

## Great Lakes Unity Region President's Annual Report 2025

**“people, power, purpose”**

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear,  
but of power and of love and of instruction/good discipline/ self discipline /self restraint  
/sobriety—and my favorite translation: a sound mind. (from 2Tim1:7)*

Dear Friends,

When I began my year of serving as President, the evidence of rebuilding with ideas and action became obvious in every direction of our work. Including representing our region with UWM, and UWH on the Regional Advisory Council. This year's Board, which started with Reverend Ray Nelson filling in until December (thank you Ray!), has been one of absolute accord and a sound mind dedicated to improving relationships with our employees, improving relationships with our Ministries, improving access to our services, and implementing new ideas.

I have reviewed many years of board minutes, and I know that it is because of the many people who have served in the past with such integrity and willingness to give in support of a whole region of ministries that we are strong now, and poised for the pending changes ahead.

Perhaps the most innovative idea implemented this year to increase connection of leaders/ministries to effective ideas and mutual support has been the Partner Waiver. What ministry doesn't appreciate funding support for their leaders?! The Board and Finance Team researched Canada's approach to partnering with their ministries and funding their conference. (Thanks Rev. Sharon Ketchum for this lead!) The Partner Conference Waiver had positive immediate results. Imagine and vision with your GLR Board a partnering model: every person and ministry investing finances has access to a portion of those finances to support growing leadership and ministries. This model would include credentialed leaders and individuals not in ministries. All who invest become partners planting a powerful seed of faith that moves obstacles out of the way ensuring greater spiritual support for all.

Our Region is poised for the next expansion of services. Any region is 'closer to the ground' than the international organizations; more capable and able to be adaptive and responsive to the desires and needs in our locale. There is much mystery ahead of us and I envision more circles of folks innovating with ideas and action. I give thanks that you have trusted me and our Board as we collectively minister, collaborate, and innovate as partners on the evolutionary edge of change.

With you ,friends, we truly are better together! Love, Kathy Harwood Long

The 2024/25 GLR Board celebrates the following faith in action:

- Prayer and gratitude. Upwards of 250 distinct people in our region shared in prayer during a zoom call, meeting, or event. Board members in prayer with upwards of 90 ministries. Gratitude letters quarterly. Volunteer position for Regional Prayer Chaplain Rev. Peggy Konkel approved.
- Tithing quarterly to: UWM, UWSI, UWH, & UUMS. An additional 1% Seed Money donation to: UWM-disaster relief fund; and technology updates fund
- Connection to ministries. Extra employee and board attention to update our ministry contact information
- Quadrupled connection calls through Zoom: Rev. Diane Robinson and Cassidy Meeks increasing contacts and support in the region and beyond; a new initiative to increase technology training with a Marketing & Promotion team Zoom calls led by lay leader Sherry Wells; EarthCare monthly Collaboration call listed.
- Conference: shorter and less expensive to attend. Content for individuals and ministries. All CEU credits provided. In person & online. Focus on building community in our region. Welcome waivers, and the new Partner Conference Registration Waiver.
- Hubs model experiment in 2024 was successful. Proposal to redesign as Lay Leader Event for May 2026 initiative.
- Youth & Family Ministry celebrates a leap year for the number of youth that have re-engaged. Family Leave policy created, funded and supported for Cassidy.
- Employees: annual reviews; cost of living raises. Re-evaluation of employee job descriptions for Website & Office Administrator; Bookkeeper / Accountant. Training funded for improved tech skills, communications, and project management.
- Robust Finance Team participation: review of finances and financial services; problem solving for staff; recommendations implemented to decrease costs to the region ex. Paychex