

Meet Our Management Group

The work of our church is carried out by a diverse group of talented staff members led by our Management Group. Here are short biographies of each of those managers.

[Nora Sanders, General Secretary](#)

Nora has played many roles in the United Church, including Sunday school teacher, chair of the board, and founder of a house church. Her first involvement in the national church came when she was one of the “Kindling Group” speakers at the Arnprior Conference in 2005. Since becoming General Secretary in 2007, she and her son have called Toronto home, along with their two large dogs and a calico cat. Her former career as a lawyer and public servant focused on justice and Aboriginal issues in Ontario, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan.



[Erik Mathiesen, Mission through Finance Officer, Chief Financial Officer](#)

Known to his co-workers as the “man in black” due to his fondness for wearing black T-shirts and jeans to the office, Erik is not your typical CFO. “Financial management and compliance functions are essential to any organization, but the most rewarding part of my job is trying to make the life of a church finance volunteer easier.” Sometimes this involves streamlining church procedures, but more often than not it means providing assurance and problem-solving support. “I’m an off-piste (unconventional) thinker,” he says, “which means I’m not wed to how we’ve always done things, am comfortable with ambiguity, and often serve as a change agent.”



[Alan Hall, Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment](#)

“Strong congregations start with strong leaders,” says Alan, explaining his role in overseeing policies and services that support ministers in pastoral relationships, along with dealing with compensation, pensions, and benefits. Jokingly referring to himself as a “closet Anglican,” he describes himself as “high church,” explaining that he loves liturgical, ceremonial elements in worship and believes that “pipe organs are the most incredible musical instruments.” An avid traveller, Alan spent a four-month sabbatical going around the world. That journey included two months in Jerusalem, an “incredibly exhilarating city, brimming with complexity and contradiction.”



Maggie McLeod, Aboriginal Ministries Circle

The Aboriginal Ministries Circle is “vitaly important,” Maggie says, noting that it has “enriched our church, for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike.” An ordained minister, she describes herself as a “bridge builder” who is able to bring an Aboriginal perspective to the organization as she “stands on the shoulders of Indigenous people who came before me.” When she has spare time, Maggie likes to spend it with her four grandchildren, “the joy of my life,” or walking on the land, especially in the Peepeekisis First Nation in Saskatchewan where she grew up.



Michael Blair, Director, Church in Mission/L'Église en Mission Unit

When the church takes part in community projects, whether in Canada or globally, that work is probably being done through Michael's Church in Mission Unit. “We're how the church gets involved in the world,” he says, noting that his unit works with churches across the nation, plus in far-flung locales such as the Philippines, South Korea, and Zimbabwe. “We're always looking for new populations that can join with us,” he says. Michael is passionate about cultural and equity issues. He also loves gardening, though he is now limited to indoor houseplants.



David Armour, Director of Philanthropy

The walls and bookshelves of David's office display his passions. Beneath photos he shot on his travels—capturing the beauty of the Rockies or barefoot schoolchildren in India—are reports from the service organizations he serves on, including Food Banks of Canada and the Ecumenical Stewardship Center. “I try to make an impact as I live out God's mission,” he says. As a child, inspired by the Rev. Norman A. Sharkey in Timmins, Ontario, he wanted to become a minister. He is now the church's chief of giving programs, making sure “everyone is asked, and thanked, for their contributions.”



Catherine Rodd, Executive Officer, Communications

The ability to stay calm under pressure, aided by a wry sense of humour, allows Catherine to meet the ever-increasing demands of the church's Communications Unit. She oversees a diverse team of professionals who write, edit, and design the church's award-winning print and video productions, as well as those responsible for publishing and sales, public relations, social media, and Web communications. “We use everything from books and blogs to Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to build connections with people who want a deeper spiritual life,” she says. While management duties now keep her busy, “writing is still my passion,” she adds.



[John H. Young, Executive Minister, Theological Leadership](#)

John is the newest member of the Management Group, but he is hardly a new face. Since being ordained by the Maritime Conference in 1978, he has worked in a variety of capacities for the church, both as a minister and as a committee member at the presbytery, Conference, and national level. When not at the office, he and his spouse are busy restoring their “permanent” home in Eastern Ontario, a historic limestone house that dates back to 1829, where he can indulge in gardening, hiking, and classical music, or enjoy long walks with their two dogs.

