Field and serves as Australia Mission Centre interim president.

Adam's dedication and compassion also are evident through his former service on the World Hunger/Tangible Love Fund Board and as previous chair of the World Church Peace and Justice Committee. He holds a master of arts in Christian ministries from Community of Christ Seminary and a bachelor of chemical engineering. He is dedicated to ongoing exploration and learning.

Carrie Welch

Carrie is a compassionate listener, organizer, and advocate. She believes in the value of community partnerships and is a peacemaker at heart. As a church employee, Carrie serves as a bishop and team lead for the USA Field support ministers. She previously has served as USA bishop, compassionate minister teaching the Open Table model, Graceland University campus minister, and young-adult and youth minister. She also serves on the World Church Finance Board. Between church assignments, Carrie gained management experience within the non-profit sector. These opportunities enriched her family life and grew her advocacy for those who often are marginalized.

She began her theological education at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, and received her master of arts degree in religion from Community of Christ Seminary. She received her bachelor of arts degree in business administration from Graceland College.

Joey Williams

Joey Williams is a passionate musician, educator, and advocate for justice and peace. He recently served as director of Hospitality and Formation Ministries specialist at International Headquarters. His previous roles include president for the Western Europe, British Isles, and Eurasia mission centres, translator/interpreter, and youth minister for Western Europe and Central Mission.

Joey holds a master of arts in Romance languages from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he also taught French, and a master of arts in religion from Community of Christ Seminary. He earned a

bachelor of arts in music through studies at Eastman School of Music, the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, and Graceland University, and continued his vocal studies at the Conservatoire de Paris.

As president of seventy for the Eurasia Quorum, Joey has committed to creating spaces where diverse voices can flourish. His motto of “Make NOIZ!” reflects his enthusiasm for building inclusive community through music and rhythm, and he looks forward to continued service by sharing his passion for people and peace.

Jennifer Killpack

Jenn has a warm spirit that brings out the best in others through collaboration and is a devoted spouse and mother of three. She embraces challenges with optimism and creativity and firmly believes in the strength of teamwork. In her work for Community of Christ, Jenn serves as the director of communications and is a member of the World Conference director's team.

As a self-sustaining minister, Jenn plays a vital role as one of three directors for SPECTACULAR, the church's largest annual youth event. She’s also a counselor to the president of the High Priest Quorum. Her dedication to the community is witnessed further through involvement in her congregation, where she has served as a pastor, Sunday-school teacher, and vacation church school director.

Jenn’s educational background reflects her commitment to personal growth and professional development. She holds a master of arts in religion from Community of Christ Seminary and a bachelor of arts in communications from Graceland University.