GROWTH AND STEWARDSHIP ANIMATOR COMMITTEE

I have been in the role of Growth Animator (Central and Northern Ontario) since January 1, 2024. Various Commissions and committees continuously show their hospitality by inviting me to their meetings. It has been very helpful to me to get myself familiar with the experience in the Shining Waters Region. As has been clarified on various occasions, the focus of my role is in three areas: To invite, to renew, and to create. The 100 Tables campaign has been a useful opportunity for me to walk with communities of faith that showed their interest in deepening their faith development and relationship-building in their communities. The Neighbourhood Profile Report is a helpful tool to connect communities of faith to their context based on data. The Strengthening Invitation Grant provided by UCC Foundation has also proven to be helpful to the congregations that wished to strengthen their muscle for better invitation.

In 2025 and 2026, there were more than 20 communities of faith in this region who showed interest in joining the 100 Tables project. Two communities of faith who received the Strengthening Invitation Grant had the chance to further strengthen their muscles in practicing invitation.
Workshops to illustrate how the Neighbourhood Profile Reports could be a means to build the growth strategies in their contexts were held. Some of the results of the work have been collected and showed in the Map of 100 Tables – 2025 on the website of the United Church of Canada.

Toward 2035 is an invitation to a conversation grounded in both discipleship and data. Our denomination is seeking a Spirit-led vision to help the navigation of the United Church in the years ahead. Resources could be downloaded from the United Church website, and the Growth Animators are ready to accompany the communities of faith with this conversation, either online or in-person, if they wish to do so.

To serve the communities of faith in the Shining Waters Region better, the role of the Growth Animator has been expanded since July 1, 2026. Stewardship components have been added to this role. Through the re-naming of this role to “Growth and Stewardship Animator,” resources for stewardship management will be made available to all the communities of faith, and an animator will be dedicated to work specifically with the Shining Waters Regional Council.

Through the work of the Growth and Stewardship animator, the denomination wants to show that it will work with all communities of faith, including the emerging communities of faith within the region, with hope and love. It wishes to bring continuously insight, passion, optimism, and curiosity through the animator's work, enhancing the congregations to focus on the Call of the United Church of Canada, "Deep spirituality, Bold discipleship, Daring justice."