

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**  
of the  
**44TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2022**

February 13–August 7, 2022

Online



*Issued by*

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada  
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## The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

Constituted June 10, 1925, by the union of the Methodist Church, Canada, Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Presbyterian Church in Canada,\* the Congregational Union of Canada and the 2nd Council of Local Union Churches. The Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church entered The United Church of Canada on January 1, 1968.

### OFFICERS OF THE INAUGURAL GENERAL COUNCIL, TORONTO, JUNE 10–19, 1925

Denomination	Chairperson	Secretaries
Methodist	Rev. Samuel Dwight Chown, D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Thomas Albert Moore, D.D.
Presbyterian	Rev. George Campbell Pidgeon, B.A., B.D., D.D.	Rev. William George Wallace, M.A., D.D.
Congregational	Rev. William Henry Warriner, M.A., D.D.	Rev. William Thomas Gunn, M.A., B.D., D.D.

### SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Year	Place	Moderator	Secretary
1925	Toronto, ON	Rev. George C. Pidgeon, B.A., B.D., D.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1926	Montreal, PQ	Rev. James Endicott, B.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1928	Winnipeg, MB	Rev. William T. Gunn, M.A., B.D., D.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1930	London, ON	Rev. Edmund H. Oliver, M.A., Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.C.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1932	Hamilton, ON	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D., S.T.D., LL.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D., S.T.D., LL.D.
1934	Kingston, ON	Rev. Richard Roberts, D.D., D.Litt.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D., S.T.D., LL.D.
1936	Ottawa, ON	Rev. Peter Bryce, D.D., LL.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D., S.T.D., LL.D.
1938	Toronto, ON	Rev. John W. Woodside, M.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1940	Winnipeg, MB	Rev. Aubrey S. Tuttle, M.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1942	Belleville, ON	Rev. John P. Sclater, M.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1944	London, ON	Rev. Jesse H. Arnup, B.A., D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1946	Montreal, PQ	Rev. Thomas W. Jones, M.A., B.D., D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1948	Vancouver, BC	Rev. Willard E. Brewing, B.D., D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1950	Toronto, ON	Rev. Clarence M. Nicholson, B.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1952	Hamilton, ON	Rev. Alexander A. Scott, M.A., B.D., B.Paed., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A., D.D.
1954	Sackville, NB	Rev. George Dorey, B.A., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D.
1956	Windsor, ON	Rev. James S. Thomson, M.A., D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.C.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D.
1958	Ottawa, ON	Rev. Angus J. MacQueen, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D.
1960	Edmonton, AB	Rev. Hugh A. McLeod, M.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D.
1962	London, ON	Rev. James R. Mutchmor, M.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.
1964	St. John's, NF	Rev. Ernest M. Howse, B.A., B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.D., D.Litt	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.
1966	Waterloo, ON	Rev. Wilfred C. Lockhart, M.A., Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.
1968	Kingston, ON	Dr. Robert B. McClure, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.I.C.S., D.D., LL.D., D.Litt.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.
1971	Niagara Falls, ON	Rev. Arthur B.B. Moore, O.C., B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D.
1972	Saskatoon, SK	Rev. N. Bruce McLeod, M.A., B.D., Th.D., LL.D., D.D.	Rev. George Morrison, B.Comm, B.D., D.D., F.C.A.

Year	Place	Moderator	Secretary
1974	Guelph, ON	Rev. Wilbur K. Howard, B.A., B.D., D.D., LL.D., D.de Un.	Rev. George Morrison, B.Comm., B.D., D.D., F.C.A.
1977	Calgary, AB	Rev. George M. Tuttle, B.A., B.D., Th.D., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.F.C., B.A., D.D.
1980	Halifax, NS	Rev. Lois M. Wilson, O.C., B.A., M.Div., D.D., D.C.L., D.Hum.L., LL.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.F.C., B.A., D.D.
1982	Montreal, PQ	Rev. W. Clarke MacDonald, B.A., M.Div., D.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.R.C., B.A., D.D.
1984	Morden, MB	Rev. Robert F. Smith, B.A., B.D., Th.D., D.D.	Rev. Philip A. Cline, B.Th., Th.M., D.D.
1986	Sudbury, ON	Dr. Anne M. Squire, B.A., M.A., D.D., LL.D.	Irene Evans Parker (acting)
1988	Victoria, BC	Rev. Sang Chul Lee, B.D., Th.M., S.T.M., D.D., LL.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A., M.Div., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.D.
1990	London, ON	Rev. Walter H. Farquharson, B.A., M.Div., D.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A., M.Div., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.D.
1992	Fredericton, NB	Rev. Stanley J. McKay, B.A., B.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A., M.Div., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.D.
1994	Fergus, ON	Dr. Marion S. Best, D.D.	Rev. Randolph L. Naylor, B.A., B.D., B.D. Hon (acting)
1997	Camrose, AB	Rev. William F. Phipps, B.A., B.D., L.L.B.	K. Virginia Coleman
2000	Toronto, ON	Rev. Marion Pardy, M.A., D.Min, L.L.B.	K. Virginia Coleman
2003	Wolfville, NS	Rev. Peter B. Short, B.A., M.Div.	Rev. James H. Sinclair, B.A., M.Div., D.D.
2006	Thunder Bay, ON	Rev. David Giuliano, Th.M., B.A., M.Div, M.Sc., C.S.D.	Rev. James H. Sinclair, B.A., M.Div., D.D.
2009	Kelowna, BC	Mardi Tindal	Nora Sanders
2012	Ottawa, ON	Rev. Gary Paterson, B.A., M.A., M.Div.	Nora Sanders
2015	Corner Brook, NL	Rev. Jordan Cantwell	Nora Sanders
2018	Oshawa, ON	Rev. Dr. Richard Bott	Nora Sanders
2022	Online	Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne	Rev. Michael Blair

Designation: Present Ordained Moderator: “The Right Reverend”;

Past Ordained Moderators: “The Very Reverend”;

Lay Moderators: designated by personal title and as they wish.

In fulfilment of its mandate of 1925 to be a “uniting” as well as a united church, The United Church of Canada has been enriched by several unions.

The Fourth General Council of The United Church of Canada (1930) approved the union of the Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda with The United Church of Canada on the condition that the Synod shall function as a Presbytery of the Maritime Conference without interference with the rights and powers conferred by the Legislature of Bermuda in The Wesleyan Methodist Church Act, 1930.

The 22nd General Council of The United Church of Canada (1966) approved the Plan of Union whereby the Canada Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church became part of The United Church of Canada, effective January 1, 1968.

At various times, congregations of other Christian communions have become congregations of The United Church of Canada, including the following:

American Presbyterian Church (1925) Montreal, Que.; Central Street Christian Church (1928) Oshawa, Ont.; St. John’s Reformed Episcopal Church (1928) Sussex Corner, N.B.; Brougham Christian Church (1930) Brougham, Ont.; Welsh Presbyterian Congregation (1932) Bangor, Sask.; Welsh Presbyterian Congregation (1932) Llewelyn, Sask.;

Augsburg Lutheran Congregation (1949) Hagensburg, B.C.; St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church (1956) Snyder, Ont.; Ebenezer Congregation of the Reformed Church of America (1958) Edmonton, Alta.; German Evangelical Congregation (1961) Toronto, Ont.; Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church (1961) Vegreville, Alta.; Armenian Evangelical Church (1964) Montreal, Que.; Mewassin Evangelical and Reformed Church (1964) Duffield, Alta.; The Church of the Brethren (1968) Arrowwood, Alta.; The Church of the Brethren (1968) Irricana, Alta.; Taiwanese Christian Church (1983) Toronto, Ont.; St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (2004) Lachine, Quebec

\* Part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada dissented from the union and continues under the former designation.

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## In Memoriam

### April 1, 2018, through December 31, 2021

The following is a list of members of the order of ministry and designated lay pastoral ministers in active service who have died since the rise of the 42nd General Council.

"They rest from their labours and their works do follow them." *Rev. 14:13*

Name	Date of Birth	Year Entering Ministry	Date of Death
<b>Pacific Mountain Regional Council</b>			
Adamson, William R.	Dec. 14, 1927	1951	Jul. 11, 2020
Arkesteyn-Vogler, Clayton	Jul. 2, 1950	1978	Mar. 20, 2019
Baird, Muriel Edith	Jun. 4, 1940	1987	Sep. 07, 2021
Boundy, Dean F.	Jan. 21, 1932	1966	May 8, 2021
Bruleigh, Warren H.	Apr. 14, 1933	1957	Aug. 23, 2018
Cann, Gordon O.	Jan. 14, 1934	1958	Jan. 17, 2021
Dickey, David Kernohan	May 15, 1929	1958	Jul. 11, 2019
Elliot, James	Sep. 19, 1933	1960	Nov. 09, 2020
Erb, James G.	Jul. 17, 1933	1959	Aug. 22, 2020
Everets, Sylvia Dianne	May 23, 1939	2001	Jan. 13, 2019
Field, Blake Thomson	Jan. 25, 1966	2007	Aug. 19, 2020
Guy, John	Jan. 11, 1930	1960	Oct. 26, 2020
Hogman, William Joseph	Dec. 20, 1926	1951	May 15, 2018
Holman, Nancy A.	Apr. 23, 1930	1985	Oct. 28, 2020
Holmes, Clare Arthur	Aug. 10, 1938	1964	Jan. 11, 2019
Hooper, John E.	Oct. 25, 1932	1964	Apr. 9, 2021
Jenner, Harold W.	Sep. 5, 1934	1959	Jul. 12, 2021
Johnson, Frank	Oct. 3, 1933	1993	Apr. 20, 2020
Johnstone, Ronald Dwight	Jun. 6, 1925	1954	Jan. 16, 2019
Kihara, Yoko	Apr. 2, 1964	2010	Feb. 20, 2020
Lawson, Alexander	Mar. 6, 1926	1963	Apr. 30, 2019
Lemmer, Peter	Jan. 11, 1936	1980	Jan. 23, 2021
Lovewell, David Edward	Jul. 3, 1929	1955	Aug. 16, 2019
MacGregor, Susan	Jul. 24, 1942	1966	May 19, 2018
Moore-Cooke, Sharon Willa	Jun. 7, 1933	1991	Sep. 28, 2019
Perry, Marilyn S.	Jun. 22, 1939	1981	Mar. 11, 2018
Perry, David Bruce	Mar. 11, 1937	1967	Aug. 06, 2018
Porteous, Stewart W.	Apr. 12, 1924	1950	Apr. 21, 2020
Pratt, Roera Hori	Jun. 30, 1921	1951	Dec. 18, 2018
Rajotte, Nelson B.	Jun. 15, 1937	1964	Sep. 7, 2021
Reid, John Cameron	Dec. 29, 1935	1964	Jul. 18, 2019
Reynolds, E. Alan	Apr. 15, 1930	1954	Nov. 14, 2020

Rijzinga, Tineke	Oct. 21, 1931	1987	Aug. 17, 2019
Searcy, George Dedrick	May 07, 1929	1957	May 21, 2019
Shank, Robert J.	Apr. 21, 1934	1959	Apr. 03, 2021
Skinner, Allister Neil	Oct. 8, 1938	1963	Dec. 14, 2018
Smith, Ronald	Aug. 13, 1927	1956	Jan. 24, 2020
Steele, William Harry	Jan. 4, 1934	1962	Aug. 23, 2018
Thompson, Robert John	Nov. 14, 1934	1963	Jan. 4, 2021
Ward, Frank H.	Aug. 24, 1926	1958	Jan. 9, 2021
Wattman, Wayne Erick	Jul. 11, 1927	1953	Jan. 26, 2019

### **Northern Spirit Regional Council**

Bleazard, Edward R.C.	Jul. 8, 1939	1964	Mar. 8, 2021
Colclough, John Reed	Mar. 26, 1924	1950	May 4, 2020
DeVries, Gerrit	Nov. 11, 1929	1970	Feb. 13, 2019
Forbes, David Terry	Jul. 13, 1935	1980	Nov. 15, 2019
Forgrave, Thomas D.	May 31, 1941	1966	Oct. 18, 2021
Mosher, Jean A.	Dec. 28, 1923	1983	Sep. 24, 2021
Rodgers, George H.	Jul. 21, 1938	1962	Sep. 18, 2021
Stenson, Alvin G.	Sep. 14, 1935	1962	Sep. 17, 2020
Wishart, Vernon Roy William	Aug. 20, 1927	1952	May 4, 2019
Wright, Robert R.	Apr. 18, 1932	1958	Aug. 21, 2021

### **Chinook Winds Regional Council**

Chamberlain, Arnold G.	Dec. 20, 1950	1977	Jan. 20, 2021
Coe, John D.	Apr. 12, 1944	1993	Oct. 13, 2021
Colquhoun, Harry B.	Jul. 20, 1934	1993	Oct. 19, 2020
Goran, Gary W.	Mar. 23, 1946	1974	Oct. 15, 2021
Hillson, James H.	Aug. 8, 1943	1967	Aug. 29, 2020
Hurlburt, Kathryn Elizabeth	Apr. 10, 1928	1960	Nov. 6, 2018
Lynn, Darrell D.	Jul. 12, 1940	1972	Jun. 12, 2019
McGregor-McCuaig, Sherlee	Sep. 5, 1929	1991	Dec. 20, 2020
Schaufele, Blaine Warren	Nov. 11, 1951	1998	Dec. 15, 2018
Simmonds, Glen T.	Aug. 12, 1940	1975	Mar. 16, 2020
Snyder, John Ross	Feb. 26, 1949	1986	Jun. 7, 2018
Takada, Minoru Stephen	Feb. 19, 1921	1956	May 9, 2019
Taylor, Harry Leroy	Dec. 22, 1941	1995	Feb. 25, 2020
Usher, Howard Cogan	Jun. 23, 1930	1962	Oct. 11, 2018
Warrington, Betty Marie	Nov. 10, 1936	1994	Sep. 15, 2019
Whiting, Robert Neal	Nov. 23, 1927	1992	May 25, 2019
Williams, Ross Samuel	Apr. 12, 1933	1960	Jan. 21, 2019



**Living Skies Regional Council**

Alton, Charles R.	Aug. 14, 1939	1970	Apr. 15, 2021
Ashwin, Wesley Duncan	Jul. 1, 1924	1953	Jul. 15, 2018
Ast, Brian Robert	Nov. 5, 1951	2002	Feb. 25, 2020
Barss, Donald A.	Dec. 12, 1936	1973	Apr. 20, 2020
Cambridge, Richard G.	Nov. 28, 1931	1956	Oct. 09, 2019
Edwards, Lawrence Manley John	Nov. 12, 1934	1962	Aug. 17, 2019
Fulford, Ivan G.	Oct. 26, 1913	1958	Mar. 14, 2021
Gilmer, William Ernest	Nov. 18, 1923	1951	Sep. 16, 2019
Grigg, Earl E.	Jan. 1, 1926	1985	Feb. 17, 2021
Haas, John Robert	Feb. 12, 1945	1994	Jan. 1, 2019
Haggerty, K. Thomas	Jul. 30, 1933		May. 24, 2020
Hallman, Douglas Ward	Jul. 28, 1948	1978	Feb. 23, 2019
Jardine, S. Gordon	Dec. 11, 1934	1959	Aug. 22, 2021
McMurtry, Ross Davis	Nov. 22, 1926	1951	Jan. 21, 2019
Millard, Neil Alfred	Jun. 18, 1938	1975	Nov. 24, 2018
Seller, Frederick Russell	Dec. 29, 1936	1964	Mar. 20, 2019
Shaw, Allan T.	Jun. 28, 1931	1958	Feb. 2, 2021
Sutton, Ronald Harvey	Aug. 31, 1933	1959	Dec. 9, 2019
Ward, Roselis Elisabeth	Jan. 22, 1930	1987	Apr. 25, 2020

**Prairie to Pine Regional Council**

Baker, Christina	Apr. 13, 1930	1983	Mar. 30, 2019
Carruthers, Gary Robert	Feb. 15, 1945	1995	Apr. 10, 2021
Collins, Donald St. Claire	Jan. 17, 1922	1949	Feb. 3, 2019
Cross, William Arthur	May. 23, 1926	1949	May 3, 2019
Davidson, George G.	Dec. 10, 1937	1961	Aug. 16, 2021
Ferguson, Brenda Irene	Jun. 02, 1945	1973	May. 29, 2018
Fiddler, Sanadius	Aug. 27, 1936	1977	Dec. 9, 2019
Freeman, John Price	Oct. 22, 1924	1947	Jun. 16, 2018
Fulford, Gordon I.	Dec. 9, 1938	1963	Feb. 24, 2021
Hickerson, William James	May. 21, 1932	1957	Sep. 13, 2019
King, Harold James	Aug. 22, 1935	1960	Jan. 31, 2019
Little, L. Thomas	Jun. 23, 1953	1996	May. 6, 2021
Lowe, William Roger	Jun. 15, 1931	1962	Apr. 13, 2018
Marshall, Marietta Ann	Feb. 10, 1951	1992	Jul. 10, 2020
Pullam, Eric G.	Oct. 16, 1933	1961	Oct. 9, 2020
Riddell, Alistair A.	Feb. 11, 1930	1962	Mar. 6, 2021
Robertson, Donald A.	May. 18, 1935	1967	Dec. 27, 2019
Robertson, John Edward	Aug. 24, 1955	2005	Mar. 14, 2021
Wenstob, O. Murray	Oct. 23, 1931	1959	Dec. 12, 2018

**Canadian Shield Regional Council**

Austin, Clayton M.	Dec. 8, 1934	1989	Oct. 10, 2021
Cook, David J. H.	Sep. 8, 1925	1955	Apr. 30, 2021
Gale, Scott Douglas	Oct. 8, 1958	2011	Oct. 10, 2018
Gundrum, Waldemar	May 15, 1943	1978	Dec. 6, 2018
Landry, Dennis J.	Jul. 3, 1943	1978	Jan. 2, 2021
MacDonald, Hugh R. L.	Jan. 4, 1934	1957	Dec. 21, 2021
Schenell, Janet Whyte	Dec. 8, 1948	1999	Feb. 12, 2020

**Antler River Watershed****Regional Council**

Bardwell, William Donald	Sep. 13, 1929	1955	Mar. 17, 2020
Brown, John Lloyd George	Dec. 15, 1929	1954	Oct. 24, 2019
Carter, Marilyn L.	May 18, 1948	1977	Apr. 13, 2021
Clarke, Frances (Fran) Mary Oldford	Dec. 19, 1928	1977	Jul. 5, 2018
Ellis, Connie Lou	Feb. 1, 1959	2005	Feb. 25, 2020
Geiger, Gordon R.	May 20, 1922	1948	Dec. 20, 2019
Holbrough, Carmen J.	Nov. 29, 1938	1971	Jan. 20, 2021
Kim, BoJeong	Nov. 26, 1944	1994	Jun. 9, 2019
Kraatz, Christian Laube	Jul. 15, 1940	1992	Sep. 11, 2019
Lloyd, Frederick	Dec. 18, 1923	1966	May 31, 2018
Loree, Albert "Bert" Edwin	Jan. 27, 1922	1946	Apr. 29, 2018
Marzec, Cyprian W.	Sep. 19, 1926	1969	Sep. 1, 2021
McAuslan, Gordon William Faber	Oct. 16, 1937	1972	Jun. 26, 2018
McManus, Joyce Maxine	Mar. 14, 1953	1981	Sep. 15, 2019
Morris, George Alexander	May 11, 1925	1966	Jun. 12, 2018
Nicol, Edward Alexander John	Jun. 26, 1944	2000	Jul. 27, 2018
Pickell, Gordon G.	Mar. 3, 1917	1947	Sep. 20, 2019
Ross, Douglas H.	Jun. 26, 1929	1957	Nov. 6, 2021
Saulteaux, Franklin Harold	Dec. 3, 1942	1997	Feb. 8, 2019
Smith, Marjorie J.	Mar. 24, 1939	1966	Nov. 12, 2020
Steadman, David William	May 8, 1945	1983	Sep. 14, 2018
Summers, Herbert Stephen	May 17, 1941	1966	Oct. 18, 2019
Westhaver, Clyde Glendon	Feb. 16, 1921	1945	Sep. 5, 2019
White, James E.A.	Oct. 31, 1934	1984	Aug. 27, 2021

**Western Ontario Waterways****Regional Council**

Beecham, Lenore Pearl	Mar. 28, 1928	1983	Jan. 30, 2021
Chesney, David Parker	Jun. 17, 1947	1971	Mar. 3, 2020
Elliott, Mary Elizabeth		2013	Dec. 6, 2020
Estill, Ann Aurella	Sep. 16, 1931	1981	Feb. 23, 2019
Fletcher, Terence John	Jun. 30, 1947	2014	Jun. 5, 2018
Johnson, Benjamin R.C.	Jun. 2, 1931	1964	Sep. 2, 2021

Klassen, William	Aug. 12, 1945	1992	Jan. 29, 2019
McFarlane, Gerald Ross	Mar. 31, 1936	1970	Jul. 16, 2018
Parr, Donald Harold	May 2, 1959	1953	Dec. 21, 2019
Phillips, Lester William	Feb. 13, 1927	1955	Jun. 12, 2020
Pletsch, Donald John	Jun. 18, 1935	1970	Apr. 22, 2020
Sarmazian, Ohanes	Jun. 27, 1934		Jun. 3, 2020
Sievert, Karl H.	Jul. 6, 1931	1970	Nov. 23, 2020
Taylor, Susanne L.	Feb. 19, 1937	1985	Feb. 18, 2021
Tweddle, John F.	Nov. 12, 1932	1990	Mar. 11, 2021
Wootton, Stanley A.	Dec. 31, 1929	1960	Jun. 3, 2021
Wright, Beverley Jean	Oct. 7, 1936	1992	Sep. 28, 2019
Wright, Donald A.	Sep. 21, 1953	1977	Jan. 17, 2021

### Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

Allsop, James Bradley	Sep. 25, 1945	1992	May 7, 2020
Bain, Margaret E.	Feb. 1, 1950	1974	Jul. 19, 2020
Ballantyne, Gerald R.	Jan. 12, 1933	1982	Feb. 27, 2021
Bigby, E. Leicester	Jun. 14, 1931	1965	Jan. 1, 2020
Bunner, John Frederick Bruce	Apr. 3, 1934	1966	Apr. 2, 2018
Delisle, Carol M.	Jan. 14, 1935	1984	Oct. 10, 2021
Dunbar, William Barry	Feb. 14, 1934	1964	Jan. 04, 2020
Elliott, Gerald Elmer	Oct. 20, 1928	1955	Aug. 10, 2018
Fife, Malcolm A.	Sep. 3, 1931	1965	Oct. 28, 2018
Fullarton, Irene	May. 1, 1939	1988	Sep. 2, 2020
Gazzard, John Anthony "Tony"	Nov. 5, 1944	1969	Feb. 14, 2020
Hair, Norman Hugh	Jul. 29, 1929	1955	Oct. 2, 2018
Hunt, Ronald Thomas	Aug. 23, 1931	1967	Sep. 3, 2018
Jay, C. Douglas	Oct. 10, 1925	1950	Jan. 1, 2021
Johnston, Allan Morrison	Mar. 31, 1931	1958	May 29, 2019
Ketcheson, Dwain Maxwell	Jul. 4, 1965	1997	Jul. 13, 2020
MacCallum-Sadler, Dora	May. 27, 1938	1980	Sep. 13, 2021
Minarcik, Alan C.	Jan. 17, 1943	1968	Sep. 10, 2021
Moore, Charlotte Ann	Nov. 25, 1942	2008	Jul. 26, 2020
Nicholls, Robert George	Jul. 8, 1932	1960	May 2, 2019
Paterson, George Morton	Feb. 15, 1935	1963	Feb. 22, 2019
Rutledge, H.W. Frank	May 15, 1925	1963	Jan. 10, 2021
Shearman, John L.S.	Dec. 9, 1926	1950	Dec. 30, 2019
Shorten, Robert Keith	Jun. 11, 1927	1951	Dec. 14, 2019
Wickett, Thomas F.	Aug. 24, 1941	1980	Apr. 11, 2021

### Shining Waters Regional Council

Boyd, William Stanley Ross	Jul. 4, 1941	1971	Sep. 6, 2019
Craig, Alan W.	Jan. 28, 1927	1958	Apr. 28, 2020
Crothers, Thomas	May. 1, 1932	1989	Feb. 2, 2020

Dempsey, Paul Russell	Jun. 8, 1939	1965	Sep. 18, 2018
Dyck, Shirley Ann	Jul. 11, 1936	1993	May 15, 2021
Emminghaus, Margarete Anna Luise	Jan. 1, 1923	1953	Apr. 13, 2019
Gillies, Donald Arthur	Jun. 27, 1934	1959	Sep. 4, 2018
Hartley, John David	Feb. 6, 1942	1966	Feb. 3, 2019
Hoffman, Nettie Irma Jeanette	Aug. 20, 1927	1950	Apr. 29, 2019
Howlett, Kenneth David	Mar. 11, 1930	1966	Dec. 19, 2019
Kim, Jong Bok	Feb. 7, 1956	2005	Jun. 30, 2020
Kim, Eek Sun	Aug. 14, 1920	1979	May 6, 2021
Kirkwood, James A.	Jan. 14, 1933	1957	Sep. 17, 2020
Kwong, Johmann Kwok Fai	Dec. 16, 1936	1994	Jul. 19, 2019
Lowry, Thomas H.	Nov. 24, 1941	1973	Feb. 21, 2020
McDonald, Edwin James	May 3, 1926	1965	Apr. 24, 2019
Metson, John Murray	Mar. 22, 1933	1961	May 19, 2018
Morrison, John Alan	Jan. 21, 1936	1965	Sep. 19, 2018
Nash, Donald Edgar	May 8, 1947	1973	Sep. 1, 2019
Page, Thomas Milton	May 14, 1930	1965	Nov. 12, 2018
Perigoe, John Rae	Mar. 15, 1978		Jul. 21, 2018
Reed, Donald	Jul. 27, 1921	1952	Oct. 25, 2019
Reid, Robert Orlo	Sep. 29, 1932	1959	Aug. 19, 2019
Sergeant, Carmen Viola	Jan. 6, 1934	1991	Sep. 25, 2020
Shelly, Sidney Derek	Jul. 28, 1948	1978	Nov. 11, 2019
Sherwin, William W.	Mar. 22, 1927	1951	Oct. 10, 2021
Smith, Glenn Richard	Apr. 5, 1958	1983	Apr. 26, 2018
Soh, Chang Gil	Oct. 10, 1943	1996	Aug. 29, 2018
Spencer, Earl Malcolm	May 31, 1943	1968	Jan. 25, 2020
Swan, Charles A.	Aug. 23, 1930	1966	Oct. 10, 2019
Takashima, George Masazo	Aug. 8, 1934		Oct. 14, 2020
van Nie, H.J. Bart	Oct. 6, 1922	1949	Nov. 14, 2021
Waters, Arthur I.	Jul. 2, 1928	1953	Jul. 14, 2021

### East Central Ontario Regional Council

Bohler, Michael P.	Aug. 16, 1943	1986	Aug. 20, 2020
Clark, Robert O.	May. 28, 1932	1962	Jul. 4, 2021
Crawford, Kenneth James	Oct. 30, 1917	1942	Apr. 9, 2018
Esdon, Norman S.D.	Jun. 24, 1944	1980	Dec. 31, 2020
Fleming, Susan Ann Irene	Aug. 15, 1945	2010	Dec. 21, 2018
Freeman, Roger MacClement	Sep. 26, 1929	1959	Aug. 27, 2020
Gillingham, Gordon Maxwell	Aug. 20, 1930	1966	Apr. 2, 2019
Graham, Pauline J.	Jun. 17, 1934	1983	Mar. 22, 2020
Hayward, Timothy James	Feb. 10, 1949	1983	Apr. 11, 2018
Lacey, Edward Frazer	Sep. 15, 1931	1956	Aug. 8, 2019
Lander, David Gerald	Jun. 2, 1945	1970	Apr. 25, 2019

Lane, Bessie E.	Aug. 4, 1925	1960	Dec. 3, 2019
Lockhart, Frank Wallace	Sep. 25, 1934	1960	Oct. 3, 2018
Love, Frederick W.	Sep. 8, 1935	1963	May 5, 2021
McGrath, Robert Roy	Sep. 25, 1927	1966	Mar. 8, 2020
McNaught, Robert John Ball	Jul. 6, 1918	1944	Apr. 13, 2018
Murray, Kenneth John Wallace	Dec. 29, 1929	1954	Aug. 27, 2019
Oulton, Jeanie L.	Oct. 17, 1957	1984	Jan. 31, 2019
Purdon, Kenneth George	Feb. 7, 1931	1960	Nov. 3, 2019
Sahadat, Joseph	Feb. 16, 1949	1992	Jul. 17, 2020
Schumacher, Millard Kent	Jul. 26, 1936	1997	Jun. 20, 2018
Shorten, Arthur Lloyd	Feb. 12, 1918	1942	Jan. 8, 2020
Snelgrove, Theodore J.	Jan. 26, 1927	1958	Feb. 18, 2021
Sorrill, Joanne B.	Jul. 14, 1938	1986	Oct. 5, 2019
Taft, Charles Earl	Jun. 5, 1931	1968	Apr. 1, 2019
Van Camp, Doreen Margaret	Aug. 9, 1933	1988	May. 22, 2018
Wallace, Robert Golston	Nov. 22, 1926	1965	Mar. 9, 2021
Warne, Kim Stannard	Jan. 7, 1934	1965	Nov. 18, 2018
Webster, D'thea Maeve	Jan. 14, 1956	2012	Nov. 10, 2019
Whetung, Murray M.	Nov. 30, 1921	1999	Feb. 26, 2021
Wilkinson, George R.	Sep. 1, 1932	1961	Sep. 7, 2021

**Conseil régional Nakonha:ka  
Regional Council**

Charles, Marian J.M.	Sep. 3, 1934	1990	Mar. 5, 2021
Cogswell, Malcolm T.	May. 21, 1935	1958	Feb. 21, 2021
Johanson, James Wilfred	Mar. 15, 1933	1970	Jul. 18, 2018
Labadie, J.A. Jacques	Oct. 28, 1942	1982	Jul. 31, 2020
Moffat, R. Deane	Aug. 23, 1942	1979	Jul. 3, 2019
Rawlings, Mark Anthony	Mar. 24, 1951	1998	May 30, 2021
Tees, Frederick Armstrong	Jul. 7, 1926	1974	May 2, 2018
Wakeling, D. Faye	Jun. 29, 1939	1981	Nov. 29, 2018
Wetherall, James Gordon	Jun. 15, 1933	1994	Jul. 18, 2020

**Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning  
Waters Regional Council**

Butt, G. Boyd	Aug. 8, 1928	1961	Dec. 1, 2019
Caseley, L. Garth	Jan. 24, 1941	1965	Apr. 21, 2021
Copp, Barbara Matthews	May 2, 1936	1963	Apr. 05, 2019
Eagles, David H.	Apr. 26, 1944	1995	Sep. 15, 2020
Ferber, Leonard H.	May 11, 1934	1980	Jul. 30, 2019
Leard, George Earl	Sep. 05, 1918	1946	Nov. 14, 2018
MacPherson, Donald M.	May. 20, 1947	1989	Apr. 27, 2021
Mair, Nathaniel Harrington	Feb. 7, 1926	1965	Aug. 13, 2019
Mills, Leander L.	Jun. 18, 1944	1977	Nov. 3, 2021

Swan, Yvette Victoria Angela	Aug. 20, 1945	2015	Apr. 18, 2021
Touchie, John Wheeler	Mar. 12, 1927	1958	Jul. 10, 2018
Ware, Anthony G.N.	Nov. 14, 1933	1976	Jan. 15, 2021

### Regional Council 15

Barrett, George Edward	May. 24, 1928	1952	Jul. 17, 2019
Barss, Morris Aulden	Jun. 27, 1932	1957	Apr. 4, 2020
Bentley, Morley P.	Mar. 30, 1930	1960	Aug. 6, 2021
Burns, Carman G.	May. 29, 1934	1961	May. 31, 2020
Cameron-Whynot, Margie	Jul. 27, 1944	1985	May. 24, 2018
Ettinger, Jay Warren	Nov. 2, 1960	2002	Feb. 27, 2021
Forbes, James W.	Sep. 7, 1934	1966	Jan. 7, 2021
Harding, Russell L.	Jan. 15, 1928	1970	Jul. 15, 2021
Henderson, John Ewen	Jan. 19, 1927	1950	Mar. 12, 2018
Hicks, James (Jim) Herman	May. 15, 1926	1952	Jun. 5, 2018
Hussey, William Robert	May. 28, 1934	1958	Apr. 19, 2020
Latimer, Robert S.	Jul. 14, 1928	1954	Jan. 16, 2021
MacLeod, Jessie Catherine	Aug. 13, 1923	1952	May 3, 2018
MacNeill, Kenley M.	Sep. 4, 1935	1961	Nov. 6, 2020
Martell, James (Jim) Campbell	Mar. 29, 1934	1964	Jun. 21, 2018
McCurdy, Adams G. Archibald	Jun. 29, 1927	1957	Apr. 22, 2019
Mills, Robert H.	Mar. 3, 1933	1956	Nov. 28, 2020
Moore, Roger K.	May. 26, 1944	1997	Feb. 17, 2021
Pearce, Karen Margaret	Oct. 25, 1942	2004	Jan. 5, 2021
Purchase, Samuel Raymond	Sep. 23, 1917	1949	Jun. 10, 2018
Roberts, Arthur John	Jun. 22, 1932	1964	Feb. 9, 2020
Russell, Stewart Burgess	Nov. 24, 1931	1962	Jun. 16, 2018
Smith, Barbara Galen	Jan. 22, 1948	2008	Oct. 3, 2019
Stewart, Gordon K.	Jan. 10, 1921	1953	May 29, 2020
Stirling, R. Laird	Aug. 22, 1938	1963	Mar. 2, 2020
Titus, William Dunlap	Nov. 20, 1930	1953	Apr. 26, 2019
Wallace, Robert Henry Arthur	Dec. 2, 1928	1955	Mar. 12, 2019
White, H. Roy	Dec. 3, 1936	1960	Dec. 28, 2018
Wilson, E. Ellen	Jan. 14, 1940	1968	Dec. 5, 2020
Wood, Margaret Ann	Sep. 14, 1954	2007	May 5, 2018

### First Dawn Eastern Edge

#### Regional Council

Arnold, Karl B.	Sep. 28, 1940	1999	Dec. 30, 2018
Chaulk, Cyril Robert John	Nov. 4, 1943	1980	Jan. 24, 2020
Coish, William Alexander	Jul. 14, 1934	1966	Sep. 30, 2019
Cole, Clarence William	Sep. 12, 1958	1995	Dec. 11, 2019
Drover, Gerald C.	Jun. 28, 1935	1994	Sep. 13, 2020
Oake, Norman Wesley	May. 31, 1922	1965	Sep. 16, 2018

Rodgers, Theodore C.	Aug. 18, 1931	1960	Jul. 21, 2021
Sanna, Florence A.	Dec. 3, 1948	1994	Jul. 15, 2021
Squires, Arthur Wallace (Wally)	Jul. 29, 1940	1998	Jul. 12, 2018
Sweetapple, Allister Frank	Sep. 22, 1935	1998	Nov. 5, 2019

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## Attendees at the 44th General Council 2022

### MODERATORS PARTICIPATING IN THE 44TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2022

	Years Served	General Council
The Very Rev. N. Bruce McLeod	1972–1974	Saskatoon, SK
The Very Rev. Lois M. Wilson	1980–1982	Halifax, NS
Th Very Rev. Stanley J. McKay	1992–1994	Fredericton, NB
The Very Rev. Marion Pardy	2000–2003	Toronto, ON
The Very Rev. Peter Short	2003–2006	Wolfville, NS
The Very Rev. David Giuliano	2006–2009	Thunder Bay, ON
Mardi Tindal	2009–2012	Kelowna, BC
The Very. Rev. Gary Paterson	2012–2015	Ottawa, ON
The Very Rev. Jordan Cantwell	2015–2018	Corner Brook, NL

### GUESTS AT THE 44TH GENERAL COUNCIL

#### FACILITATION GROUP BIOGRAPHIES

The Facilitation Team synthesizes the submissions from each of the Discussion Groups, looking for commonalities as well as unique insights and wisdom, to present a suggested way forward for each proposal as well as any other matters discussed.



#### Carmen Lansdowne

Carmen is the compassionate, thoughtful, and creative Executive Director of First United Church Community Ministry Society and First United Church Social Housing Society. She tends to take on large projects and extends herself in many directions, largely (although not always) pulling it off while maintaining academic interests, church ministry, Indigenous ways of being, parenting, and partnering.

Carmen joined First United in February 2017, and has led an organizational turnaround resulting in increased stability and capacity.

She currently sits on the boards of the Vancouver Foundation and the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. She also chairs the national Indigenous Candidacy Board for the United Church of Canada, supporting Indigenous and non-Indigenous candidates for ministry in Indigenous contexts. She has previously served on the Pension Board of The United Church of Canada, the United Church's General Council Executive, as United Church representative to the Executive and Central Committees of the World Council of Churches, and the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee of the United Church. Carmen holds a PhD from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation. She is passionate about creating a life with great stories and amazing adventures with her family.



**Mardi Tindal**

Mardi is a former Moderator of The United Church of Canada. She holds an MA from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the University of Toronto.

Mardi has brought energetic leadership throughout her career as an adult educator and facilitator, Executive Director of Five Oaks Centre, writer, broadcaster (including co-host and story producer for *Spirit Connection*, the United Church's weekly program on VisionTV) and lay church leader. She has facilitated leadership formation with leaders in all fields throughout North America. Now retired, she continues to serve as a Courage & Renewal facilitator, prepared by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal (CCR). She also serves on the CCR board and on the board of *Broadview* magazine.

During and beyond her term as Moderator, she has collaborated with faith leaders nationally and internationally, with a focus on the interrelated healing of soul, community, and creation. This included participation in the World Council of Churches' delegation to three UN COP (Conference of Parties) climate negotiations, most recently when leading the United Church delegation to the Paris talks in 2015. She has also served as national mentor to Faithful Footprints, the program by which the United Church is working toward an 80 percent reduction (at least) in our carbon emissions by 2050.

Mardi's vocation as a grandparent alongside spouse Doug is one of her greatest joys.

**M Chorney**

M Chorney is a 31-year-old Policy Analyst with the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat. In her spare time, she has an extensive background in organizing and planning youth events for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Youth for The United Church of Canada, and is now Chair of Equal Voice Manitoba. She is detail oriented, organized, and precise in her work as shown by her involvement in various community organizations. She enjoys learning new things and is a motivated individual. She has an honours degree in political science with a minor in women and gender studies. Her current position as Policy Analyst, as well as her former positions as Legislative Assistant to a Member of Parliament, and Special Assistant to a Minister at the Manitoba Legislature, have allowed her to gain experience and knowledge in writing reports, press releases, and planning events. As the Communications and Marketing Coordinator for Affirm United, she is also very involved in the 2SLGBTQ+ community.



### **Rev. Eric Lukacs**

Born and raised in Montréal, the Rev. Eric Lukacs has been ordained for over 15 years, most notably serving in the isolated Harrington Harbour Pastoral Charge officially for three and a half years. He led the first official bilingual ministry at Granby United Church. His first career was in business development and strategic planning, after having graduated with a degree in Communications studies. He is currently completing his Master of Counseling at Saint Paul University in Ottawa and expects to certify as a psychotherapist sometime in 2022. In 2012, he obtained his construction contractor's licence and is the owner of Cuisines Chez Soi in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, managing financial and regulatory affairs at a distance.

Eric is the architect of a pilot church alliance model that helps smaller churches maximize their potential. He is passionate about compassionate, faithful, and faith-filled communities and brings a down-to-earth approach to all things church. He is the proud father of two children who reside in Montréal. He's also super excited to be part of the facilitation team and will miss feeling the love of the team in person.



### **Hewitt T. Holmes (The Rev.)**

Hewitt T. Holmes has been the ordered minister of Worship, Congregational Care, and Leadership at Collier Street in Barrie, Ontario, since 2017. This is after a short stint in team ministry as minister of Learning and Growing in Faith. His gifts are wide and varied.

Before coming to Collier, Hewitt served in Jamaica in pastoral and theological education, in Dryden and in Thunder Bay in congregational life. Since coming to Canada, he has served on various bodies, groups, and taskforces of the United Church; he is presently a member of the Board of Vocation.

Hewitt is the first Black minister of Collier. He is people-oriented, purposeful, and passionately driven by God's love and compassion in the world. Hewitt enjoys teamwork, a good laugh, contemplative prayer, reflection, reading, canoeing, cooking, and relaxing.

## **EQUITY SUPPORT TEAM BIOGRAPHIES**

The Equity Support Team works to help the Council live into the church's commitments to equity. This is a somewhat new role at General Council. The team is supported by Adele Halliday, the Anti-Racism & Equity Lead.

### **Sharon Ballantyne**

Greetings from Halifax, NS; Region 15. "It takes a village" is an expression that embraces prayerful presence, gratitude, radical hospitality, thinking "outside the box," and is intentional that all belong, are valued and needed—including my Seeing Eye dog, Echo. We try to live into this at Fort Massey United Church, where I currently am serving as intentional interim minister.

I am an equity advocate in education, in church, and in community, and have a PhD in pastoral care and counselling. I am also a 2018 McGeachy Scholar on equity, a Jubilee spiritual director, a Supervised Ministry of Education (SME) supervisor, support affirming initiatives, chaired the equity team of the East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC), was a GC43 Intercultural Observer, and am a member of the GC44 planning team. These all shape my lifelong learning. Together, we all wear equity hats!

### **Koshy David**

Koshy is a United Church minister serving in two congregations in Living Skies Region. He hails from the Church of South India and has been serving in the United Church for the past seven years. Koshy came to the United Church with over 20 years of pastoral experience as well as serving as a missionary in two other countries. He wishes to introduce himself as a missionary, as mission is his vision. He has a great passion for mission among people from the margins; being involved in social issues and affirming social justice has always played a central role in his ministry. Koshy is committed to supporting the wider church in doing its mission in the nation as well as in local congregations.

### **Steven Johann**

The United Church has been home since before I can remember. We were always involved in our small church. Four generations before my time, the Crown forced the Saugeen Ojibwa and Ottawa to leave the land (Saugeen Treaty No. 45½), which was made available as farmland to my ancestors in southwestern Ontario. Following university and theological college at St. Andrew's in Saskatoon, I have been in ministry for more than 30 years across the prairie region. I have served in team ministry with my spouse as well as in solo positions, rural, urban, and suburban. Our grown sons both live in Edmonton, which has been our home for 14 years. I enjoy walking and reading, simultaneously when I can. I also enjoy keeping my cooking skills in shape.

### **Jenni Leslie**

Hello from Ottawa! I have been serving with the people of Kitchissippi United Church, an amalgamation of three congregations in Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region, since 2008. *Kitchissippi* is an Algonquin word meaning Great River.

I attended the University of Toronto for both my BA and MDiv. I was settled in 2002 to Glengarry East Pastoral Charge. The experience of attending General Council in 2003 in Wolfville, NS, sustained my ministry over some difficult times.

I am a member of the Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community, proud mom of twins, and served on the Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble Council from 2012 to 2018. I began journeying along an anti-racist path and am also a facilitator of the United Church's Racial Justice workshops.

I'm very thankful to have been chosen to serve the church on the Equity Support Team!

**Torrin Maag**

I am Torrin Maag, a fourth-year student at McMaster undergrad beginning to pursue ministry. I have been part of the United Church since childhood and have grown into it ever since. I was drawn into this team because of my age and my interests in neurodiversity and queer issues. I hope to help out in any way I can!

**Albertine Chokoté Naoué**

Albertine is a trained (PhD) lay biblical theologian. She is a member of the governing board of the French Ministries Table and Treasurer of the Executive Office. Originally from Cameroon, Albertine lives in Toronto, where she is the founder and director of the non-profit organization Connexion Verte. This NPO works to promote the most equitable inclusion possible into their new living environment for members of Black francophone communities of African descent already living in Ontario or new to the province.

**Maedith Radlein**

Maedith Radlein grew up in Jamaica. She did her undergraduate degree and teaching qualification at the University of Edinburgh and Moray House in Scotland, and then taught in Jamaica for several years before immigrating to Canada in 1987.

In Canada, she worked with the Waterloo Region District School Board as an elementary school teacher and principal, retiring in 2014. She is a member of the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region and the Congress of Black Women.

Maedith attends Parkminster United Church in Waterloo Region, Ontario. She continues to advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation as a member of the Waterloo Region District School Board's Equity & Inclusion Advisory Group, as well as Co-Convenor of the Region of Waterloo's Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER****Philip Vinod Peacock**

Philip Vinod Peacock is an ordained minister of the Church of North India. He has trained in Theology and Social Analysis. He presently serves as the Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and part of the Collective General Secretariat. He has been with the WCRC since 2018. Prior to working with the WCRC, he taught Contextual Theology and Social Analysis at a seminary belonging to his church.

**ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH PARTNERS****CANADIAN ECUMENICAL AND INTER-FAITH**

The United Church of Canada works in partnership with ecumenical and inter-faith organizations, Christian councils, and church agencies in Canada. We are journeying together toward relationships that are just, honest, respectful, and life-giving. The following individuals will represent Canadian partners at GC44:

## CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

### Rev. Dr. Das Sydney

[The Canadian Council of Churches](#) is a broad and inclusive organization which represents 26 different denominations and 85% of Christians in Canada. It is engaged in a number of key areas of shared interest from theological reflection to racism and climate change. It produces the Canadian edition of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources and also works through Project Ploughshares which is a peace research institute of the Council.

### About Rev. Dr. Das Sydney

Rev. Dr. Das Sydney is the President of Canadian Council of Churches. He was born in India, grew up in Africa, and had his university education in Ghana, Canada and the U.S. He is a past president of the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec and has served as an adjunct at Acadia Divinity College and McMaster. He has served in churches in Ontario and Nova Scotia and is currently the Minister Emeritus at Highland Baptist Church in Kitchener, ON. He is married to Angela, a graduate nurse and they have three children and three grandchildren.

## ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

### Archbishop Linda Nicholls

[The Anglican Church of Canada](#) consists of 30 dioceses in four ecclesiastical Provinces from coast to coast to coast. Indigenous members of the Church are creating an Indigenous Anglican expression within the Anglican Church of Canada under the leadership of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop. We are part of the worldwide Anglican Communion through global partnerships and a shared commitment to the historic episcopate; creeds, Scriptures and five marks of mission. We are in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. We are currently discerning new strategic aspirational pillars centered around our life in Christ as we see where God is calling our Church as we emerge from the pandemic.

### About Archbishop Linda Nicholls

Archbishop Linda Nicholls was installed as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada on July 16, 2019. Previously she served as Bishop of Huron (2016-2019), Area Bishop of Trent-Durham, Diocese of Toronto (2008-2016), Coordinator for Dialogue for Ethics, Interfaith Relations and Congregational Development at the national office, and almost twenty years as a parish priest in the Diocese of Toronto. With degrees in music (B.Mus.) and education (B.Ed.) Linda taught high school music and math at Woodstock International Christian School for five years before theological studies at Wycliffe College (University of Toronto); ordination as a deacon (1985) and priest (1986). She also holds a Doctor of Ministry degree (University of Toronto, 2002). Linda has a keen interest in the renewal of the healing ministry in congregational life; ethics in healthcare; spiritual direction; national theological commissions and ecumenical dialogue. She has served as the Co-Chair of the Anglican Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada and is a member of the third Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III). Other interests include Choral singing, wilderness canoeing and walking to fill her recreation time along with her duties as staff to a cat.

## **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

### **Bishop Susan Johnson**

[The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada](#) is comprised of 5 geographical synods, 493 congregations and 90,000 members. It was formed in 1986 as a merger between two predecessor Lutheran bodies. It is a member of the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, and KAIROS. It is in full communion with the Anglican Church of Canada. Its relief and development arm is Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

### **About Bishop Susan Johnson**

Susan Johnson has served as the National Bishop of the ELCIC for almost fifteen years. Prior to her election, she served in ministry in the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC, latterly as an Assistant to the Bishop. Prior to ordination she worked as a high school music teacher in the Greater Vancouver area. She has received honorary doctorates from Huron College and the Atlantic School of Theology. She is one of Wilfrid Laurier's 100 alumni of distinction. With Michael Blair she is one of the two Canadian Ambassadors for the World Council of Churches' #ThursdaysInBlack.

## **THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

### **Rev. Stephen Kendall**

[The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#) was formed in 1875 and is in the historic Reformed Tradition. Congregations from coast to coast seek to live out our mission: Disciples of Christ, Empowered by the Spirit, Glorifying God, and Rejoicing in Service! As a founding member of the Canadian Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches, we live and work together with others in our common witness.

### **About Rev. Stephen Kendall**

The Rev. Stephen Kendall is a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, ordained in 1987. Since 1998. He has served as the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He also serves as ecumenical officer for the denomination and has been a member of the Governing Board of The Canadian Council of Churches since 1998. Internationally he served on the Executive of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and is part of the Ecumenical Officers network for the World Council of Churches. Stephen Kendall has served five years as minister of a new congregation in Calgary, and seven years in a congregation in Toronto. He holds a degree in mechanical engineering from Carleton University and a Masters of Divinity from Knox College, University of Toronto.

## **NATIONAL MUSLIM CHRISTIAN LIAISON COMMITTEE**

### **Muneeb Nasir**

Muneeb Nasir is the Muslim Co-Chair of the [National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee \(NMCLC\)](#), which fosters open dialogue, mutual respect, and cooperation between Canadian Christians and Muslims. Founded in 1984, NMCLC has sponsored regular dialogue and learning events, consulted on documents and resources and collaborated on social issues.



### **About Muneeb Nasir**

Muneeb is a Muslim faith leader, writer, and interfaith activist who is respected for his knowledge and involvement in religious and current affairs. He is the Chair of the public endowment, [Olive Tree Foundation](#), and the Managing Editor of the online [Canadian Muslim Journal](#). Over the years, he has served on boards and advisory committees including on the Steering Committee of the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#), on the Muslim Advisory Board, at University of Toronto's Emmanuel College and on the Scarborough Hospital Advisory Council.

### **JEWISH INTERFAITH GUESTS**

#### **Rabbi Allan Finkel**

Rabbi Allan Finkel was born and raised in Winnipeg and was educated in Winnipeg's Hebrew day school system. His parents had immigrated from Eastern Europe with a mother who was a Holocaust survivor, and he grew up in the Orthodox tradition at the Talmud Torah Synagogue. He later wandered through Conservative Judaism and in his thirties, he settled into Reform Judaism where he found his spiritual "home." He has a diverse background, having accumulated a law degree, an MBA and three wonderful children. His career path and extensive volunteer commitments have all featured a commitment to the Jewish values of Tikkun Olam—repairing the world. Rabbi Allan's journey into the rabbinate occurred later in life and he is currently the spiritual leader at Temple Shalom, Winnipeg's Reform (liberal) Jewish congregation, with a strong passion for creative and innovative adaptations of Judaism in these modern and changing times, and to the engagement and inclusion of interfaith families and to inclusiveness in all dimensions. Rabbi Allan is also an outspoken advocate for interfaith engagement and especially for building strong bridges and partnerships across all denominations within the Jewish community, and he currently serves as the chair of the Winnipeg Council of Rabbis.

#### **Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs**

[CIJA](#) is the advocacy agent for all the Jewish Federations across Canada. CIJA represents the diverse perspectives and concerns of more than 150,000 Jewish Canadians affiliated with their local Jewish Federation. CIJA is the Canadian affiliate of the [World Jewish Congress](#), representative to the [Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany \(Claims Conference\)](#), and to the [World Jewish Restitution Organization](#).

#### **About Richard Marceau**

Richard Marceau is CIJA's Vice President of External Affairs and General Counsel. A lawyer and member of the Barreau du Québec and of the Law Society of Ontario, Richard is a graduate from Québec City's Université Laval Law School, the University of Western Ontario Law School and France's École Nationale d'Administration. Elected to the House of Commons in 1997 and twice re-elected, Richard is the author of [Juif, Une histoire québécoise](#), and its English-language adaptation [A Quebec Jew](#), for which he received the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Award in 2012. With Montreal-based Rabbi Adam Scheier, he compiled and edited the [Canadian Haggadah Canadienne](#), published in 2015, which received positive acclaim in Canada and worldwide.

## **CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

The [Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) is the national assembly of the Bishops of Canada. Through the work of its members, the Conference is involved in such areas as ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, theology, social justice, liturgy, and Christian education. The CCCB appoints members to the Roman Catholic–United Church of Canada Dialogue, which has been meeting since 1975. The dialogue seeks to increase understanding and appreciation between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church of Canada. It explores pastoral, theological and ethical issues, including those that may divide our churches. The dialogue is currently discussing theologies of creation, ecology and the environment.

## **MUTUAL RECOGNITION**

The United Church of Canada is in a relationship of Mutual Recognition of Ministry with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Mutual Recognition means two denominations accept the credentials of each other's ordered ministers, and allow ministers to be employed in the other denomination's congregations without being required to enter an admission process. Mutual Recognition of Ministry partners at GC44 are:

## **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES (UCCP), PHILIPPINES**

### **Bishop Melzar Labuntog**

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is one of the largest of the Reformed or Protestant Churches in the Philippines with government estimates of 1.5 million individual members, scattered in the entire Philippine archipelago. The Church was a result of the organic union of distinct church denominations such as the Presbyterian, United Brethren, the Philippine Methodist, Disciples of Christ, Congregational, that defined the character of the Church. The Church organizational structure has the General Assembly as the greater legislative body that meets every four years, and the 49 Conferences that meet annually and the more than 2,000 local churches. The church has seven Jurisdictional Areas, three in Luzon, two in the Visayas and two in the Mindanao, and a Bishop is assigned in each of the Jurisdictional area. The General Secretary is the head of the National Secretariat and provides direction for the nationally planned programs. The church has covenant partnerships with churches around the world like the United Church of Canada, among others. It holds membership with the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, the World Methodist Council, and the United Evangelical Mission. The UCCP will hold its 12th Quadrennial Assembly on May 23–26, 2022, in Manila.

### **About Bishop Melzar Labuntog**

Bishop Melzar Labuntog is the General Secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. From his ordination in 1989, he has served as a pastor, as staff of the Christian Education and Nurture Desk of the National Office, as Coordinator for Christian Stewardship and Resource development and then Conference Minister of Central Mindanao Area Conference. He was Jurisdictional Bishop Assigned to Northwest Mindanao Jurisdictional Area 2010 to 2018. His service as General Secretary began in 2018.



## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (PROK), SOUTH KOREA**

### **Rev. Eun-kyung Kim**

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) had its 106th General Assembly last September 2021. At this general assembly, the PROK adopted a statement for Carbon Neutrality, decided to invite 6 lay persons (Men's Association, Women's Association, Youth Association) as ordinary delegates to the following general assemblies, and elected the first female moderator in its history. The delegates also committed themselves to continue with the efforts for peaceful reunification and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula and decided to found a church in the DMZ area.

### **About Rev. Eun-kyung Kim**

I was born in 1955 in Gwangju, where the Gwangju Uprising for Democracy took place in 1980. I was born into a Christian family. My father, who was a righteous person, had a strong historical consciousness. He treated me equally with his son, at a time when preference for boys prevailed. I was ordained on 15 June 2000, the same day the North-South Joint Declaration was issued from the first Inter-Korean Summit. That declaration provided a framework for future peaceful reunification of Korea, the humanitarian meeting of separated families and release of prisoners, as well as for mutual dialogue and exchanges. In addition to serving as a church pastor, I have worked with the Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Center in Iksan and Jeonbuk Gyerehana (a regional initiative for the reunification movement of the Korean Peninsula). I am currently serving the Iksan Chungang Church, which is running an affiliated social welfare centre for migrants.

## **FULL COMMUNION PARTNERS**

The United Church of Canada has a relationship of Full Communion with The United Church of Christ, USA, and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada. Full communion is an agreement for two or more churches to work together for mission and ministry, including the recognition of each other's sacraments and ordination of ministers, allowing them to be called by congregations of either denomination. Here are the individuals who will be representing our Full Communion partners at GC44:

### **DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, USA**

#### **Rev. Terri Hord Owens, Rev. Paul Tche**

[The Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#) is a denomination comprised of Christian congregation in the United States and Canada. Disciples, as we are known, hold as our "polar star" a firm commitment to Christian unity. Since 2000, we have also named a commitment to being an anti-racist, pro-reconciling church. With a congregational polity, we seek to have ministry that is relevant to the various contexts in which we serve. Our identity statement declares that "We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us." The Lord's Table is a key element of worship whenever Disciples gather, but the frequency is not the point. The access that we all have to the Table and thus to God, as revealed through Jesus Christ, is at the heart of this important Christian sacrament. The Disciples of Christ hold full communion partnerships with The United Church of Canada, and the United Church of Christ in the US.

**About Rev. Terri Hord Owens**

Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens is the General Minister and President (GMP) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada. She was elected in July 2017, and is the first person of colour and second woman to lead the denomination. She had a career in information technology consulting for over 23 years prior to entering ministry. She served as the Dean of Students at the University of Chicago Divinity School (her alma mater) for 12 years, and pastored a Disciples congregation in the Chicago suburbs most recently prior to assuming the ministry as GMP.

**About Rev. Paul Tche**

Rev. Paul S. Tch  has served the Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry (CUIM), the office for ecumenical and interfaith affairs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States of America and [Canada](#), as president since 2016. In his role and ministry with the CUIM, he offers leadership as the ecumenical officer for the Disciples of Christ, representing the church in local, national, and international efforts in giving expression to the unity of the church and our oneness in Christ. As an interfaith officer, he participates in various interreligious dialogues representing the Disciples and equips congregations to engage with interfaith neighbors and friends.

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, USA**

**Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, Rev. Mark Pettis**

[The United Church of Christ \(UCC\)](#) is a distinct and diverse community of Christians that come together as one church to join faith and action, the result of a merger of five streams of faith in the US that formed in 1957: the Congregational Church, the Christian Church, the German Evangelical Church, the German Reformed Church, and the Afro-Christian Churches. The United Church of Christ is based in the United States, and with over 5,000 churches and nearly one million members across the US, the UCC serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world. The UCC is a church of firsts, a church of extravagant welcome, and a church where “...they may all be one” (John 17:21). Its stated vision is to build a just world for all. In July of 2021, the entire denomination committed to the shared mission of leveraging its full capacity to bring about racial justice and equity. This campaign is called “Join the Movement.”

**About Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer**

Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer is the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ in the United States of America. He was ordained in 1988. He completed doctoral studies in 2004 in the study of White Privilege and Its Effect on the Church. After 16 years serving two local churches, Rev. Dorhauer began working in the UCC’s middle judicatory offices, first covering the states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee and then the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. In 2015 he was elected to serve as the 9th General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ in the US. He and his wife Mimi have celebrated 37 years of marriage, have three adult children and two adorable grandchildren.

**About Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson**

The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson is the Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and the Co-Executive for Global Ministries, the shared mission agency and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She has fiscal, management, and visionary oversight for WCM and the joint mission collaboration with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through Global Ministries. The programmatic units in her purview are sustainable development, global partnerships, global advocacy, disasters ministries, ecumenical and interfaith relationships, migration, refugees and asylum, the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering, General Synod and related ministry areas, and the United Nations.

Her ecumenical and interreligious commitments have overlapped in her interest and implementation of global consultations on multiple religious belonging. Her leadership in this area has facilitated dialogue in the church and created safe space for engaging the variety of expressions of religious multiplicity. Her doctoral dissertation was focused on research in this area, looking specifically at the ways in which African Caribbean people continue to practise African-derived religious and spiritual expressions along with other religious and oftentimes with Christianity. She is a gifted writer and poet whose writings have been published in books, journals, and online publications. Her book of poetry, *Drums in Our Veins*, will be published in 2022. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, her poetry and writings reflect her Jamaican heritage and culture as well as the traditions and lore of her African Ancestors. Karen Georgia earned a BA from Brooklyn College in New York, a Master's in Public Administration from North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC, and a Masters of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York. She earned her Doctorate in Ministry at Seattle University.

**About Rev. Mark Pettis**

The Reverend Mark Pettis serves as the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Manager for the United Church of Christ. In this role he is responsible for guiding and coordinating the ecumenical and interfaith relations of the national setting of the denomination. Among other ecumenical and interfaith commitments, he serves on the Executive Council for Religions for Peace USA, on the Coordinating Committee for Churches United in Christ (CUIC), as a participant in the National Council of Churches-National Council of Synagogues Jewish-Christian Dialogue, as a member of the National Council of Churches Interreligious Convening Table, and on the Advisory Board for the Shoulder-to-Shoulder Campaign. Prior to serving in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ, Rev. Pettis served as the Senior Minister of the Manhattan Beach Community Church (United Church of Christ).

## MIGRANT CHURCH PARTNERS

This term is used for new migrant communities in direct connection with their parent church and in partnership with the United Church. Migrant Church partners at the GC44:

### THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, USA

#### Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst

Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst is an Ecumenical Staff Officer for the Council of Bishops of [The United Methodist Church](#). Her responsibilities include: multi-lateral engagements, trainings, grants and general management. She is an ordained elder, having served three local congregations and as a District Superintendent in the United States before being appointed to this global, ecumenical ministry role in 2015.

#### About Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst

Jean is married to Jerry Cappel, an Episcopal Priest involved in environmental theology, and she is thankful stepmother and recent grandmother. She lives in Kentucky with her spouse and his collection of alpacas, dogs, and chickens.

### UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, ZIMBABWE

#### Rev. Alan Gurupira

[The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe](#) strives to be a continuously transforming United Methodist Church in the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area that claims higher ground, spiritually, physically, socially, and morally. They are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ through outreaching, witnessing, networking, and nurturing for the transformation of the world. The church has several mission centres made up of units comprising the hospital/clinic, school, local church, and orphanage homes.

#### About Rev. Alan Gurupira

Rev. Gurupira has served the church for the past 38 years. He has been in Mutoko and Murewa as a Pastor in Charge, School Chaplain, and Station Chairperson, and has served as District Superintendent for Murewa – Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe District. Later on he became the Connectional Ministries director for the Zimbabwe West Annual Conference, at the same time deputizing the then Administrative Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Zebediah Marowangepo and holding the position he vacated.

### WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, GERMANY

#### Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

[The World Methodist Council \(WMC\)](#) is made up of about 80 Methodist, Wesleyan and related Uniting and United Churches representing over 80 million members in 138 countries, including The United Church of Canada. The WMC engages, empowers and serves the member Churches by encouraging Methodist unity in witness, facilitating mission in the world, and fostering ecumenical and inter-religious activities. At its Conference and Council meeting 2016 in Houston, Texas, the WMC decided to prioritize the work on the themes Poverty & Equality; Migration; Racism, and Discrimination. To work for the greater unity of the Christian Community, the WMC engages in dialogues with other World Communions. To mention two

examples: There is a continuous dialogue with Roman Catholic Church since 1967. In 2019, the WMC and the Organization of African Instituted Churches met to start a consultative process.

### **About Bishop Rosemarie Wenner**

Rosemarie Wenner lives in Germany, near Heidelberg. Her home church is The United Methodist Church, and after serving as an ordained elder in various ministries in Germany, she was elected to the episcopacy and served as the resident Bishop of the Germany Area of The United Methodist Church (Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche) from 2005 to 2017. In her retirement she works as Geneva Secretary of the World Methodist Council, tasked to connect the work of the World Methodist Council with the World Council of Churches and other Ecumenical partners such as the Global Christian Forum. Focus areas in my work for and with the World Methodist Council are Migration and the cooperation with other partners in the New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA).

## **GLOBAL PARTNERS**

The United Church of Canada works in partnership with national churches, ecumenical organizations, Christian councils, and church agencies [around the world](#) as one partner among many. We are journeying together toward relationships that are just, honest, respectful, and life-giving. Our global partner representatives at GC44 are:

### **WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, SWITZERLAND**

#### **Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda**

[The World Council of Churches](#) is a fellowship of churches that confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, "so that the world may believe." (John 17:21). The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity.

#### **About Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda**

Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda is Programme Executive, Overcoming Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia at the World Council of Churches based in Geneva. Masiwa holds a PhD in Applied Intercultural Biblical Studies from Bayreuth University, Germany. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Religious Studies and a Master in Arts in Religious Studies from the University of Zimbabwe. He is an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow. Masiwa has published three monographs and over 50 journal articles, book chapters and training manuals. At the heart of this research journey is the commitment to justice and equity, concepts that are closer to biblical mishpat. Masiwa is a practising Anglican, married, and a father to two boys and a girl.

## **WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES, GERMANY**

### **Rev. Najla Kassab**

[The World Communion of Reformed Churches](#) is comprised of 100 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting, and Waldensian churches. The WCRC, working with its 233 member churches, is active in supporting theology, justice, church unity and mission in over 105 countries.

United in Christ and rooted in the historic Reformed traditions, the WCRC with its member churches believe that Christian faith is responding to God's call to meet spiritual needs and foster justice for all in the transformation of the world through the love of Jesus Christ. Called to communion, committed to justice is key to WCRC work.

### **About Rev. Najla Kassab**

Rev. Najla Kassab is the President of the World Communion of the Reformed churches since 2017. She is a Lebanese pastor, who graduated from Near East School of Theology (NEST) and Princeton Theological Seminary. Rev. Kassab is the Director of Christian Education Department of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, she strives to empower women and enhance their role in the church.

Rev. Najla is active in the ecumenical movement and strives for working towards justice at the level of the Middle East and beyond. Through her role as President for the World Communion of Reformed churches (WCRC), she presents a new model of leadership where women are fully involved in building the body of Christ.

## **GLOBAL REGION: MIDDLE EAST**

### **SABEEL, JERUSALEM**

#### **Mr. Omar Harmacy**

Palestinian Liberation Theology is an ecumenical grassroots movement, rooted in Christian Biblical interpretation and nourished by the hopes, dreams and struggles of the Palestinian people. Originating in the land where Christ lived, this theology seeks to provide a holistic vision of God's redeeming activity in the midst of the current reality. In a situation where justice has been long neglected, Palestinian Liberation Theology opens new horizons of understanding for the pursuit of a just peace and for the reconciliation proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By learning from Jesus - his life under occupation and his response to injustice - this theology hopes to connect the true meaning of Christian faith with the daily lives of all those who suffer under occupation, violence, discrimination, and human rights violations. Additionally, this blossoming theological effort promotes a more accurate international awareness of the current political situation and encourages Christians from around the world to work for justice and to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The [Sabeel](#) Center is located in Jerusalem, serving Bethlehem, Ramallah and the surrounding areas, with a branch office in Nazareth to serve the Galilee.

In recent years, International Friends of Sabeel chapters have been founded in Australia, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. International Friends of Sabeel Chapters provide support for Sabeel's work in advocacy, education, and nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation.

### **About Omar Haramy**

Omar is a Palestinian Orthodox Christian. His family has deep connections to the Church of the Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem. According to oral tradition, the Haramy family was among the first families in Jerusalem to announce that Jesus was no longer in the grave.

Through his work with Sabeel, and many other community organizing roles, Omar's life is an attempt to witness to the resurrected Christ.

Omar Haramy is also a member of the Kairos Palestine Steering Committee and the Church of Sweden International Reference Group.

## **GLOBAL REGION: ASIA**

### **WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION – ASIA PACIFIC, SOUTH KOREA**

#### **Ms. Hiu Fan (Fanny) Chung**

The [World Student Christian Federation \(WSCF\)](#) is a global federation of student Christian groups. WSCF is ecumenical—welcoming people from all Christian traditions and encouraging dialogue between students of different traditions. WSCF has members from Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Anglican traditions and from other faiths. The WSCF-AP region's website is under-construction.

#### **About Hiu Fan (Fanny) Chung**

Fanny (Hiu Fan) Chung is a registered social worker in Hong Kong. She has graduated from Sung Kong Hoe University (South Korea) on MA in Inter-Asia NGO Studies. She has been involving with ecumenical movement since 2008 and had been working with the Korean ecumenical movement in the last 9 years. Currently she is working for WSCF as a Regional Executive for Asia Pacific and Global Program Director.

## **GLOBAL REGION: AFRICA**

### **COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN ZAMBIA**

#### **Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya**

[The Council of Churches in Zambia](#) has been in existence since 1914. It was first called the General Missionary Conference and its main responsibility was to promote cooperation between the missionary societies in areas such as education, health and religious broadcasting. The name was later changed to the Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia (CCNR) in 1944. Upon independence in 1964, the CCNR changed its name to Christian Council of Zambia serving as an ecumenical organization to strengthen Christian unity and promotion of social justice, peace and development. It was until the year 2003 that the name was again changed to the present day, the Council of Churches in Zambia.



**About Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya**

Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya is an ordained Anglican Priest serving as General Secretary of the CCZ since August 2017, he holds a Cambridge University diploma in Religious studies, Bachelor's Degree in Theology and Master's Degree in Theology Specialization from Justo Mwale University. He has previously worked for National Airports Corporation and Zambia National Commercial Bank. He wrote a thesis for Bachelor's Degree titled the Ecological Agenda for the Church in Zambia and is keen ecumenist who believes in a holistic ministry of the Church by promoting sustainable development aligned with the current global development goals to influence society. He is a theologian with special interest in stewardship of the economic and physical environment and promotion of good governance, justice and peace.

**GLOBAL REGION: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN****PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF CUBA****Rev. Alison Infante Zamora**

[The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba](#) continues to extend its international relations and also its impact in the country. An important factor has been the theological preparation of the laity, in special courses organized by the seminary in cooperation with the local congregations. It is exploring new ways of evangelization, organizing many Bible studies and prayer groups in different places. It has developed an important action of liturgical renewal, which includes using Cuban rhythms in the music and providing a balance between tradition and innovation. Also, after many years in which all the social services were in the hands of the government, the church has set up some social projects, which have been very well received by the people.

**About Rev. Alison Infante Zamora**

Rev. Alison Infante Zamora was elected in February 2022 as Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC). He was ordained by the IPRC following studies at the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas and is serving as pastor of the Juan G. Hall Presbyterian Church in Cardenas, Cuba.

Alison is energetic, passionate about his faith, a great communicator, emerging church leader, husband to Sarahí García, and father to Ana Paula and Joel David.

**PARTNER COUNCIL**

The Partner Council of The United Church of Canada was established in 2011 as part of the United Church's commitment to live into its partnership principle of mutuality and accountability "Reviewing Partnership in the Context of Empire (2009)." It enables partner voices and input to be heard at all levels of the church, including governance structures, and affirms the importance of global partner accompaniment of the church as we continue to live out God's mission in Canada and globally. There are six members of the Partner Council, all participating in GC44:



**ASTHA SANSTHAN, INDIA****Parul Chaudhary**

[Astha Sansthan](#) works to enable marginalized and deprived people to mobilize themselves around issues that concern them including women's empowerment (particularly for single women, and women involved in local governance structures), land/forest rights, livelihood, issues of tribal people and people who are differently-abled. Astha Sansthan takes a rights-based approach to programming.

**About Parul Chaudhary**

Parul Chaudhary is a program staff person in Astha Sansthan. She has worked with grassroots women's organizations, supporting capacity building and leadership development efforts.

**KAIROS: CANADIAN ECUMENICAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES, CANADA****Aisha Francis**

[KAIROS Canada](#) is a coalition of Canadian churches, church-based agencies, and religious organizations dedicated to promoting human rights, justice, and peace, viable human development, and universal solidarity among the peoples of the Earth. It is a decisive and faithful response to God's call for respect of the Earth and justice for its peoples.

**About Aisha Francis**

Aisha Francis is the Executive Director and brings to her leadership a background in advocating for racial justice issues, and experience in justice, racial equity, and access for families impacted by incarceration.

**MIDDLE EAST: MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (MECC), LEBANON****Samer Laham**

[The Middle East Council of Churches](#) is a fellowship of 27 churches in 12 countries in the Middle East. The MECC strives to be a true and credible witness to justice and peace in the Middle East, building fellowship between member churches and building relationships of understanding and respect between Christians and peoples of other faith. A key MECC focus is response to humanitarian crisis in the region.

**About Samer Laham**

Samer Laham is the Director of Emergency Response Services for the MECC.

**AFRICA: ALL AFRICA THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION ASSOCIATION (AATEEA), ZAMBIA****Rev. Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki**

Based in Lusaka, Zambia, [AATEEA](#) is an association of institutions offering distance theological learning for groups in 25 countries in Africa. AATEEA acts as a coordinator for programs, encourages member engagement in critical social issues offering seminars and training related to key social justice issues such as ecology and HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ2S rights. AATEEA focuses on for training grassroots leaders.

**About Rev. Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki**

Kangwa Mabuluki is the Director of AATEEA. He has been involved in ministry and the ecumenical movement for more than 30 years.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: CENTRO REGIONAL ECUMENICO DE ASESORIA Y SERVICIO (CREAS), ARGENTINA****Horacio Mesones**

Founded in 2000 and based in Argentina, [CREAS](#) (Regional Ecumenical Center for Advice and Service) is a Latin American multi-disciplinary ecumenical organization of Christian inspiration with the mission of strengthening the capacities of the ecumenical movement for the promotion of dignity, economic, ethnic, social and gender justice, the care for the Common House, and the respect for diversity. CREAS works on cooperation to strengthen the diaconal work of churches and community organizations, ecumenical formation, sustainable development, and social and environmental conscious new economies.

**About Horacio Mesones**

Horacio Mesones is the Executive Director of CREAS, and has served on its staff since 2005.

**WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION, SWITZERLAND****Marcelo Leites**

The [World Student Christian Federation](#) is the oldest international student organization, founded in 1895. As a federation of student movements, the WSCF empowers and connects responsible young leaders around the world in their path to changing tomorrow. WSCF describes its mission as “empowering” students in critical thinking and constructive transformation of our world by being a space for prayer and celebration, theological reflection, study and analysis of social and cultural processes, and solidarity and action across boundaries of culture, gender, and ethnicity.

**About Marcelo Leites**

Marcelo Leites became the Federation’s Secretary General in 2021, serving previously as Regional Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean and Director for WSCF’s Global Program on Ecological Justice.

## General Council 44 Planning Committee

The work of organizing and facilitating a General Council requires the gifts, passion, and commitment of some incredible volunteers. Let's meet them:

The GC44 Planning Committee has been working for almost four years and has had to adapt to the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. This group had been ably led by Sue Brodrick as the chair of the planning committee.

- Sharon Ballantyne, Equity Support
- Richard Bott, Moderator
- Graham Brownmiller, Worship Chair
- Allan Buckingham, Business Chair
- Treena Duncan, Regional Council Executive Minister
- Nancy Nourse, Local Arrangements Chair
- Tony Snow, Indigenous Connector, Chinook Winds
- Katie Vardy, Youth Forum

The committee was supported by a number of General Council staff:

- Christopher Dumas
- Sue Fortner
- Bill Gillard
- Adele Halliday
- Beverlea Oag
- Shirley Welch
- Jamie Wilder

Worship planning team:

- Graham Brownmiller
- Kenji Marui
- Ivan Gregan
- Nicole Beaudry
- Bev Brazier
- Alydia Smith
- Curt Allison

and over 50 testimonial and scripture readers and reflectors.

Friends in Council/Comité des amies et des amis du Conseil:

- Nancy Nourse
- Marie-Claude Manga

The Business Table:

- Allan Buckingham
- Richard Bott
- Sue Brodrick
- Michael Blair
- Maya Douglas
- Rosemary Lambie
- Shannon McCarthy
- Nicole Treksler

As we seek to live deeply into our commitments to reconciliation and right relations, and to mutual accountable partnership, we are privileged to be accompanied by the Honoured Elders, Ray Jones and Elenor Thompson.

## Commissioners to the 44th General Council, 2022

Richard Bott, Moderator  
 Jordan Cantwell, Immediate Past Moderator  
 Michael Blair, General Secretary

### Regional Council Presiding Officers

S. Blair Odney - Pacific Mountain Regional Council  
 Gordon Waldie - Northern Spirit Regional Council  
 Vicki McPhee - Chinook Winds Regional Council  
 Tricia Gerhard - Living Skies Regional Council  
 Patricia Bird - Prairie to Pine Regional Council  
 Barbara Nott - Canadian Shield Regional Council  
 Jane Van Patter - Antler River Watershed Regional Council  
 Mark Laird - Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council  
 Robert Lawson - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council  
 David Leyton-Brown - Shining Waters Regional Council  
 Paul Reed - East Central Ontario Regional Council  
 Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro - Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council  
 Linda Buchanan - Nakonha:ka Regional Council  
 James Kennedy - Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council  
 Sandra Tomsons - Regional Council 15  
 Nancy Mojica-Fisher - First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council

### Pacific Mountain Regional Council

Kirstin Autio  
 Cheryl Bear  
 Katherine Brittain  
 Anna Chambers  
 Emily Cooke  
 Albert Fowler  
 Laura Hermakin  
 Minnie Hornidge  
 Joseph Kyser  
 Katherine Paton  
 Deborah Richards  
 Keith Simmonds  
 Ruth Stebbing  
 Keri Wehlander

### Northern Spirit Regional Council

Mary Annan  
 Mokwadi Paymann Basele  
 Daniel Chon  
 Peter Chynoweth  
 Lloyd Henderson  
 Amy Kaler  
 Helen Reed  
 Scott Reynolds  
 Leigh Sinclair  
 Sarah Waldie  
 Bruce West

**Chinook Winds Regional Council**

Tammy Allan  
Susan Brodrick  
Esther Crews  
Taylor Croissant  
Samuel Grottenberg  
Francis Liu  
Nancy Nourse  
T. Murray Speer  
Abby Werenka  
Kathryn Yamashita

**Living Skies Regional Council**

Emily Carr  
Allan Gairns  
Robert Hayes  
Trina Hodgson  
Sun-Do Hyun  
Sheila Ivanochko  
Beth Johnston  
Jeri-Lee Jones  
Frances Kitson  
Bill Pollock  
Michele Rowe  
Janelle Shaw  
Yvonne Terry  
Diane Thurlow  
Owen Wright

**Prairie to Pine Regional Council**

Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud  
Elizabeth Brown  
Christopher Davis  
Kenneth E. DeLisle  
Diane Dwarka  
Lesley Harrison  
Donna Kennedy  
Hope Mattus  
Cyndi Price  
Heather Sandilands  
Anna Stewart  
Karen Tjaden  
Erica Wiebe  
Taeil Yang

**Canadian Shield Regional Council**

Whitney Bruno  
Mary-Jo Eckert Tracy  
Joyce Fergus-Moore  
Peter Haddow  
Laura Hutchison  
Susan Siczkar  
John Watson  
Fraser Williamson

**Antler River Watershed Regional Council**

Richard Auckland  
Tabitha Carey  
Gabrielle Heidinger Baerg  
Olav Kitchen  
Kenji Marui  
Shane McDowell  
Wendy Noble  
Jo Ann Silcox  
Mary Anne Silverthorn  
Colin Swan  
Rebecca Whiting  
Pamela Wilcox  
Brie Wohlers

**Western Ontario Waterways  
Regional Council**

Dawn Blanchard  
Gary Brent Caslick  
Elizabeth Dillman  
Rebekah Duncan  
Chris Fickling  
Alex Jebson  
Joyce Johnston  
Peter Kudelka  
Janice Mason  
Laurie O'Leary  
Catherine Stewart-Savage  
Judith Zarubick

**Horseshoe Falls Regional Council**

Andrew Advincula  
 Judith Gilliland  
 Ralph Hayman  
 John Hurst  
 Deborah Laforet  
 Steve Lowden  
 Wendy Lowden  
 Jessica McCrae  
 Karen Orlandi  
 Thea Sheridan-Jonah  
 Pat Tooley  
 Yvonne Wright

**Shining Waters Regional Council**

Jingle Ayupan  
 Edna (Hedy) Baker-Graf  
 Maxwell Giffen  
 Isaac Kamta  
 Barbara Lloyd  
 Steven Loweth  
 Ken McEvoy  
 Lawrence Nyarko  
 Lynella Reid-James  
 Jeannette Schieck  
 Dong-Chun Seo  
 Heather Stevenson  
 David Watts

**East Central Ontario Regional Council**

Steve Coles  
 Penny Culverson  
 Margaret (Meggin) King  
 Andrew Macpherson  
 Donald McLean  
 Ryan McNally  
 Ted Meyers  
 Kaitlyn Ostrander  
 Joyce Payne  
 E. Aruna Saroea-Alexander  
 Tom Smart  
 Wanda Stride  
 Kathleen Whyte  
 Marilyn Zehr

**Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council**

D. Kofi Akoussah  
 Donald Anderson  
 Nicole Beaudry  
 David Charles  
 Liz Church  
 Edward Gratton  
 Oakley Hart  
 Susan Hutton  
 Erin McIntyre  
 David Patterson  
 Mary Royal-Duczek  
 Paul Sales  
 Hazel Ward-Moreau

**Nakonha:ka Regional Council**

Denis Ashby  
 Christine Marie Gladu  
 Marc Grenon  
 Catherine Hamilton  
 Marie-Claude Manga  
 L.E. Moir  
 Valerie Nickson  
 Morgan Pierre Point  
 Ben Ryan  
 Tami Spires

**Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council**

David Allan  
 Bethe Benjamin-Cameron  
 Randy Breckenridge  
 Barbara Cairns  
 Shirley Cleave  
 Heather Donnelly  
 Hugh Ellis  
 Audrey Louder  
 Carol Munro  
 Victoria Murphy  
 Jack Spencer  
 Jenny Vessey  
 Nathan Wright

**Regional Council 15**

Kathleen Anderson  
Kevin Cox  
Sharon Lohnes  
Daniel MacDonald  
Malcolm Macleod  
Maxwell Martin  
Penny Nelson  
Ameilia Parks  
Kevin Parks  
Wanalda Parsons  
Lawrence Roche  
Linda Scherzinger  
Fay Smith  
Janet Sollows  
Sheila Van Schaick

**First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council**

Brenda Andrews  
Miriam Bowlby  
Cynthia Burt  
Oliver Dingwell  
Shane Foote  
Paula Gale  
Simbarashe Mazhara  
Simon Muwowo  
Emma O'Rourke  
Hannah Sheppard  
Anthony Grant Stuckless  
Bethany Stuckless  
Tony Tuck

**National Indigenous Council**

Kenneth Albert  
Eileen Antone  
Grafton Antone  
Lisa Anwar  
Russel Burns  
Cathie Cunningham  
Evelyn Day  
Clarence Jones  
Sheila Robson  
Janet Root  
Bonnie Simcoe  
Agnes Spence  
Lorna Standingready  
Elenor Thompson

**General Council Executive Members**

Mitchell Anderson  
Kathy Brett  
Teresa Burnett-Cole  
Samuel Dansokho  
Paul Douglas Walfall  
Jane McDonald  
Arlyce Schiebout

**General Council Executive Appointed**

Norman Robert Boie  
Janice Davis  
Hyun Heo  
Franklyn James  
Epse Kamta Bukam  
Hannah Kim-Cragg  
OhWang Kwon  
Alwin Maben  
Ian McGregor  
Susan McPherson Derendy  
Samantha Miller  
Ernest Njiemoun  
Morgan Ryder  
Evan Smith  
Junior Smith  
Jessica Swance



## Letter of Welcome

Dear Friends,

“Who do you say I am?” was a question Jesus asked the disciples who were closest to him as they travelled along in their ministry together. The answers were as varied as the people who responded and helped to define how disciples since that time have related to Jesus, including the direction of the gathered community. Our own understanding that we, as The United Church of Canada, are called to live “deep spirituality - bold discipleship - daring justice” is grounded deeply in that relationship. General Council 44 will centre around Jesus’ question, working out what it means for us to live our response.

As we prepare for this gathering of the General Council, we are living the reality of a new time. The continuing COVID-19 pandemic has forced changes we did not expect, including this meeting being completely in online spaces rather than bringing Commissioners and Youth Forum members together in a physical space. The two years of forced separation have meant that the church, in all of its councils—from communities of faith to the General Council—has had to find new ways of being and doing ministry. While we’ve found new possibilities in the midst of all of it, there has also been significant loss. For this to happen as we were just beginning to understand what our new structural changes meant for communities of faith, ministry personnel, the Indigenous church, the regions, the General Council, and the denomination as a whole has not been easy. We have been disoriented. We are still unsure what lies ahead. All of that, combined, has meant grief for many and stress for us all.

But, in many ways, this isn’t new to the church, is it? Creation has been in constant flux since the beginning of the beginning, and life has worked to find ways to be and grow in the most chaotic of situations. Christ’s church has shaped and reshaped itself to try to be what God needed it to be in that moment. As Paul wrote to the disciples in Corinth, “We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies” (2 Cor. 4:7–10).

General Council 44 is part of that life, picking itself up, brushing itself off, and stepping into the future knowing that, in this moment, God is with us and we are with God, we are not alone—no matter what comes next!

As we reorient ourselves, meet each other online, and work to discern together who God is inviting this United Church of Canada to be, let’s help each other to explore the possibilities and to hold on to each other as the Holy Spirit blows in the church, around the church, and through the church.

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Commissioner to General Council 44 at this exciting and challenging time in the life of our church. As you make your way through the background

material and the online platform in preparation for the meeting, know that what you bring to this gathering is vital. Information on accessing both the background material and the online platform will be provided in a future e-mail. We invite you to be in prayer and invite your communities to hold you and all Commissioners in prayer, that our collective discernment and decisions will be life-giving and transformative for the church.

There is much for us to do, in configurations we've not experienced as a General Council. We look forward to the journey together.

We're excited to join you online in February.



Rt. Rev. Richard Bott  
Moderator  
The United Church of Canada



Rev. Michael Blair  
General Secretary  
The United Church of Canada

## Draft Agenda

Agenda Item	Date	Pacific	Eastern	Newfoundland
GC44 Constituted	February 13, 2022	9 am–2 pm	12–5 pm	1:30–6 pm
Learning Sessions (7) <i>Note: 2 weeks are skipped</i>	Wednesdays March 9–May 4	4–5:30 pm	7–8:30 pm	8:30–10 pm
Discussion Sessions (6) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	June 17–19, 2022 (2 each day)	9–11 am 1–3 pm	12–2 pm 4–6 pm	1:30–3:30 pm 5:30–7:30 pm
Alvin Dixon Run Kick-Off: June 17, 2022				
Nominations for Moderator Close: June 17, 2022				
"Way Forward" proposals posted (report and videos): June 27, 2022				
Invitation for participants to post thoughts/comments: June 27–July 22, 2022				
Decision Session (I) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	July 21, 2022	2–4 pm	5–7 pm	6:30–8:30 pm
Decision Session (II, III) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	July 22, 2022	9–11 am 1–3 pm	12–2 pm 4–6 pm	1:30–3:30 pm 5:30–7:30 pm
Election of Moderator	July 22, 2022	TBD	TBD	TBD
Decision Session (IV, V) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	July 23, 2022	9–11 am 1–3 pm	12–2 pm 4–6 pm	1:30–3:30 pm 5:30–7:30 pm
Decision Session (VI, VII) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	July 24, 2022	9–11 am 1–3 pm	12–2 pm 4–6 pm	1:30–3:30 pm 5:30–7:30 pm
Decision Session (VIII, IX) <i>(Live participation is required)</i>	July 25, 2022	9–11 am 1–3 pm	12–2 pm 4–6 pm	1:30–3:30 pm 5:30–7:30 pm
Closing Worship/ Installation of Moderator	August 7, 2022	TBD	TBD	TBD

## Logo and Theme for the 44th General Council



*"Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15)*

On the left, a cross curves around in an arc, creating a circular movement and merging into Jesus' hair. The organic shapes that form Jesus' hair suggest foliage, something growing, part of a landscape. The shading in the face forms a gaunt cheekbone that echoes the shape of a chalice.

We are asked a question, and the part of the face we can see looks directly out at us inviting a response. The expression is direct and serious but serene.

As we explore our response to Jesus' question, we are then challenged to know it, tell it, and live it.

"Who do you say I am?" has been translated into French and the language of the Stoney Nakoda peoples.

## Acronyms

We discourage the use of acronyms because they tend to exclude those who don't know them, but there are still some in this workbook. For that reason we include a glossary of what the acronyms stand for here.

ADR	Alternate Dispute Resolution
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AOTS	As One That Serves (Men's Ministries)
ARCH	Archives
ARW(RC)	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
AVEL	Audio Visual Education Library
BP	Business Planning (Committee)
CAYT	Children and Young Teens Program at General Council
CCC	Canadian Council of Churches
CIM	Church in Mission
CoF	Community(ies) of Faith
COC	Community of Concern
CRTG	Comprehensive Review Task Group
CS(RC)	Canadian Shield Regional Council
CW(RC)	Chinook Winds Regional Council
DM	Diaconal Ministry
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
ECO(RC)	East Central Ontario Regional Council
EM	Executive Minister
EOO(RC)	Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
FIN	Finance
FDEE(RC)	First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
FSL(RC)	Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council
GC	General Council
GCE	General Council Executive
GCM	General Council Minister(s)
GCO	General Council Office
GCSE	General Council Sub-Executive
GM	Conference General Meeting
GP	Global Partner(s)
GS	General Secretary, General Council
HF(RC)	Horseshoe Falls Regional Council
IJRS	Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools Committee
ITS	Information Technology Services Unit
LM	Lay Ministry
LS(RC)	Living Skies Regional Council
M&S	Mission and Service
MAC	Moderator's Advisory Committee

MAL	Member(s) at Large
ME	Ministry and Employment Unit
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MEPS	Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
MOD	Moderator
MP	Ministry Personnel
MV	More Voices United
N:ka(RC)	Nakonha:ka Regional Council
NIC	National Indigenous Council
NIEC	National Indigenous Elders Council
NOM	Nominations Committee
NS(RC)	Northern Spirit Regional Council
NWO	National Women's Organization
OM	Ordered Ministry
OMGS	The Offices of the Moderator and General Secretary
OMNI	Omnibus
PAR	Pre-Authorized Remittance
PM(RC)	Pacific Mountain Regional Council
PP(RC)	Prairie to Pine Regional Council
R15(RC)	Regional Council 15
RCEM	Regional Council Executive Minister
ROP	Record of Proceedings
SW(RC)	Shining Waters Regional Council
TICIF	Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee
UCC	The United Church of Canada
UCW	United Church Women
UMiF	Unité de Ministères en Français/Ministries in French Unit
VU	Voices United
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRC	World Communion of Reformed Churches
WOW(RC)	Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
YF	Youth Forum Program at General Council

### **FROM PREVIOUS STRUCTURE(S)**

AMC	Aboriginal Ministries Council
ANCC	All Native Circle Conference
ANW	Alberta and Northwest Conference
BC	British Columbia Conference
BQ	Bay of Quinte Conference
CESS	Conference Executive Secretary(ies)/Speaker
EM	Ethnic Ministries Unit
ES	Emerging Spirit
HAM	Hamilton Conference
LON	London Conference

M&O	Montreal and Ottawa Conference
MAR	Maritime Conference
MNWO	Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
MTU	Manitou Conference
N&L/NL	Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
PC-FIN	Permanent Committee, Finance
PC-G&A	Permanent Committee, Governance and Agenda
PC-MEPS	Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
PC-PMM	Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry
PMM	Programs for Mission and Ministry
SK	Saskatchewan Conference
SPK	Speaker
TOR	Toronto Conference

## Glossary of Terms about Equity and Self-Determination

### *A note about terminology:*

This glossary is not a comprehensive list of all terms that exist related to equity and self-determination. Rather, this glossary is designed to support participants at this year's General Council with some key terms that may be used throughout the meeting.

Terminology in this area is constantly changing and evolving—and so what works now, in 2022, may not work as well in a few years. Language can also be an imperfect descriptor of complex concepts related to identity. Still, the hope is that this glossary may be helpful for participant processes and engagement throughout General Council.

The terms are listed in alphabetical order under the following broad categories:

- [Disabilities](#)
- [Gender identity and sexual orientation](#)
- [Indigenous justice](#)
- [Intercultural engagement](#)
- [Race and racism](#)

### **DISABILITIES**

**Disability:** Almost 3.8 million Canadians (about 14 percent of the population) identify as having a disability. It is often described as a physical or mental condition that can limit a person's movements, senses, or activities. A disability may be present at birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

A disability may be physical, medical (like epilepsy or addictions), sensory, developmental, cognitive, related to learning, a condition of mental impairment, a mental disorder, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language. Disabilities can be both visible and invisible.

Understandings of disability change over time—and therefore, defining disability is a complex, evolving matter. Conditions such as Crohn's disease or chronic fatigue syndrome, for example, are now considered disabilities but would not have been several years ago. Disability can also be dynamic. It is an elastic category—an open minority—that anyone can join at any time, with the likelihood of joining increasing with age.

[The Canadian government has often advocated for "people-first" language](#), which emphasizes putting the person first and the disability second: for example, saying a person with a spinal cord injury, or a person with a history of depression. Many disabled people, however, say the disability is not inside of the person: one is not a "person with a disability." Rather the naming should be of a "[disabled person](#)"—that is, [someone who is disabled by a world that is not equipped to allow them to participate and flourish](#). To learn about preferences for naming



some suggestions are to: include a reference to person, avoid broad groupings such as “the disabled,” and listen to people about personal preferences.

**Mental illness:** A disability that affects about one in five Canadians. It includes living with depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, or being bi-polar, all of which can be invisible or have visible effects. Although mental illness can be treated effectively, there is stigma and discrimination related to mental illness that creates barriers to diagnosis, treatment, and acceptance in the community. Some people and organizations also refer to mental illness as a disorder.

## **GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

**Cisgender:** A term that describes individuals whose gender identity is the same as the gender the person was assigned at birth.

**Gender/gender identity:** A social construct that differs from culture to culture. It is a self-determined identity that reflects an individual’s personal understanding of gender in regard to one’s own embodied experiences.

**Queer:** This term was used historically as an insult to Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ peoples, but members of the community have since begun reclaiming it. The term can also be used as an affirmative political and/or identity statement.

**Sex:** Gender and sex have often been used interchangeably, despite them having different meanings. At birth, people are usually assigned sexes based on their sex characteristics (such as genitals or chromosomes).

**Sexual orientation (also known as sexuality):** Refers to a person’s emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and sexual attraction.

**Trans/transgender:** An umbrella term whose meaning remains in flux. The term is used to refer to a person who has a gender identity that is different from the sex the person was assigned at birth, and/or expresses their gender in ways that differ from societal expectations for a binary of men and women. Trans people may identify with any sexual orientation. “Trans” is often used as a substitute for “transgender,” to include people of a wider variety of gender identities who may not feel comfortable adopting the term “transgender.”

**Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+:** An acronym used to denote identities of individuals and groups; can be understood to be inclusive of people who identify as Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender/transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual. This acronym is often changing and evolving, which is why in some contexts a common phrase is “people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.”

**Two-Spirited or Two-Spirit:** Indigenous Peoples who fulfill one of many mixed or cross-gender roles found traditionally. A direct translation of the Ojibwe term Niizh manidoowag, Two-Spirited or Two-Spirit is usually used to indicate a person whose body simultaneously houses a

masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. Not all Indigenous Peoples, however, are comfortable using this term. People who are non-Indigenous cannot self-identify as Two-Spirit.

Additional terms about gender and sexuality are listed in an excerpt from The United Church of Canada resource [\*Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith\*](#), 2019 edition.

## INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC): This refers to the right of Indigenous Peoples to be fully involved, as equal partners, in decision-making on issues that affect Indigenous Peoples and the territories of Indigenous Peoples. FPIC is a process in which Indigenous Peoples are fully informed, in advance, of plans for a project or development; are fully involved in consultations; and are free of coercion in the decision-making process, including any process of accommodation that might arise.

Indigenous Peoples: Refers to peoples who have inhabited territories since before the arrival of colonizers. In the last 20 years Indigenous Peoples worldwide have increasingly chosen this identity rather than the term “Aboriginal,” which is considered colonial language. In Canada, “Aboriginal” is still used in the constitutional context; however, most jurisdictions are moving toward “Indigenous.” There are three distinct groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit; there are cultural and linguistic differences among and within each of these groups. This diversity is one reason why the term “Indigenous Peoples” (with an “s”) is used rather than “Indigenous People.”

Nation to nation relationships: Relationships of equity, mutuality, and respect between states (such as Canada) and individual Indigenous nations. Such relationships existed in the very early days of Canada’s colonization, and were articulated in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and treaty-making, but were abandoned in the colonial quest for land and resources, Confederation, and an official policy of assimilation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has called for a return to nation-to-nation relationships.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): An international human rights instrument drafted by Indigenous Peoples and adopted by the United Nations in 2007. At that time, Canada was one of four nations to abstain from adopting the Declaration. Canada changed its mind in November 2010, stating that it recognized the Declaration as an “aspirational document.” In 2016, Canada announced that it would fully implement the Declaration, and in 2021, the federal government passed Bill C-15, which seeks to implement UNDRIP in Canadian law. Adoption of UNDRIP was a key recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and was directed also to the corporate sector and the churches. The United Church has adopted the Declaration and continues to be engaged in implementing it.

The UNDRIP does not grant any special or new rights to Indigenous Peoples, nor does it prioritize the rights of Indigenous Peoples over any other human rights. It simply codifies the

collective and individual rights that Indigenous Peoples have always held, including the rights to self-determination; participation in decision-making; spiritual identity; land and resources; free prior, and informed consent; and freedom from discrimination.

## **INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT**

**Bias:** An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Equity:** Equality refers to the practice of treating everyone the exactly same, no matter what identities they hold.

Equity, however, is different. Equity takes into account that due to the systemic discrimination that exists in society, not everyone starts in the same place. Equity realizes that in order to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all peoples, we need to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some people and groups—particularly people from marginalized communities. Equity does *not* mean treating everyone the same without regard for individual differences (and societal inequalities). Equity moves closer to justice, and it is part of the work of the whole church.

**Equity aspirations:** Equity aspirations are a practical tool for working toward our long-term goals around equity. They are a tool for approaching meetings, conversations, and report preparation. Equity aspirations invite us to question biases, challenge assumptions, notice who's missing, value all voices, aim for equity, and live out our commitments (as we strive to live out God's call). The equity aspirations are listed as part of the workbook for General Council 44, and are also noted in each session.

**Ethnic:** The Canadian government, in its census, still tends to use the term "ethnic" as a reference to the cultural origins of a person's ancestors. At times, and in different places, the word "ethnic" has been used interchangeably to mean "racialized" when in fact these are different concepts. (The term "racialized" is explained elsewhere in this document.)

In the United Church, the word "ethnic" has been used historically in church documents, but it has recently fallen out of favour. People in the United Church have recently offered considerable critique of the term "ethnic"—this word has its origins in the term "ethnos," which in turn has roots in the terms "pagan/heathen." The term "ethnic" is included in this glossary to help make sense of historical documents; however, it is likely not used in many current written materials.

**Intercultural:** Living together with a respectful awareness of each other's differences. We do this by examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly. Becoming an intercultural church is the call to live together in intentional ways where there is the mutual recognition and understanding of difference through self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power; it is also our attempt to respond faithfully to such a call. The intercultural commitment is also grounded in other United Church commitments, such as anti-

racism. As such, work related to anti-racism, and disabilities, is part of the church's intercultural engagement.

**Intercultural vision:** The intercultural vision was adopted by the Executive of General Council (GCE) in October 2012 as part of the report "[Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation.](#)" The vision notes that an intercultural church is one that is welcoming, relational, adaptive, justice-seeking, intentional, and missional. A plain language version is available in the [Intercultural Ministries](#) section of the United Church website.

**Power:** The ability to influence or impose one's will on others, even if those others resist. Power itself is not inherently good or bad; it depends on how the power is used. Power is dynamic and not static; not subjective; fluid and not binary; personal and systemic; situational and contextual. Personal power is the power that resides in a person. Systemic or institutional power is given by society based on the position that the person holds.

**Prejudice:** Pre-judgment—an attitude or state of mind that casts another person, either positively or negatively, based on stereotypes or misinformation. Prejudice is not the same as discrimination. Often the two terms are used interchangeably, but they are very different even when they are related. Prejudice is personal. It's about behaviour and personal beliefs, including beliefs that are shaped by wider society. Discrimination is social and structural. It is about which group has power and which does not, and which group has the power to impose its beliefs and preferences.

**Privilege:** Unearned power that gives certain people or groups economic, social, and/or political advantages simply by virtue of their belonging to a dominant identity group in society. People are often unaware of their own privilege.

There are two types of status: ascribed and prescribed. Prescribed status refers to people earning (i.e., by merit or favour). Ascribed status refers to people born into that status. Privilege is an example of ascribed status.

**Systemic or institutional discrimination:** Discrimination is an action or behaviour based on prejudice, manifesting itself in excluding or restricting persons and groups from participation in the community's normal activities; it can only be exercised by a group with more social, economic, or political power over another group. Systemic or institutional discrimination is embedded into the very structures of society and its institutions, noticed in visible effects, experienced subjectively, and often unrecognized by dominant members who benefit most from it.

## **RACE AND RACISM**

**Colour-blind:** Refers to the false notion that race does not matter in a social context or that race is neutral in a social context. "Colour-blindness" can keep people from raising concerns about racial inequalities. It can also dismiss the lived experiences of Indigenous and racialized peoples who tend to have regular and ongoing experiences of systemic racism. This is because "colour-

blindness” suggests that racism will go away simply if one ignores it, and it pretends that it does not exist.

A “colour-blind” perspective might be expressed as stating something like “I do not see colour” or “We are all just part of the human race” or “All lives matter” when talking about people. In reality, however, very young children notice racial and colour differences in people, and most adults will also notice racial differences. Ignoring racial differences usually does not aid in dismantling racism.

Race: Race is a Western social construct; it’s a human creation. It describes a socially defined group seen by others as being distinct by sharing external features such as skin colour, facial or bodily characteristics, hair texture, and/or a common descent. There is no proven scientific basis for such categorization. It’s a powerful, frequently damaging construct. That race is not “scientific” or biological does not make it any less powerful.

Racialized: This term is commonly used instead of “racial minority,” “visible minority,” “person of colour,” or “non-White.” The term “racial minority” is one that is not used as much because, while racialized people may have fewer numbers in some parts of Canada, racialized people are not a minority in the world.

The people of the United Church have tended to “racialized” instead of the term “BIPOC” (which is an acronym for “Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour”).

Racism: A system of oppression fed by individual and collective attitudes and by actions that discriminate against, oppress, exclude, and limit people on the basis of race and/or the colour of their skin. It is systemic because it has the power to inhibit the realization of the full potential of humanness by those who experience racial discrimination. The struggle to eliminate racism is a justice issue.

#### Racism

- is a system of advantage and privilege based on “race,” in which one group of people exercises abusive power over others on the basis of skin colour and racial heritage
- is a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology that accords inherent superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another or others
- is measured not by intent but by its effect or impact on those oppressed
- can be “in your face” or hidden; individual or systemic; intentional or unintentional
- gives privilege to, and sustains, the dominant/powerful group
- exists everywhere in our society, including all institutions and the church
- can be acted on personally, but it always refers back to a bigger system of power, privilege, and related inequities

White privilege: Unearned power given to White people that gives White people economic, political, social, and cultural advantages. White privilege is an institutional and social set of

benefits granted to people who physically resemble the people who dominate the powerful positions in our society and in its institutions. Because of Canada's historical ties to European empires and to their long process of colonization, people of northern European descent and/or appearance (i.e., White Canadians) have social privileges and power that racialized people and Indigenous peoples do not. The ability to speak English fluently and with a "Canadian" accent is also part of White privilege in the Canadian context.

Whiteness: This is a broad cultural category—a way of being—that tends to normalize White racial identities. Whiteness is considered to be "dominant" and can sometimes go on without question. In the Canadian context, people of many racial identities participate in the culture of Whiteness; however, White privilege means that White people are more easily able to navigate and benefit from this culture.

As a category, Whiteness is fluid and changes over time. For example, at one point, some immigrants to Canada from some places within western Europe were not considered to be "White," whereas more recently, many people from western Europe are included in the category of "Whiteness."

## Moderator Nominee

### REV. DR. CARMEN LANSDOWNE



#### Nominating Body

Pacific Mountain Regional Council

#### Brief Biography

Carmen Lansdowne is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation, and a life-long member of The United Church of Canada. Baptized into the United Church in 1975, she waited until adulthood to make a profession of faith that came from a deep sense of personal spirituality and a calling to participate fully in the life and work of the church.

She attended the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) in the MDiv program from 2003 to 2007, and after successful completion of her internship at Marengo Pastoral Charge (Alsask and Loverna, SK), she was ordained to further study in 2007. She completed coursework for a ThM degree at VST in 2008, then moved to Berkeley, CA, where she commenced coursework for a PhD at the Graduate Theological Union. She completed the ThM in 2011 and the PhD in 2016.

In addition to her theological contributions as a writer and speaker, Carmen has served the church in a variety of roles. From 2006 to 2013 she served on the Executive and Central Committees of the World Council of Churches, as well as being an ex-officio corresponding member of the Executive of the General Council. She continues to attend global theological and church gatherings by invitation. She has served on the Pension Board of The United Church of Canada, the Theology and Inter-Church-Inter-Faith Committee, executive search committees for the General Council Office and the World Council of Churches, and various subcommittees of both the WCC and the United Church. She served as one of six facilitators offering feedback from commissioners at General Council 43. She currently chairs the Indigenous Candidacy Board of the United Church and sits on the Keepers of the Vision of the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. She also recently joined the Board of Directors of the Vancouver Foundation—Canada's largest community foundation.

Carmen joined First United Church Community Ministry Society as Executive Director in February 2017. Under her leadership, she has effected an organizational turnaround resulting in

increased capacity and stability. She has also shepherded to construction phase a \$65-million redevelopment of First United's property in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The new purpose-built facility will triple First United's programming and ministry space and add 103 non-market rental units of Indigenous housing (to be operated by Lu'ma Native Housing Society).

Under Carmen's leadership, First United has developed strong labour relations with its unionized staff, built a highly skilled and committed leadership team, increased revenues, and become a certified living wage employer. She worships at Lynn Valley United Church as she is able.

She continues to maintain academic interests through guest lectures and various writing projects and as a Christ Institute Fellow with the Westar Institute. Carmen guest preaches at different communities of faith several times a year, and remains committed to Indigenous way of being, parenting, and partnering. She lives in North Vancouver with her partner, two children, and their dog Cocoa.

## **A Statement of Vision**

I am deeply humbled by the call to serve The United Church of Canada by letting my name stand for the role of Moderator. This call has come from a circle of friends, colleagues, mentors, and elders whom I deeply trust, and whose words of encouragement, caution, excitement, and concern I have sat with in prayer.

The role of Moderator is a permanent leadership position in our church in its current iteration, but one of the best things about our church is the fact that the leadership within the role is not permanent. As such, over time the church has benefited through the diverse backgrounds and gifts of those who have gone before—shaping and tending this branch of the Christian tree that is so dear to us as Canadians.

The past two years have been particularly challenging: We have suffered the very harsh and real impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the economic, racial, political, and social divisions it has worsened at all levels of society. The confirmation of thousands of unmarked graves across the country, sparked by 215 graves found at the former site of Kamloops Indian Residential School (and then over 6,000+ and counting across the country) has renewed calls for Canada to seriously address Indigenous justice concerns. We are on a continuing journey of examining the long and troubled relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians; the Indigenous church has not yet "accepted" the 1986 apology—in many ways we are still waiting for the rest of the church to make the necessary changes to live into that apology. I believe this is still an area of misunderstanding for many in the church, and bears further discussion as part of our denominational journey of repentance and healing. And I believe that there is much the non-Indigenous church can learn from Indigenous peoples as part of that journey.

So many of our traditional Indigenous cultures are deeply place-based, grounded in concepts that roughly translate to "the good living/the good life." That good living is an active



relationship of reciprocity and respect for the earth our mother—a respect that is based on striking balance and a differently oriented political and economic systems and stronger social connection. The Climate Emergency is not waiting for political systems to catch up. We have elders who remind us that there were other ways of living, and youth demanding we reorient ourselves to preserve any quality of life for their future. Those of us who make decisions about our elders and our youth have a moral obligation to take the climate emergency seriously and to call on our country to pivot in radical ways, ways that we know are possible due to the types of policy changes and leadership we saw during the Second World War and the Apollo Mission in the US—and in our global and collective responses (as imperfect as they were) to COVID-19.

Our church is currently working to be a place of deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice. All three of those are traditions deeply grounding our faith: prayer and awe at the Mystery, living in the way of Jesus, and trying to seek structures and systems in society that would realize the world we believe a triune God calls us to co-create so that we might have life and have it in abundance. Traditional Indigenous ways of life are deeply spiritual, based on protocols that govern our interactions with each other towards right action, and a commitment to living in balance with the world and with each other. In many ways, we were traditionally focused on the present and the future in a way that could be life-giving for our collective futures. So much of Western civilization is focused on tradition, on the past, on facts. Those things are important, but rather than history and story being based on timelines and definitions of what is “true” or “fact,” history for Indigenous peoples is meant to teach us how to be together in this moment and into the future. The concept of looking into the future seven generations to make sure we realize the full consequences of our actions today would require us to make decisions differently in order to truly live with respect in creation and to create that good living for all.

As we continue to live into this newly restructured church and are still trying to find our bearings, many of us are still grieving what was. In particular, the process and outcomes of restructuring has left the Indigenous church adrift in many ways. The restructuring of the church (and the elimination of transfer and settlement before that) have also impacted the rural church in challenging ways.

Can we pivot in a three-year period and shed our colonial baggage, solving all of our societal, political, economic, or environmental problems? No. But we can live into our 2006 commitment to each other to become an intercultural church. Being an intercultural church together means that we are radically committed to community, to granting each other dignity, and to listening to each other in ways that transform who each of us is and who we are together. It is heeding the biblical call to “Fear not.” It is gathering when we fear there isn’t enough but realizing there are fishes and loaves among us. It is watching everyday events and realizing they are as miraculous as turning water into wine or seeing Jesus walk on water.

My vision for The United Church of Canada is that together we can work to continue to define who we are. To build new connections and rebuild old ones. To work towards social change that sees a world cared for and human dignity honoured. To walk together every day in

repentance and reconciliation. To march and fight and change unjust systems together. To pray together. To sing together. To discern together. Because truly we are not alone. We live in God's world.

### Proposals by Origin

Proposal #	Title	Way Forward Proposal	Originator
ARW01	Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews	WF19: ARW01, SW03 Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
ARW02	Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability	WF20: ARW02 Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
ARW03	Vocational Process Accountability	WF21: ARW03, SW04 Vocational Process Accountability	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
ARW04	A Jurisdiction of Clergy	WF22: ARW04 A Jurisdiction of Clergy	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
ARW05	Care of the Church's Marginalized	WF26: ARW05, SW08 Care of the Church's Marginalized	Antler River Watershed Regional Council
AUD01	Audit Committee Recommendations		Audit Committee
CS01	Just Peace in Palestine and Israel	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Canadian Shield Regional Council
CS02	Essential Agreement	WF13: CS02, CW01, WOW01 Essential Agreement	Canadian Shield Regional Council
CW01	Requiring Ongoing Essential Agreement for Ministry Personnel	WF13: CS02, CW01, WOW01 Essential Agreement	Chinook Winds Regional Council
CW02	Initiating Dialogue on Church Union	WF02: CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union	Chinook Winds Regional Council
ECO01	Clergy Consultative Committee	WF14: ECO01 Clergy Consultative Committee	East Central Ontario Regional Council
ECO02	Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships	WF15: ECO02 Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships	East Central Ontario Regional Council
FSL01	Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Way Forward Proposal</b>	<b>Originator</b>
GCE01	Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program	WF23: GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program	General Council Executive
GCE02	Updated Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process - Short Term Supply		General Council Executive
GCE03	A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada	WF07: GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada	General Council Executive
GCE04	Just Peace in Palestine and Israel	WF08: GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel	General Council Executive
GCE05	Living into the Strategic Plan	WF03: GCE05 Living into the Strategic Plan	General Council Executive
GCE06 A	Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s	WF16: GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s - Part A	General Council Executive
GCE06 B	Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s	WF16: GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s - Part B	General Council Executive
GCE07	Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model	WF39: GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model	General Council Executive
GS01	Opening Procedural (February 2022)		General Secretary
GS02	Consent (February 2022)		General Secretary
GS03	Amalgamation of Congregations	WF27: GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations	General Secretary
GS04	Approving Minutes via Email	–	General Secretary
GS05	Discipline of Members and Adherents	WF28: GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents	General Secretary
GS06	Formal Hearings and Appeals - Extension of Time Periods		General Secretary
GS07	Remit Process Revisions	WF29: GS07 Remit Process Revisions	General Secretary

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Way Forward Proposal</b>	<b>Originator</b>
GS08	Climate Justice Commitment	WF01: GS08 Climate Justice Commitment	General Secretary
GS09	Affirm Existing Assessment Rate and Related Principles	WF30 GS09: Affirm Existing Assessment Rate and Related Principles	General Secretary
GS10	Living into Reconciliation	WF32: GS10 Living into Reconciliation	General Secretary
GS11	Relationship with the Methodist Church - Bermuda (NEW)	WF04: GS11 Relationship with the Methodist Church - Bermuda	General Secretary
GS12	Procedural (June 2022)		General Secretary
GS13	Consent (June 2022)		General Secretary
GS14	Challenging Anti-Semitism in The United Church of Canada (NEW - June)	WF12: GS14 Challenging Anti-Semitism in The United Church of Canada	General Secretary
GS15	Procedural (July 2022)		General Secretary
GS16	Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s - Part B	WF16: GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s	General Secretary
GS17	WF09 CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	General Secretary
N:ka01	Theological Education	WF17: N:ka01 Theological Education	Nakonha:ka Regional Council
N:ka02	Membership in United Church Through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith	WF06: N:ka02 Membership in United Church Through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith	Nakonha:ka Regional Council
N:ka03	Recognition of La Table des ministères en français	WF33 N:ka03 Recognition of La Table des ministères en français	Nakonha:ka Regional Council
NEW01	Diaconal Educational Pathways for the Future	WF18: NEW01 Diaconal Educational Pathways for the Future	
NEW02	To Have the United Church Recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915	WF40: NEW02 To Have the United Church Recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915	

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Way Forward Proposal</b>	<b>Originator</b>
NEW03	Supporting Immigration Process for Ministry Personnel	WF41: NEW03 Supporting Immigration Process for Ministry Personnel	
NIC01	National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church	WF31: NIC01 National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church	National Indigenous Council
NOM01	Appointments to GCE		Nominations Committee
NOM02	Appointment to General Council Committees		Nominations Committee
NS01	Commemoration of Emancipation Sunday		Northern Spirit Regional Council
NS02	Community of Faith Meeting Quorum	WF34: NS02 Community of Faith Meeting Quorum	Northern Spirit Regional Council
NS03	Criteria and Authority for a Regional Council to End a Pastoral Relationship	WF35: NS03 Criteria and Authority for a Regional Council to End a Pastoral Relationship	Northern Spirit Regional Council
PM01	Alberni Indian Residential School	WF10: PM01 Alberni Indian Residential School	Pacific Mountain Regional Council
PM02	A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine Cry of Hope	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Pacific Mountain Regional Council
PM03	Pension Equity for UCC Pension Plan Members	WF36: PM03, SW06 Pension & Salary Equity	Pacific Mountain Regional Council
RC1501	Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Regional Council 15
RC1502	Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave	WF37: RC1502 Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave	Regional Council 15
SW01	Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction	WF11: SW01 Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction	Shining Waters Regional Council

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Way Forward Proposal</b>	<b>Originator</b>
SW02	Raising our Voice for Human Rights	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW03	Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews	WF19: ARW01, SW03 Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW04	Vocational Process Accountability	WF21: ARW03, SW04 Vocational Process Accountability	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW05	A Jurisdiction of Clergy	WF24: SW05 A Jurisdiction of Clergy	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW06	Ministry Personnel Salary Equity	WF36: PM03, SW06 Pension & Salary Equity	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW07	Review of New Structure	WF38: SW07 Review of New Structure	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW08	Care of the Church's Marginalized	WF26: ARW05, SW08 Care of the Church's Marginalized	Shining Waters Regional Council
SW09	Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel (NEW)	WF09: CS01, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02, SW09 Peace in Palestine and Israel	Shining Waters Regional Council
TICIF01	Membership	WF05: TICIF01 Membership	Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee
WOW01	Faithful Ministry Personnel	WF13: CS02, CW01, WOW01 Essential Agreement	Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
WOW02	Including Rest & Renewal for GC & Regional Staff on Extended Developmental Leaves	WF25: WOW02 Including Rest & Renewal for GC & Regional Staff on Extended Developmental Leaves	Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

## Minutes of the 44th General Council, 2022

### Sunday, February 13, 2022

The 44th General Council of The United Church of Canada met electronically over several months in 2022 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – the longest General Council in the 97-year history of The United Church of Canada, and the first to be held virtually. The Council was divided into five parts: an opening session, several learning sessions, discussion sessions, decision sessions and the installation of the 44th Moderator. The opening session was held on Sunday, February 13, 2022. This was followed by learning sessions held from March through May. Discussion sessions took place from Friday, June 17, to Sunday, June 19. Decision sessions were held from Thursday, July 21, to Monday, July 25. The meeting of the 44th General Council, 2022, concluded with the installation of the newly elected Moderator on Sunday, August 7, 2022.

The Moderator, The Right Reverend Richard Bott, presided. The General Council 44 Commissioners gathered with ecumenical, interfaith, and global partners; honoured Elders; Youth Forum members; past Moderators; equity, facilitation, and technical support teams; as well as visitors watching by virtue of livestreaming.

Prior to the start of the first session in February there were various instructions regarding how to access English/French translation, how polling and voting would take place, how to be recognized to speak or raise a point of order, and the role of the Equity Team. There was also instruction regarding not using the “chat” function for business. All these instructions were repeated prior to every gathering.

#### **Constituting the Meeting**

The Moderator constituted the meeting, “Au nom de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l’Église, et par l’autorité qui m’a été conférée par le quarante-troisième Conseil général, I hereby declare this meeting of the 44th General Council to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it to the glory of God.”

The Moderator then welcomed all those gathered for this meeting of the 44th General Council.

#### **Honoured Elders and Territory Acknowledgement**

Elenor Thompson and Ray Jones, the Indigenous Elders accompanying the 44th General Council, were introduced. Elenor is from the Cree community of Oxford House in northern Manitoba. She studied at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and at Vancouver School of Theology, and was the first minister ordained through the National Indigenous Council. Ray is hereditary Chief of the Gitksan First Nation, at Gitsegukla, in British Columbia. Ray was a member of the Board of Governors of the Vancouver School of Theology and has been a long-time member of the KAIROS Canada Indigenous Rights Circle, co-chairing it for a number of years. He is past-chair of the Aboriginal Ministries Council in Pacific Mountain Region.



These introductions were followed by a territory acknowledgement during which the Moderator spoke about colonialism, responsibility and reparations, in addition to the growing understanding on the part of the settler church that land acknowledgments need to be accompanied by action, thought and sensitivity to the current presence and history of Indigenous people on the land. The Moderator then invited those gathered to name the land from which they were joining the meeting and to sit in silence for a moment to consider how to walk in a good way.

### **Worship Elements**

The Worship Team was coordinated by Graham Brownmiller, in ministry at Jubilee United, in Vancouver, BC, who served as chair of the Worship Committee. The committee consisted of Nicole Beaudry (Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council), Bev Brazier (Pacific Mountain Regional Council), Ivan Gregan (Regional Council 15), Kenji Marui (Antler River Watershed Regional Council), and Alydia Smith (worship staff General Council Office). Curt Allison, member of the ministry team at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Vancouver, BC, and a music team provided the music for the meeting.

Worship was woven throughout the entire meeting, and incorporated scripture readings, prayer, music, and testimonials in both French and English. Worship throughout General Council 44 was based on the theme "Who do you say that I am?" from the gospel of Mark, chapter 8.

Communion was celebrated, led by the Moderator and Graham Brownmiller, who encouraged those gathered virtually to participate as well. This was followed by the prayers of the people, and M&S offering video, and a video montage, "Who is Jesus to you."

A reading from the gospel of Mark 8:27–30 was read several times in different voices and languages. After the scripture readings the Moderator's sermon reflected on the theme of "Who do you say that I am?" in contemplating the diversity of who we are and what Jesus means to us. Moderator Richard named points of divergence as well as points of similarity and the wide variety of experiences that have been brought into the story of The United Church of Canada.

Memorable in this opening session were the diverse voices from coast to coast to coast, as well as from other parts of the globe, sharing scripture and reflection on the council's theme: "Who do you say I am?" The gathered community felt the power of scripture in a new and profound way when Shayna Jones of we are STORYFOLK sang the gospel message.

One of the ecumenical partners, the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson of the United Church of Christ, reflected on Jesus by saying: "Passive Jesus is not my Jesus. My Jesus is a revolutionary. Jesus is an advocate for the poor." Others said "Redeemer," "Love incarnate," "Teacher," while another voice spoke of Jesus as "a beautiful creative active God. A gesture that says God wants to be with us and understands us and wants to accompany us as we build a better world with God."

## Introductions

The General Secretary, Michael Blair, provided a brief summary of participants at this meeting. Those participating included Commissioners, global, ecumenical and inter-faith partners, Youth Forum participants, past Moderators, visitors and staff support. He encouraged everyone to peruse the biographies of the various partners that were included in the Workbook and to communicate with any of the partners using the chat feature incorporated into the meeting platform.

The nominee for Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne, was introduced. This was followed by the introduction of the Facilitation Team, the Equity Team, and the Friends in Council. Philip Peacock, Executive for Justice and Witness, and Co-General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, was introduced as the keynote speaker. His keynote address was scheduled for the opening of the business sessions in July 2022.

Susan Brodrick, Chair of the General Council 44 Planning Committee, welcomed all those present to the meeting. She noted that the planning for this meeting had covered a span of almost four years and had transformed from what was going to be an in-person meeting in Calgary, Alberta, in July of 2021, to being the first fully virtual meeting of a General Council. Though the work of this Council would be done in a new and different way, she was confident that it would still be done well.

## Equity Support

The General Secretary began by noting that the practice of equity support had been suggested at the 43rd General Council as a way to live into the church's equity commitments during meetings. One of the members of the Equity Support Team, Maedith Radlein, explained that the presence of the equity team was to help the church live into its commitment to be just, to make issues such as racism, Indigenous right relations, and sexual and gender identity priorities in its mission. The equity team was asked to observe procedures and practices, as well as to listen to discussions to understand where the United Church is on its journey, and to see where improvements or a review could be beneficial for the group. She encouraged Commissioners to be open to alternate perspectives, to be aware of privilege, and to strive to include all voices in conversations and decisions.

There was an explanation of how to find the Equity Team on the meeting platform and how to connect with them during the meeting regarding any questions or concerns.

### Equity Aspirations

Remember to...

1. Question biases
2. Challenge assumptions
3. Notice who's missing
4. Value all voices
5. Aim for equity

### Pour cibler l'équité

Assurez-vous...

1. de déceler les préjugés
2. de remettre en question les idées préconçues
3. de prendre conscience des absents
4. d'accorder une valeur à toutes les voix
5. de viser l'équité

6. Live out our commitments	6. de mettre en pratique nos engagements
...as we strive to live out God's call	...lorsque nous incarnons l'appel de Dieu

Because of technical issues table time did not occur. The Moderator noted that the Business Table would try to find another way for the table groups to connect.

### **Business Process**

The Moderator introduced Allan Buckingham, Chair of the Business Committee. Allan outlined how business would be conducted throughout the virtual meeting over the next several months.

Allan noted that the goal was that this General Council would build on the knowledge of all those gathered. The Business Committee was hoping to improve on the discussion process first used in Oshawa at GC43. Having more time between the various aspects of decision-making should allow for more prayer and discernment.

The learning times were scheduled to begin March 9, with the discussion sessions following in mid-June. The goal was to have deep, meaningful conversations regarding the issues before the church. After the discussion session the Facilitation Team would look at the output from the discussions to discern commonalities and themes, and suggest ways forward on each proposal. These would be shared before the end of June, with the final decision session taking place in July.

Allan closed with the hope that the 44th General Council would be moved by the spirit and the wisdom of the risen Christ in the decisions made.

### **GS01 Opening Procedural Motions**

The General Secretary outlined the opening procedural motions, noting how business will be dealt with at this General Council. He particularly noted that because the General Council meeting is spread over so many months, the GC43 Executive will continue to meet as needed until the close of the 44th General Council in August 2022.

### **Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-01**

#### **Corresponding Members**

That the following persons who are in attendance be corresponding members of the 44th General Council 2022 and as such, be entitled to speak but not to move motions or to vote:

- all former Moderators;
- global partner representatives, ecumenical, inter-faith and official guests of the 44th General Council 2022;
- nominees for Moderator;
- members of the General Council Executive, National Indigenous Council, and National Indigenous Elders Council who are not Commissioners;

- Youth Forum participants who are not Commissioners;
- those who have been requested by the General Secretary, General Council to serve as resource persons to the Council;
- members of the Business Committee who are not Commissioners;
- General Council Officers, Executive Ministers, Executive Officers, and Regional Council Executive Ministers.

## **Resource People**

### **Business Committee Membership**

That the Business Committee for the 44th General Council be:

- Allan Buckingham, Chair
- Richard Bott, Moderator
- Sue Brodrick Chair, General Council Planning Committee
- Michael Blair, General Secretary, General Council
- Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, Northern Spirit, Living Skies, Prairie to Pine Regional Councils
- Rosemary Lambie, Executive Minister, East Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario Outaouais, Conseil regional Nakonha:ka Regional Councils
- Nicole Treksler, Legal Counsel
- Maya Douglas, Ministry Personnel, St. James United Church, Etobicoke, Ontario

### **Friends in Council**

That the Friend(s) in Council for the 44th General Council be:

- Nancy Nourse
- Marie-Claude Manga

### **Scrutineers**

That the Scrutineers for the 44th General Council 2022 be:

- Cam Watts
- Sarah Charters
- Faith March-MacCuish

### **Facilitation Team**

That the Facilitation Team for the 44th General Council 2022 be:

- Mardi Tindal
- M (Meghan) Chorney
- Hewitt Holmes
- Carmen Lansdowne
- Eric Lukacs

### **Equity Support Team**

That the members of the Equity Support Team for the 44th General Council be:

- Sharon Ballantyne
- Albertine Chokoté Naoué
- Koshy David
- Steven Johann
- Jenni Leslie
- Torrin Maag
- Maedith Radlein

### **Business before the 44th General Council 2022**

That the reports and proposals provided along with any additions, and any new business received by the deadline for new business, be received for consideration by the 44th General Council 2022.

### **Business Procedures**

That the following business procedures be adopted:

The Moderator will chair the meeting, making any rulings necessary and ensuring that there is full opportunity for discussion and decision making.

Business at the meeting will be considered according to the following three-phase process:

1. *Learning phase:* Information sessions will inform Commissioners about the issues related to the various proposals on the agenda. These sessions will take place between March 9, 2022 and May 4, 2022. Commissioners will participate either in person or by viewing the recordings on the PheedLoop application.
2. *Discussion phase:* The discussion phase will take place between June 17–19, 2022. Commissioners and corresponding members will meet in online discussion groups with pre-named hosts and a rapporteur. Within the discussion groups, they share what they have heard through the listening phase so everyone is informed about all the issues. Discussion groups deliberate on the proposals. Rapporteurs will record comments, affirmations, and suggestions in a summary paragraph or two capturing the essence of the discussion, not necessarily specific things said. The discussion groups confirm the information to be recorded and shared. Reports from all discussion groups are available for viewing by the entire Council and the Facilitation Team.
- 2a. *Synthesis of the discussions:* The Facilitation Team will analyze all the Discussion Group notes looking for common and important thoughts on each item before the Council. After thought and discussion, the Facilitation Team will compile Suggested Ways Forward based on the original items before the Council and the feedback received from the Discussion Groups.
3. *Decision-making phase:* The Facilitation Team will prepare refined proposals based on their discernment from the discussion group reports. These refined proposals will be available prior to the start of the decision-making session on July 22, 2022 There will be

debate and further refinement of proposals in plenary, if needed, with the Facilitation Team returning to do more refinement as necessary. The process concludes with a motion in response to the proposal, final debate and a vote on the motion.

During the decision-making phase in plenary, the Moderator will apply the rules set out below and the rules set out in *The Manual Appendix, Procedures for Holding a Meeting and Decision-Making*.

Commissioners and corresponding members wishing to speak will:

- raise their virtual hands to be included on a speakers list. The Equity Team will support the Moderator to ensure that a variety of voices are heard. Speakers will not necessarily be heard in the order in which they raised their hand;
- be recognized by the Moderator or Discussion group host, prior to speaking;
- begin comments by identifying themselves by name, role, and Regional Council (or position as appropriate);
- only speak once to a given proposal except at the discretion of the Moderator;
- each new speaker should offer a new perspective or information;
- speak for no longer than 90 seconds except at the discretion of the Moderator;
- use the designated procedural toggle to raise a point of order, that is to raise a specific question of procedure with the Moderator;
- use the designated toggle to raise points of personal privilege, to be limited to comments noting that the individual raising the point has been insulted or maligned in the current debate.

For multi-part motions, a separate vote will be conducted on each part if requested by a Commissioner.

Note: General concerns about the meeting (inability to hear, missing documentation) will be raised directly with the Friends in Council, who will determine how the concern will be addressed. Concerns for the well-being of individuals, celebrations of birthdays, etc. will be made to the Friends in Council, who will coordinate these for “community moments.”

Voting at the meeting will be by electronic ballot unless otherwise specified.

### **Prioritizing Work**

The work of the 44th General Council 2022 will be assigned based on the priorities named by Commissioners of the 44th General Council 2022, as determined through consultation prior to the discussion sessions. The Business Committee will review and group all proposals by theme/issue based on the strategic objectives of the GCO Strategic plan. Following the learning sessions, General Council Commissioners will be asked to prioritize the proposals. The proposals named by the General Council Commissioners will serve as the priority agenda for the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022. Any proposals not dealt with during the meeting will be referred to the Executive of the General Council or the General Secretary.

**Procedure for Withdrawing Proposals from the Consent Motion**

The following procedure will apply in the event that a Commissioner desires that a proposal be withdrawn from the consent motion and/or that a proposal be assigned to a body other than that recommended by the Business Committee:

- 3a. The Commissioner making such a request will have one minute to make their request and provide their rationale for their request;
- 4a. The request will be granted only if a majority of Commissioners vote in favor of it; and
- 5a. If an item of business is removed from the consent motion, the Moderator will direct the Business Committee to find a place for the work consistent with the request.

**New Business**

Any new business submitted between February 13, 2022 and March 30, 2022 will be dealt with by the 44th General Council, any other new business submitted after March 30, 2022 will be sent to the Executive of the General Council for disposition or may be considered in this meeting at the discretion of the Business Table.

Notices of new business (including the draft proposal) will be presented in writing to the Business Committee. The Business Committee will report items of new business and might recommend for incorporation into the agenda for the decision of the Council based on the following criteria:

- a. arising unexpectedly in response to the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022;
- b. arising in response to global or national matters that occur during the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022; and
- c. as determined by the court on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

New business not dealt with by the 44th General Council 2022 will be dealt with by a motion to refer to the Executive of the General Council or the General Secretary.

**Election of Moderator**

That the following be approved as the process for nominations and election of the 44th Moderator of The United Church of Canada:

1. Nominations from Regional Councils and the National Indigenous Council will be closed on May 30, 2022. Nominations may be made by Commissioners from the floor until June 17, 2022. There must be a mover and a seconder, and the nominee must indicate willingness to stand for election and provide confirmation that they are a member of The United Church of Canada (per The Manual 2022,D.4.1.1). The Moderator will call for any further nominations just before the official close of nominations from the floor.
2. Nominations from the floor of the 44th General Council 2022 will be declared closed during Discussion Session A, on June 17, 2022.
3. After the closing of nominations, all nominees will be introduced to the Council.
4. Nominees will address the 44th General Council 2022, individually, on July 22, 2022, by recorded video.

5. Voting will be by ballot and take place on July 23, 2022.
6. Any nominee who receives 50% plus one of the votes cast will be declared elected as the new Moderator.
7. The name on the ballot with the lowest number of votes will be released from subsequent ballots; if there is a tie in the number of votes cast for the nominees with the lowest number of votes in their favour, the nominees who are tied will be released from subsequent ballots.
8. The results of each ballot will be announced to the nominees on that ballot, before being announced to the Council.
9. Announcements of the results of the ballots will take place at times determined by the Moderator with advice from the Business Committee.
10. Tallies of votes will not be announced.
11. The new Moderator will be installed on Sunday, August 7, 2022 at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto.

### **Minutes of the 43rd General Council 2018**

That the minutes of the 43rd General Council 2018 be approved.

### **Minute Secretary**

That the Minute Secretary for the 44th General Council 2022 be Shirley Welch.

### **Reports**

That the 44th General Council 2022 accept the accountability report of the Executive of the General Council.

That the 44th General Council 2022 receive for information the following reports:

- . Moderator's Accountability Report
- . Moderator's Advisory Committee Report
- . General Secretary's Accountability Report
- . National Indigenous Council Accountability Report
- . Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Accountability Report
- . Report on Membership
- . Report on Questions to be Asked of Persons to be Commissioned, Ordained, Recognized or Admitted in the Celebration of Ministries Service
- . Board of Vocation Accountability Report
- . Manual Committee Report
- . General Council Judicial Committee Report
- . Minutes of the Executive of the General Council – June 2018 to June 2022 (found in the United Church Commons)
- . Actions of the Executive of the General Council – Summary Report (found in the United Church Commons)



## Agenda

That the 44th General Council 2022 accept, as its agenda, the agenda as circulated and approved, on the understanding that the agenda may be changed, as necessary, by the action of the 44th General Council 2022, on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

## Budget Constraints

All motions having significant budget implications for the General Council Office shall be considered “in principle only” and, if adopted, be referred to the Executive of the General Council to implement to the fullest extent possible within adopted budgetary constraints.

## Executive of the General Council

That the Executive of the 43rd General Council be authorized to deal with all routine and emergency work of the General Council during the recess times of this 2022 meeting of the 44th General Council.

## Carried

## GS02 Plenary Consent

The General Secretary introduced the Consent proposal. He noted that proposal *GS04 Approving Minutes via Emails* had been lifted from the consent proposal as it had been passed previously by the General Council 43 Executive. There was an opportunity for questions and comments, including clarification about how to remove an item from the consent agenda. After the proposal had been moved and seconded, several of the proposals were lifted from consent.

## Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick

GC44 2022-02

That the 44th General Council (2022) approve the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals:

- GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations
- ~~GS04 Approving Minutes via Emails~~
- GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents
- GS06 Formal Hearings and Appeals – Extension of Time Periods
- GS07 Remit Process Revision
- GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program
- GCE02 Updated Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process – Short Term Supply
- NS01 Commemoration of Emancipation Sunday
- SW07 Review of New Structure
- SW08/ARW05 Care of the Church’s Marginalized (Discontinued Service List)

## Motion to amend: John Watson/Colin Swan

That *GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

## Carried

**Motion to amend: Samuel Grottenberg/Denis Ashby**

That *GS07 Remit Process Revision* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

**Carried**

**Motion to amend: Heather Sandilands/John Watson**

That *GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel While in Directed Program* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

**Carried**

**Motion to amend: Beth Johnston/Paul Reed**

That *SW07 Review of New Structure* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

**Carried**

**Motion to amend: Penny Culverson/Paul Reed**

That *GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

**Carried**

**Motion to amend: Denis Ashby/Oakley Hart**

That *SW08/ARW05 Care of the Church's Marginalized (DSL)* be lifted from the consent motion and be referred to the Business Table for further action.

**Carried**

**Motion as amended:**

That the 44th General Council (2022) approve the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals:

- ~~GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations~~
- ~~GS04 Approving Minutes via Emails~~
- ~~GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents~~
- ~~GS06 Formal Hearings and Appeals — Extension of Time Periods~~
- ~~GS07 Remit Process Revision~~
- ~~GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program~~
- GCE02 Updated Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process – Short Term Supply
- NS01 Commemoration of Emancipation Sunday
- ~~SW07 Review of New Structure~~
- ~~SW08/ARW05 Care of the Church's Marginalized (Discontinued Service List)~~

**Carried**

**Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice**

The 43rd General Council, in October 2021, approved a new call and vision statement: Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice as an expression of who we are as The United Church of Canada. A video was shown highlighting this new vision for the church.

**Business Reminders**

Allan Buckingham briefly reminded Commissioners and corresponding members that the learning sessions would begin March 9 and that they would be recorded for the benefit of any who could not attend in person. The learning sessions are the mechanism to learn more about the proposals and to ask questions. Allan also noted that the closing date for nominations for Moderator was June 17, the first day of the discussion sessions.

**Elder Reflections**

The Moderator invited Elenor Thompson and Ray Jones to share any thoughts that they might have after this first portion of the 44th General Council meeting. Elenor shared greetings (and her challenges with technology). She spoke of the positive attributes of the United Church and that to her Jesus is truth. Ray greeted those present in Gitxsan and briefly spoke of his residential school experiences. He spoke of the hope held in the proposal coming from the National Indigenous Council regarding a new structure for the Indigenous church alongside the established church structure. Both Ray and Elenor spoke of the new way of working in the church.

Addressing the Council later in the session, Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson affirmed what she had seen, spoke of the challenge and value of learning, and encouraged the council to persevere even in adversity, with a view to what Jesus would do. Elenor responded to the council theme, speaking of Jesus as truth, the truth that comes when we accept ourselves as the way the Creator made us. Honoured Elder Ray Jones reflected on theme in his language, Gitxsan. Based in strong beliefs in the Creator, he described Jesus as the son of God, the son of the Creator, and encouraged the council to be committed to equity, to live side by side as Indigenous and non-Indigenous church, and to face the future unafraid.

The Moderator thanked Elenor and Ray for their comments, and their presence with the Council.

**Equity Team Reflections**

The Moderator invited Jenni Leslie, a member of the Equity Team, to share impressions gathered by the team of this first portion of the General Council meeting. Jenni noted that though mistakes would be made during the course of the meeting, it was important to apologize and move forward striving for equity. She noted that many positive comments had been received regarding the music that was shared throughout the gathering. They had received questions about some terminology and noted that a glossary of terms was available in the workbook. Jenni closed by noting that the equity aspirations are to be used by all throughout the meeting and in people's daily lives, and that equity was not just the job of the Equity Team.

### **Theological Reflection**

The Moderator noted that various United Church partners would be contributing to the theological reflections throughout the course of the meeting. He then introduced Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican church of Canada. Archbishop Nicholls began her reflection with memories of her ecumenical connections with The United Church of Canada. She shared her observations, affirming how the baptismal covenant was lived out through the practices, worship, and method of the opening session. She highlighted the beautiful music, diversity in video, and creative worship that held the community in reflection and commitment. She looked at who Jesus is through the lens of baptism and the baptismal covenant. Who Jesus is will be different for each of us, but we need to see these differences, and still be able to see the face of God in the other, and to be grateful for the diversity. Archbishop Nicholls closed her reflection with the doxology used during the Anglican eucharist—a prayer of deep hope.

### **Courtesies**

The General Secretary reminded those gathered that this would be the longest General Council in the history of The United Church of Canada. He extended thanks to Graham and Curt and the whole worship team; to the Equity Team for their contribution to the meeting; to the staff team in the studio and working from home; to the Bespoke staff team, who enabled the technology for the meeting; to Archbishop Linda Nicholls for her presence and contribution to the gathering today; and finally, to the Elders, Elenor and Ray, for their presence and gifts of wisdom.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-03**

That the 44th General Council adjourn until June 17, 2022, at which time the Council will reconvene for the discussion phase of the business process.

**Carried**

The Moderator thanked the Commissioners and all those present for their contributions to this first phase of the 44th General Council. He closed with a short blessing.

## **March to May, 2022**

### **Learning Sessions**

Proposals were grouped using the five strategic objectives of the new strategic plan. Each learning session explored one of these themes. Commissioners were invited to attend learning sessions live, or to participate by watching the recordings afterwards. Each learning session was held in worship and included scripture readings, music, testimonials and greetings from partners. Each session began with an explanation about translation, a brief outline of the material to be covered, and a territory acknowledgment. During later learning sessions there was opportunity for the Commissioners to work in small discussion groups.

Learning sessions were designed to present proposals, ask questions, and receive answers to clarify issues or implications. They consisted of presentations by those bringing the proposal to

General Council 44, followed by an opportunity for clarifying questions. The presentations were generally pre-recorded, with the presenter or a designate available to respond to questions live during the learning session.

At the first learning session Allan Buckingham, Chair of Business, outlined the business process which had been approved in the procedural motion in February: learning sessions on each proposal, where there will be time for clarifying questions; discussion sessions where there will be opportunity for full discussion in small groups allowing for contributions from all gathered; notes from these various discussion sessions will subsequently be shared with the Facilitation Team whose job it will be to pull the commonalities and the pieces of wisdom from each of those groups and combine them for a suggested way forward on each proposal; these suggested ways forward will be shared back to the full General Council prior to the decision sessions to allow the Council time to think about them; and finally, the decision phase, when each proposal will be dealt with.

### **Learning Session 1 – March 9**

#### **Proposal Grouping: Nurture the Common Good**

- NS02 Community of Faith Meeting Quorum (Blaine Gregg)
- NS03 Criteria and Authority for a Regional Council to End a Pastoral Relationship (Larry Derkach)
- RC1502 Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave (Heather Ferrier, Ann Cameron)
- PM03 Pension Equity for United Church of Canada Pension Plan Members (Keith Simmonds)
- SW06 Ministry Personnel Salary Equity (Liz McKenzie)
- N:ka03 Recognition of La Table des ministères en français (Marie Claude Manga, Éric Hébert-Daly)
- NIC01 Restructuring the Indigenous Church (John Thompson, Murray Pruden)
- GS10 Living into Reconciliation (Arlyce Schiebout)

### **Learning Session 2 – March 16**

#### **Proposal Grouping: Strengthen Invitation**

- CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union (Taylor Croissant, Samuel Grottenberg)
- GS11 (NEW) Memorandum of Understanding between The United Church of Canada and the Wesleyan Methodist Synod Bermuda (Janet Sollows, Adrian Hartnett-Beasley, Faith March-MacCuish)
- GCE05 Living into the Strategic Plan (Jennifer Henry)
- N:ka02 Membership in the United Church through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith (Marc Grenon)
- TICIF01 Membership (John Young, Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Michelle Owens)

**Learning Session 3 – March 23****Proposal Grouping: Invigorate Leadership (A)**

- GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s (Ann Harbridge, Lorna King, Darrell Reine, Alan Hall, Jennifer Janzen-Ball)
- CS02 Essential Agreement (Scott Mosher)
- CW01 Requiring Ongoing Essential Agreement for Ministry Personnel (Samuel Grottenberg)
- WOW01 Faithful Ministry Personnel (Mark Laird)
- N:ka01 Theological Education (Samuel Dansokho, Éric Hébert-Daly)

**Learning Session 4 – March 30****Proposal Grouping: Invigorate Leadership (B)**

- ARW01 Senior General Council Office and Regional Staff Performance Reviews (Robin Wardlaw)
- SW03 Senior General Council Office and Regional Staff Performance Review (Jim Evans, Barry Rieder)
- WOW02 Including Rest and Renewal for General Council and Regional Staff (Mark Laird)
- SW05 A Jurisdiction of Clergy (Jim Evans, Barry Rieder)
- ARW04 A Jurisdiction of Clergy (
- ARW02 Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability (Jim Evans)
- ARW03 Vocational Process Accountability
- SW04 Vocational Process Accountability
- ECO02 Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships (Paul Reed)
- ECO01 Clergy Consultative Committee (Ryan McNally)
- ARW05 Care of the Church's Marginalized (Jim Evans)
- SW08 Care of the Church's Marginalized (Barry Rieder)

**Learning Session 5 – April 6****Proposal Grouping: Embolden Justice**

- GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel (Martha ter Kuile, Brenna Baker, Jordan Cantwell)
- GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada
- CS01 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel (Joyce Fergus-Moore)
- FSL01 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine
- PM02 A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine Cry of Hope
- RC1501 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine
- SW02 Raising our Voice for Human Rights (Robin Wardlaw)
- SW09 (NEW) Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel (Barbara Lloyd)

During this session an incident occurred. The Moderator offered an apology to a guest of the meeting, Richard Marceau, who was the subject of an anonymous insult.

### Healing Time – April 27

The learning session scheduled for April 27 was postponed until May 4, to allow for an opportunity to respond to the incident which occurred during Learning Session 5. There was time for small group conversations, reflection, and prayer. This session was not open to visitors.

### Learning Session 6 – May 4

#### Proposal Grouping: Deepen Integrity

- GS08 Climate Justice Commitment (Beth Baskin, Laura xx, Tony Snow)
- GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model (Erik Mathiesen)
- GS09 Affirm Existing Assessment Rates (Erik Mathiesen)
- PM01 Making it Right: Alberni Indian Residential School (Minnie Hornidge, Gail Miller)
- GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations (Fred Braman)
- GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents (Fred Braman)

### Learning and Discussion regarding proposal *NIC01 Restructuring of the Indigenous Church* – May 11

Commissioners were invited to attend a virtual event hosted by the National Indigenous Council to learn more about proposal *NIC 01 Restructuring of the Indigenous Church*, which had been discussed at the first Learning Session of General Council 44 on March 9. The time was split between presenting the proposal, and a time for questions.

### Learning Session 7 – May 18

Items pulled from Consent and New Proposals:

- GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel in a Directed Program (Marg Szilassy, Adam Hanley)
- GS07 Remit Process Revisions (Beth Moore)
- NEW01 Diaconal Educational Pathways (Rebecca Whiting, Marcie Gibson)
- NEW02 To Have the United Church Recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915 (Takouhi Demirdjian)
- NEW03 Supporting Immigration Process for Ministry Personnel (Pierre Goldberger)
- SW01 Decriminalization of Illicit Substances (Jeffrey Dale)

At the end of the final learning session, Allan Buckingham, Chair of Business, briefly outlined how the discussion sessions would take place.

Additional events were planned relating to the call to embrace Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. These events offered a chance to gather with global, ecumenical, and interfaith partners to learn more about different issues relating to the strategic objectives. They included presentations on the climate crisis and justice work being done by United Church partners.

## June 17–19, 2022

### Discussion Sessions

It was expected that all Commissioners would participate in the discussion sessions to ensure the broadest input. There were two discussion sessions per day over the course of three days. During discussion time participants could affirm, offer amendments, or suggest ways of strengthening or clarifying the proposals before the Council.

Prior to the first discussion session on Friday, June 17, the Moderator explained how to access the simultaneous translation, reviewed the voting process, and briefly outlined the agenda for the first session. The Moderator also explained that this was a continuation of the meeting constituted in February by the opening and closing procedural motions at that time.

### Words from the Elders

The Moderator invited the Honoured Elders, Ray Jones and Elenor Thompson to offer any comments or thoughts for this portion of the meeting. Elenor welcomed everyone present and hoped for fruitful discussion times for the Council.

### Territorial Acknowledgement and Worship

The Moderator offered the territorial acknowledgement, reminding those present that territory acknowledgments are fresh opportunities to consider our responsibilities and to recognize that acknowledgment of territory is a recommitment to truth and reconciliation. This was followed by worship elements: readings of scripture from a variety of voices and languages, a four-directions prayer, the lighting of Christ candles, and music.

The Alvin Dixon Memorial Run was introduced with congregations and individuals being encouraged to run in support of the Alvin Dixon Fund to raise money for the Alvin Dixon Memorial Bursary Fund. This fund supports Indigenous students entering or continuing post-secondary education or study at religious and spiritual centres.

The Moderator shared with the Council that Indigenous Elder Alberta Billy had recently passed away. He spoke of her work in encouraging the United Church to move towards reconciliation and was the primary mover to have the church issue an apology to Indigenous peoples across this land. The Moderator asked for prayers for Alberta and her family.

### Closing of Nominations for Moderator

The Moderator reminded the Council that any nominations for Moderator would need to be received by the General Secretary prior to 2 p.m. (EDT).

### Introduction to Discussion Group Process

Allan Buckingham, Chair of Business, outlined the discussion group process. He shared information regarding the prioritization of proposals which had taken place after the learning sessions. Allan explained that groups could discuss all proposals or those that they felt were most important to their group. He described how the Facilitation Team would use the notes made by all the discussion groups to formulate a way forward on each proposal. These notes



would also be available to the General Council Executive for any work not completed by the Council at the decision sessions in July.

### **Point of Personal Privilege**

Keith Simmonds, a Commissioner from Pacific Mountain Region, clarified that the proposal *PM03 Pension Equity for United Church of Canada Pension Members* was a request to look outside the existing United Church pension plan to find other ways that might provide pension equity to those members who worked at the lower end of the pay scale for much of their careers.

### **GS12 Procedural Motions, June 2022**

The General Secretary introduced the procedural motion for this session. This motion added new items of business to the agenda for the 44th General Council, 2022. Some of these items were expected business: the Nominations Committee report and recommendations, and the Audit Committee report and recommendations, as well as the United Property Resource Corporation report and various regional council reports which had been received to date.

One other item of business coming to the Council arose during the meeting at learning session 5, on April 6, 2022. This is the proposal *GS14 Challenging Anti-Semitism in The United Church of Canada*.

There was a question about why two proposals, *GS13 Consent Proposal, June 2022* and *AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations*, were only available in English.

It was noted that proposal *NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees* would need to be corrected prior to the upcoming vote on that item.

### **Motion: Michael Blair/Jane McDonald**

**GC44 2022-04**

#### **New Business**

That the 44 General Council add to its agenda the following proposals:

- GS13 Consent Proposal, June 2022
- GS14 Challenging Anti-Semitism in The United Church of Canada
- AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations
- NOM01 Appointments to GCE
- NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees

### **Reports**

That the 44th General Council 2022 receive for information the following reports:

- Audit Committee Report
- Nominations Committee Report
- United Property Resource Corporation Report
- Regional Council Reports

### **Carried**

**GS13 Plenary Consent, June 2022**

The General Secretary apologized for the Audit Committee proposal only being in English. The proposal *NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees* had been corrected as noted earlier in the session. This correction was projected in English and French so that everyone could see the amended wording. The French translation for this proposal, *GS 13 Plenary Consent, June 2022*, was also projected for those requiring the translation for voting.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Arlyce Schiebout****GC44 2022-05**

That the 44th General Council (2022) approve the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals:

- AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations
- NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees

**Carried****Discussion Group Process**

The Moderator invited Allan Buckingham to share information regarding how to join the assigned discussion groups. Allan also noted that there would be some time initially for each person to share a brief faith story in order for the groups to get a sense of each other before getting into deep discussion.

Allan indicated that groups could decide amongst themselves about the order in which they would work. He emphasized that time should be given for the note-takers to ensure the summary of comments to be shared was an accurate reflection of the group's final agreement on each proposal.

After a prayer offered for the discussion groups, participants left the virtual meeting to continue in their discussion groups.

Subsequent discussion group sessions followed a similar pattern:

- Meet in Plenary for song and prayer
- Plenary broke into Discussion Groups
- Discussion Groups returned to Plenary for last 20 minutes for pre-recorded worship elements including song and prayer
- Recess until next session

The group notes were posted to the meeting platform at the end of each day so that participants could check the notes from their group or those of other groups.

**Next Steps**

At the end of the final session on Sunday, June 19 the Moderator took the opportunity to thank everyone for their participation in the discussion sessions: Commissioners, hosts, note-takers, staff, interpreters, and the Business Committee. Allan Buckingham, Chair of the Business

Committee, explained that the notes from all the Discussion Groups would be given to the Facilitation Team, who would synthesize them into a suggested way forward for each proposal. Alan named the members of the Facilitation Team and shared the link to their biographies found online.

### **Moderator Nominee**

The General Secretary reported that there had not been any further nominees for the office of Moderator of the United Church. Moderator nominee, Carmen Lansdowne was introduced, and information about when and how the election would take place was shared.

### **Reflections from the Elders**

Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson shared her gratitude at having the time to be able to reflect and hear a variety of opinions about all the proposals over the past couple of days: listening with an open heart and mind.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-06**

That the 44th General Council adjourn until July 21, 2022, at which time the Council will reconvene for the decision phase of the business process.

**Carried**

## **Thursday, July 21, 2022**

### **Decision Session I**

#### **Opening**

The Moderator shared with Council that he had tested positive for COVID-19, and would be working in isolation for the decision sessions.

The session began with a moving four directions prayer and territorial acknowledgement.

Allan Buckingham noted that a full explanation of how the business process would work would be outlined at the next session.

#### **GS15 Procedural Motions, July 21, 2022**

The General Secretary introduced the procedural motion for this portion of the General Council meeting. He noted that this motion was to receive the report from the Facilitation Team regarding the suggested ways forward for the proposals before Council. Several Regional Council reports had also been received since the June discussion sessions.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-07**

#### **Reports**

That the 44th General Council 2022 receive for information the following reports:

- the Facilitation Team report, Suggested Ways Forward;

- Regional Council Reports received since June 17, 2022;

And

That the notes from Discussion Groups 1-21 be referred to the 44th General Council Executive, the General Secretary, and any pertinent committees.

**Carried**

### **Keynote Address**

The General Secretary introduced Philip Vinod Peacock as the keynote speaker, whose address was the focal point of this session. Rev. Peacock is an ordained minister from long-time partner of The United Church of Canada, the Church of North India, and currently the Executive for Justice and Witness, and Co-General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Focusing on the theme of the Council, “Who do you say I am?” Rev. Peacock urged those gathered to see how Jesus placed himself in the line of prophets who are killed—killed because they dared to speak truth to power. He spoke of how faith in the radical God of justice is waning as new gods and demons are competing for places in our lives—demons of power and money, racism and prejudices. He urged the Council to see discipleship as turning our backs on these demons and instead turning to Jesus whose way is justice and love.

Rev. Peacock also spoke of another story with a biblical question, that of the Good Samaritan, where the question posed is: “Who is my neighbour?” He proclaimed that those who are in the margins offer healing and salvation. To be the church of today, the United Church must be the “inn” of hospitality and support from which the marginalized can see transformation carried out, their salvation realized.

The Moderator thanked Rev. Peacock for his insightful address to the 44th General Council.

### **Elder**

Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson offered a prayer of thanksgiving at the closing of the session.

## **Friday, July 22, 2022**

### **Decision Session II**

#### **Opening**

The Moderator outlined when the use of Points of Order or Points of Privilege would be appropriate during the meeting, and how to make a Point of Order or a Point of Privilege. The Moderator then welcomed those gathered for this portion of the meeting.

Graham Brownmiller lit the Christ candle and offered a prayer for light in a sometimes dark world.

**Elder Reflections**

Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson reminded the Council that as nature is varied and diverse, the church is also “beautiful and strong because of our diversity.” She spoke of a “united” church, not a unifying or uniform church, where we share the table with equity.

**Equity Team**

Albertine Chokoté Naoué Tchoulack and Steven Johann from the Equity Team highlighted some of the supports to equity, such as interpretation, translation, and surveys, and encouraged Commissioners to consider why they are speaking or not speaking. They particularly encouraged voices that may have been silenced or devalued, or who are naturally more quiet, to find the energy to speak when the Spirit calls.

**General Secretary’s Accountability Report**

The General Secretary, Michael Blair, highlighted a series of issues before the church as it lives into the newly developed strategic plan. These include concern about the long-term impact of COVID-19; the commitment to make processes nimble, flexible, and transformative; the precariousness of the church, including both financial sustainability and leadership strain; an invitation to be bold and brave; succession planning with an aging demographic; living authentically into right relations with the Indigenous church; benefiting from technological advances; and strengthening the church’s capacity to speak beyond ourselves to the broader community.

The General Secretary flagged a particular dilemma, in a high-inflation environment, at the current policy of setting the annual Cost of Living Adjustment for ministry personnel and staff on the increase in annualized consumer price index (CPI) with a one-year lag. Resolution of this question potentially stresses different parts of the church, and yet we hold pastoral concern for all parts of who we are. The General Secretary invited wisdom on this question and the minimum travel reimbursement to be sent to the General Council Executive.

The General Secretary concluded his comments by highlighting the senior staff team by name—regional and national—and expressing gratitude for the privilege of service, including with the General Council Executive and current Moderator.

In response to a question, he took the opportunity to affirm the fundamental and foundational relationship of global partners, while also signalling how the climate emergency might shift how we engage globally.

**Moderator’s Accountability Report**

The Very Reverend Jordan Cantwell, immediate Past Moderator, took the chair. The Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, 44th Moderator, spoke of a “church that has been full of story—tears, laughter, and an abundance of work.” He highlighted the importance of the United Church continuing to come to terms with its role as perpetrator within the residential school system, as the graves of Indigenous children have been uncovered. The Moderator hoped the church will continue to engage in conversation about what reparation means—another beginning in many beginnings in a journey toward reconciliation.

The Moderator also spoke of the joy in meeting with ministry personnel, particularly highlighting those ministers formed in traditions outside of the United Church or in communities and cultures outside of Canada. He encouraged the church to truly listen and learn and be changed by the experiences, life, and call of those who have offered themselves and their diverse witness to be part of The United Church of Canada.

The Moderator urged the church to continue to emerge from the pandemic with a focus on how we can live into the Word, reach out pastorally, lead in service and justice, and help each other be the church in a time such as this. He closed with thanks to the General Council Executive, the General Secretary and staff, both at the General Council office and in the regional councils.

Comments of appreciation were shared verbally and in the meeting's chat function for the work of the both the Moderator and General Secretary. Gratitude was particularly expressed for the Moderator's gift in offering theological leadership in unprecedented times.

Past Moderator Cantwell offered a prayer for the current Moderator as he will begin a sabbatical at the rise of General Council 44 and move into new ministry. Moderator Bott resumed the chair.

### **Worship Element**

Before breaking into discussion group there was reflection on Jesus—as teacher, healer, social prophet, movement-builder, and mystic—by the Very Rev. Gary Paterson.

### **Business Table**

Allan Buckingham, chair of Business, explained again, in detail, how the decision process would work using the suggested ways forward from the Facilitation Team.

### **Discussion Group Time**

The discussion groups came together once again to have an opportunity to consider the Facilitation Team report and the Suggested Ways Forward for each of the proposals.

## **Decision Session III**

### **Opening**

The Moderator outlined the process that would be taken with each proposal. There would be opportunity, by poll, for the Council to decide whether the proposed way forward captured the summary of the notes taken from the discussion groups. If so, the Council would move forward with voting on the proposal. If not, the proposal would go to the Business Table to determine how to deal with it. The poll questions for each vote were:

- Do you feel that what the Facilitation Team heard generally reflects a summary of the discussion groups?

- Do you feel that the suggested Way Forward reflects what was heard from the discussion groups?
- Are you comfortable with this being the wording that is put before the Council?

### **Way Forward 02: CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union**

Samuel Grottenberg, one of the original authors of this proposal, noted that the wording differed from what had originally been recommended by Chinook Winds Regional Council. The proposal was referred to the Business Table for clarification.

At this point, some Commissioners raised concerns about the overall business process previously approved by General Council 44. Issues raised included whether the Facilitation Team had imposed their own perceptions on the proposals, whether every small group had discussed and given their view on every proposal, and whether corresponding members should be included in the online polling leading to putting the motion wording forward.

The Moderator explained that the business process was laid out in proposal *GS01 Opening Procedural Motion (February 2022)*, and that the process had been explained in writing and verbally several times throughout the various stages of the meeting. He also noted that while corresponding members were allowed to participate in the polls leading up to the votes, only Commissioners were able to vote on the final motions.

There was a short break for the Business Table to confer.

### **Motion to Reconsider GS01 Opening Procedural Motion (February 2022)**

After the break, it was suggested by the Business Table that the Council could reconsider the business process for the meeting if there was a vote to reconsider the opening procedural motion from February, which had set out the business processes for the meeting. Such a vote would have to pass with a two-thirds majority. Once the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for Commissioners to state a case for or against the proposed action.

### **Motion: John Watson/Keith Simmonds**

**GC44 2022-08**

That the 44th General Council reconsider motion *GS01 Opening Procedural Motion (February 2022)*.

### **Defeated**

The Moderator thanked those who had raised concerns about the process and indicated that those concerns will be kept in mind as this Council continued, and that they would be forwarded to the planning team for General Council 45. A testimony was shared, followed by a prayer.

### **Way Forward 03: GCE05 Living into the Strategic Plan**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was significant support for this proposal and they suggested affirming this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. A concern was noted regarding the lack of timelines in the proposal. The General

Secretary indicated that he would be responsible to ensure deadlines are adhered to in order that a report can be submitted to General Council 45. These timeframes will be shared with new ministry initiatives.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-09**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GCE05 Living into the Strategic Plan*, encourage regional councils and communities of faith to experiment with new ministry initiatives, provided such initiatives are within the bounds of the authority of the regional council and community of faith as set out in the Basis of Union, and on terms agreed to by the regional council and the community of faith. Such permission will remain in effect until the convening of the 45th General Council at which time the General Secretary will report the results of the experimentation for information and further action as appropriate.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 04: GS11 Relationship with the Methodist Church - Bermuda**

The Facilitation Team noted that there were no concerns or clarifications raised by the discussion groups and they suggested affirming the proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-10**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS11 Relationship with the Methodist Church - Bermuda*, approve The United Church of Canada entering into a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Bermuda Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church in the form outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning A New Associate Relationship Between The United Church of Canada And The Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church In Bermuda dated 10 January 2022.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 05: TICIF01 Membership**

The Facilitation Team noted that they heard affirmation for section 3a of the proposal from most discussion groups, some with concerns and comments that warrant review during the study. They suggested proceeding with Section 3a of the proposal on membership put forward by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. Concerns were raised, particularly that some of the wording had been changed. An amendment was made to the motion.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-11**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to TICIF01, request the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee lead the Church in a study on discipleship. Such a study should wrestle with questions such as: "What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?" "Are we, as individuals, prepared to pay the cost of being a disciple?" with the goal of a renewed understanding of church membership.



**Amendment: Arlyce Schiebout/Samuel Grottenberg**

That the final phrase “with the goal of a renewed understanding of church membership” be deleted and a sentence added to read, “From such a study, a renewed understanding of church membership might arise.”

**Carried**

**Motion as Amended**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to TICIF01, request the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee lead the church in a study on discipleship. Such a study should wrestle with questions such as: “What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?” “Are we, as individuals, prepared to pay the cost of being a disciple?” From such a study, a renewed understanding of church membership might arise.

**Carried**

**Clarification from the Business Table**

Allan Buckingham addressed the Council regarding the variations in wording from the original proposals. He noted that the Business Committee had taken the suggested ways forward and looked at the original wording from the proposals (which were often written as “could/should”) and crafted those into more directive actions. Allan noted that during the polling process there was opportunity to change or correct the wording of the proposals rather than waiting until the proposal was in motion form, which then required amendments to make any changes.

**Friends in Council**

The Council heard from the Friends of Council, the Rev. Nancy Nourse and the Rev. Marie-Claude Manga. Marie-Claude highlighted the importance of commemorating Emancipation Day on August 1.

**Moderator Nominee: Carmen Lansdowne**

The Council viewed a video prepared by the sole Moderator nominee, the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne. The election for Moderator will be held on July 23.

**Worship Element**

The day closed in prayer, testimony, song and a benediction. The testimony by Aisha Francis, Executive Director of KAIROS, centred on Jesus as accepting of all, truly welcoming—the One accompanying and creating space for the least of these toward fullness of life for all.

## Saturday, July 23, 2022

### Decision Session IV

#### Opening

The Moderator greeted those gathered for the fourth decision-making session.

#### Friends in Council

The Friends in Council, Marie-Claude Manga and Nancy Nourse, shared information on the make-up of this General Council—a gathering of 256 Commissioners, within an overall community of approximately 500 persons.

#### NOM01 Appointment of the General Council Executive (v2)

The Moderator introduced Cathy Hamilton, Chair of the Nominations Committee (GC43), expressing his gratitude to Cathy, the Nominations Committee, and the spirit-filled way in which the committee works. Cathy explained that some positions on the General Council Executive (GCE) are held by virtue of position: the Moderator, Past-Moderator, and General Secretary; several members were elected for a six-year term at the 43rd General Council: Teresa Burnett-Cole, Mitchell Anderson, Kathy Brett, Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Paul Douglas Walfall, Jane McDonald, and Arlyce Schiebout; and that this General Council would elect seven further members. She noted that there would be a vacancy on the Executive, as Alan Lai had to withdraw from serving. The GCE will ask the Nominations Committee to seek and recommend an additional member for appointment.

In bringing forward these names, the Nominations Committee strove to ensure that the General Council Executive is reflective of the diversity within the church and honours equity commitments. Cathy expressed her gratitude to the outgoing Executive members, those who will continue to serve, and the staff who serve the Nominations Committee for their excellent work. During the opportunity for questions or comments, there was a reminder that in naming the GCE, the Council was entrusting them to do the work of the church and committing to trusting them to do the work that would come before them.

#### Motion: Cathy Hamilton/Michael Blair

GC44 2022-12

That the 44th General Council appoint the following members to serve as the Executive of the General Council from the rise of the 44th General Council with terms as noted.

#### Positions by office

- To be elected, *Moderator*
- Richard Bott, *Immediate Past Moderator*
- Michael Blair, *General Secretary*

#### Members to be appointed until the 46th General Council, 2028

1. Michael Caveney
2. M Chorney
3. Catherine Glover

4. Wilson Gonese
5. Marlene Lightning
6. ~~Alan Lai~~ [Withdrawn]\*
7. Kathleen (Kit) Loewen
8. Thea Sheridan-Jonah

\* *Vacancy to be filled*

#### **Members previously appointed until the 45th General Council, 2025 (for information)**

1. Teresa Burnett-Cole, National Indigenous Council
2. Mitchell Anderson
3. Kathy Brett
4. Samuel Dansokho
5. Paul Douglas Walfall
6. Jane McDonald
7. Arlyce Schiebout

#### **Carried**

After thanking Cathy and the Nominations Committee, the Moderator offered a prayer of thanks for the new Executive and the work they will be undertaking.

#### **Agenda Update**

The Moderator invited Allan Buckingham to update the Council regarding the next items on the agenda. Allan also reminded Council how to make alternate wording suggestions to any of the proposals. He updated the Council regarding proposal *Way Forward 02: CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union*, which had been referred to the Business Table during the first decision session. Allan noted that there had been a miscommunication when the proposal was forwarded from the regional council which had been overlooked by staff.

#### **Way Forward 02: CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union**

The Facilitation Team suggested affirmation of the proposal as they reported general support for exploring what church union looks like in the 21st century. As an historic united/uniting denomination, it is important to affirm the new ways the Spirit may be speaking to our church. The originators of the proposal, who were present as Commissioners, were offered the option of amending the wording of this proposal. Taylor Croissant, Chinook Winds Regional Council Commissioner, asked that the following sentence be added to the end of the proposal that had been originally presented for consideration: "This is to be done as part of a multi-lateral ecumenical dialogue of Canadian mainline protestant churches to prayerfully discuss the possibility of organic church union, but with openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, who might prompt us towards other forms of greater partnership." The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was a question about the word "organic" in reference to church union, which was responded to by Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Executive Minister for Theological Leadership. Jennifer noted that organic church union often refers to a coming together of churches through worship, or through sharing other kinds of opportunities to

gather together that are more spontaneous than the formal church bilateral dialogue in which churches are often engaged.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-13**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *CW02 Initiating Dialogue on Church Union*, direct the General Secretary to draw upon the wisdom of global ecumenical partners and denominations, such as: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, The Church of South India, The Church of North India, The Church of Pakistan, and The United Church of Christ in Japan, who have existed in church union with Anglicans, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, and Presbyterians for nearly the same length as our own United Church union, to continue our own pursuit of church union in Canada. This is to be done as part of a multi-lateral ecumenical dialogue of Canadian mainline protestant churches to prayerfully discuss the possibility of organic church union, but with openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, who might prompt us towards other forms of greater partnership.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 06: N:ka02 Membership in United Church Through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was significant support for this proposal, with some questions raised around definitions of membership and discipleship. At least two discussion groups asked about linking the implementation of the proposal to the study affirmed in proposal *TICIF01 Membership*. They suggested affirming this proposal with implementation to be informed by the study conducted by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee. After several suggested word changes during the polling process, it was agreed that the proposal be referred to the Business Table to bring clarified wording to the Council.

**Way Forward 13: CS02, WOW01, CW01 Essential Agreement**

The Facilitation Team noted that the majority of groups did not support this proposal, could not reach consensus, or did not discuss it. There were no comments or suggestions from discussion groups to suggest a way forward. One group offered that the Office of Vocation complaints and review processes already provide a mechanism for responding on these issues. The Facilitation Team suggested the General Council take no further action on these three proposals. During the polling process it became clear that there was not consensus within the group to move forward with this suggested way forward. It was agreed that this item be referred to the Business Table, to be brought back later in the meeting.

**United Property Resource Corporation Report**

Tim Blair, Chief Executive Officer of the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) / Kindred Works, addressed the Council on the work of the corporation, which is based on the vision that secure and stable homes can be a foundation for lives of opportunity. UPRC transforms church properties into housing and gathering spaces for community needs while preserving and sustaining worship space. UPRC is committed to creating 5,000 new affordable housing spaces in the next five years, providing homes for 34,000 Canadians. They are working with congregations across the country, with emerging partnerships with the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada. Their processes include labour opportunities for equity-seeking groups, partnerships with Indigenous businesses, accessibility commitments, and reductions in carbon emissions.

### **Moderator Vote**

The session ended with Commissioners casting their votes for election of the Moderator, with results to be shared at the beginning of the next decision session.

### **Worship Elements**

The Council heard inspiring testimonies from two former Moderators. Mardi Tindal offered a reflection on Jesus as the Cosmic Christ who opens us to unity with all living things. Mardi spoke of Jesus as the Christ of the whole universe in which all polarities are reconciled—both companion and Christ as model and teacher—for how we are called to live love. The Very Rev. N. Bruce McLeod spoke of Jesus as a window where everything that really matters comes into focus. He shared a picture of Jesus beckoning from a place ahead of us, calling the church forward for the sake of the aching world.

## **Decision Session V**

### **Moderator Vote Results**

The General Secretary announced that the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne had been elected as the 44th Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

### **Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-14**

That the ballots for the election of Moderator be destroyed.

### **Carried**

The Moderator-elect spoke to the Council and reflected on the scarcity mind-set in the church, offering the observation that Indigenous peoples have a gift in seeing the world as a place of abundance. She expressed gratitude at the opportunity to continue in conversation and discipleship together over the coming triennium.

Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson offered prayer and gratitude for being present to witness the first Indigenous woman elected Moderator. The installation of the 44th Moderator will take place on August 7, at Canadian Memorial United Church in Vancouver.

### **Equity Team Reflections**

Torrin Maag spoke on behalf of the Equity Team, rejoicing in how the Council has responded to the essence of people's discussions, including holding space for under-heard voices. While the team expressed confidence that Council will continue to grow in its ability to make decisions equitably, they noted that only a few people have been offering verbal opinions, and so invited the Council to continue to "draw the circle wider."

Contributions by former Moderator The Very Rev. Jordan Cantwell and Allan Buckingham encouraged the Council to trust one another, to trust the process, and to keep focused on making decisions. Allan noted that any proposals not addressed would be referred to the General Council Executive.

The Moderator reiterated that the “chat” space was akin to chatting at one’s table.

#### **Way Forward 14: ECO01 Clergy Consultative Committee**

The Facilitation Team noted the diversity of opinion on this issue. There was clear concern in discussions for clergy wellness and security in their employment relationships. They believed that the motivations for this particular proposal are the threads of pain, frustration and concern also found in other proposals around accountability, compensation, and impacts of restructuring and the overall sustainability of the church. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council take no further action on this proposal, but refer the discussion notes to the General Secretary to ensure the threads of concern are picked up in the implementation of other proposals. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

#### **Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-15**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *ECO01 Clergy Consultative Committee*, direct the General Secretary, General Council to refer to the discussion notes for this proposal when implementing other proposals related to this topic, and take no further action on this proposal.

**Carried**

#### **Way Forward 15: ECO02 Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was broad affirmation for this proposal with suggestions for implementation. They suggested that the General Council affirm the proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

#### **Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-16**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *ECO02 Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships*, direct the General Secretary, General Council to:

- Determine how to recognize cooperative ministries as a faith community structure within The United Church of Canada;
- Put steps in place to ensure this recognition;
- Develop resources and guidelines for the formation and governance of cooperative ministries; and
- Ensure that cooperative ministries, pastoral charges and ministry personnel serving in such arrangements are able to participate accurately and fully through ChurchHub.

**Carried**

### Way Forward 16 v2: GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s

The Facilitation Team noted that while there was no clear consensus on this proposal, the discussions revealed that this is an issue that needs to be addressed in our church. They suggested affirming Part A of the proposal, and encouraged regions to explore and implement ways that support rural and other struggling ministries in The United Church of Canada. They also suggested that work done at the regional level be shared back to the national level. The polling questions were asked and responded to. In response to a comment the Moderator suggested separating the proposal into two parts, and that Part B be dealt with separately. After lengthy discussion and commentary, and prior to the proposal being moved and seconded, Council agreed to deal with Part B separately. There was a suggested change in wording to point 3. a) iii, which was agreed to by the Council. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-17**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s*:

#### A. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith

##### 1. Lay-led Communities of Faith

- a) affirms the importance and value of “lay-led congregations” (a descriptive term, not a formal “class”, loosely describing a congregation without called or appointed ministry personnel for more than a year) continuing to be linked to the denomination and supported in governance by a regional council appointed pastoral charge supervisor;
- b) affirms the role of the regional councils in assisting communities of faith in determining appropriate governance and decision-making practices and necessary oversight of any person paid for services (custodial, administrative, ministry, etc).

##### 2. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

- a) reaffirms that licensed lay worship leaders continue to be limited to worship leadership on an occasional basis, “occasional” determined by the regional council;
- b) will revise the policy with respect to Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to require that where the community of faith requires a larger scope of service, or more than “occasional” leadership, than is within the scope of a licensed lay worship leader, the regional council will work with the community of faith to develop either a collaborative ministry or a congregational designated ministry role with its attendant accountabilities and ensure adequate training and oversight of congregational designated ministry.

##### 3. Congregational Designated Ministry

- a) will revise the policy with respect to congregational designated ministers to require that:
  - i. if a congregational designated ministry position includes worship leadership the congregational designated minister must successfully complete the licensed lay worship leadership program of that regional council, or an equivalency

- determined by the regional council, and be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
- ii. if the congregational designated minister is the primary individual leading worship, then they must be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
  - iii. revise Section I.1.11.4 d) of *The Manual* to state that the requirement that there be a ministry personnel appointed or called to the community of faith may be waived by the regional council for Communities of Faith that are recognized as "lay-led" Communities of Faith
4. Pastoral Charge Supervisors
    - a) affirms the importance of the role of pastoral charge supervisors to nurture the connexion with and support of the United Church with churches that do not have appointed or called ministry personnel;
    - b) directs the General Secretary, with the regional councils, to consider how the role of paid pastoral charge supervisors may support the development and evolution of collaborative ministries.
  5. Technology
    - a) encourages regional councils to give priority to and encourage leveraging technology to support communities of faith in the provision of worship and pastoral care and for supporting oversight, supervision, and governance.

The 44th General Council also encourages regional councils to explore and implement ways that support rural and other struggling ministries in The United Church of Canada and that what is done at the regional councils be shared back to the national church because we have work to do as a whole church that honours a diversity of faithful forms of leadership.

### **Carried**

### **Point of Order**

Paul Douglas Walfall questioned the validity of the proposals being presented to the Council. The Moderator indicated that he would let the Council know of his determination in this matter at the beginning of the next session.

### **Worship Elements**

This decision session also included elements of worship, and a testimony by Korean partner, Rev. Eun-yung Kim. It began with a video highlighting the ministry of *Broadview* magazine.

## **Sunday, July 24, 2022**

### **Decision Session VI**

### **Moderator's Ruling**

The Moderator returned to the point of order raised at the end of the previous decision session. The question was whether it was in order for the Business Table to have prepared proposals for consideration when the agreed upon process as laid out in proposal *GS01 Opening Procedural Motions* stated that the Facilitation Team would do so. The Moderator's



ruling was that the practice was in order. The Facilitation Team had suggested a way forward for each proposal, and the Business Table, in its administrative responsibility to help the Council conduct its work had offered wording that was consistent both with the Facilitation Team's proposed way forward and with the action language of motions. He further noted that the pre-decision-making process that was being used by the Council gave space for the Council to change any wording that it felt was not consistent or correct before officially moving and seconding the proposals.

### Reminders

The Moderator reminded those present to be sure their full names were showing on screen. An email was provided for anyone wanting an abstention to be noted in the minutes. Another email was provided for those wishing to raise points of privilege or points of order. Shannon McCarthy and Allan Buckingham, representatives of the Business Table, spoke to the process before returning to proposal consideration. The process was being slightly altered due to concerns raised. From this point forward, the proposals would reflect the suggested way forward from the Facilitation Team only (i.e. affirm or take no action on proposals).

### Way Forward 17: N:ka01 Theological Education

The Facilitation Team reported that there was no clear consensus on a way forward, nor were there suggestions on what could be done differently. They suggested the General Council take no further action on this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was concern for expressed for access to theological education in French, and theological education in the United Church in general. A commitment was made to share notes with the General Council Executive and the "Invigorate Leadership" objective group at the General Council Office developing Strategic Plan initiatives.

### Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick

GC44 2022-18

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal *N:ka01 Theological Education*.

**Carried**

### Way Forward 18: NEW01 Diaconal Educational Pathways for the Future

The Facilitation Team reported that there was no consensus across discussion groups, though there was some support for this proposal. Some groups explicitly asked to take no action, with one group recommending no action specifically because the program at the Centre for Christian Studies was already under review. Some groups suggested opening up accessibility across all streams of theological education. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council take no further action on this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-19**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal NEW01 Diaconal Educational Pathways for the Future.

**Carried****Way Forward 19: ARW01 & SW03 Senior GCO and Regional Staff Reviews**

The Facilitation Team reported that there was no support to move forward with these proposals, with most groups either not coming to consensus or recommending to take no action. They suggested that the General Council take no further action on these two proposals. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-20**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposals *ARW01 and SW03 Senior GCO and Regional Staff Reviews*.

**Carried****Way Forward 20: ARW02 Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability**

The Facilitation Team reported that there was generally no support for this proposal and suggested that the General Council take no further action on the proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-21**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal *ARW02 Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability*.

**Carried****Way Forward 21: ARW03 & SW04 Vocational Process Accountability**

The Facilitation Team reported that there was generally no support for this proposal and suggested that the General Council take no further action on these two proposals. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-22**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposals *ARW03 and SW04 Vocational Process Accountability*.

**Carried****Way Forward 22: ARW04 A Jurisdiction of Clergy**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was no clear consensus to affirm this proposal. Based on the conversations that were reported, they suggested that regions implement the system of networks and clusters that were affirmed at GC43. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council take no further action. The polling questions were asked and responded to.

After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-23**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal *ARW04 A Jurisdiction of Clergy*.

**Carried**

### **Way Forward 23: GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program**

The Facilitation Team reported that there was no consensus on a way forward. There were comments that reflected that not everyone understood the process related to directed programs. They suggested that the General Council take no further action on this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was a comment regarding the diversity of understanding regarding the polity of the church, what decisions have already been made, or how things are intended to work in the new structure of the church. There was discussion about the need for a greater understanding of the intentions and implications of this proposal.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-24**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal *GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program*.

### **Amendment : Murray Speer/Samuel Grottenberg**

That *Way Forward 23: GCE 01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program* be referred to the next annual meeting of GC44.

**Carried**

### **Partners**

Throughout this session, three of the over 30 global, ecumenical, and interfaith partners that are accompanying General Council spoke. The Rev. Terri Hord Owens (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) expressed gratitude for the “labour” of learning, listening, discussing, and deciding and for the opportunity to be “bathed” in spiritual practices of worship. The Rev. Stephen Kendall (Presbyterian Church in Canada) spoke of the friendship between the churches and the opportunity to draw from, and share, United Church of Canada experience in the journey of healing and reconciliation, inclusion of LGBTQIA2S+ persons, and commitments to anti-racism. Horacio Mesones (CREAS) shared concrete examples of collaboration, testifying to how ecumenical cooperation makes a difference in shared local solutions, strengthened justice, and deepened hospitality in a polarized world.

### **Worship Elements**

The session concluded with a moving testimony from former Moderator the Very Rev. Stan McKay. Speaking from a context of unmarked graves and opening doors to Ukrainian refugees, the Rev. McKay shared his understanding of Jesus as the Great Mystery, One beyond words. He

spoke poignantly of an awakening in Norway House in a service in Cree, led by Elders. Hearing John 21:15-19, "Simon, do you love me? Feed my lambs," in the Cree language he realized how his culture and the gospel were connected.

## Decision Session VII

### Business Table Update

Allan Buckingham, invited Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister for the Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils, and a member of the Business Table to address the Council. Shannon noted that concerns had been raised with the Equity Team about the chat function and how it was being used during the meeting over the last few days. The intention had been that this would be a way to connect with friends and colleagues, and not a way to provide input or criticism of the meeting. A poll regarding closing the chat function was conducted.

### Way Forward 24: SW05 A Jurisdiction of Clergy

The Facilitation Team noted that there was generally little support for this proposal. They suggested that the General Council take no further action. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

#### Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick

GC44 2022-25

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposal *SW05 A Jurisdiction of Clergy*.

**Carried**

### Way Forward 25: WOW02 Including Rest and Renewal for General Council and Regional Staff on Extended Developmental Leaves

The Facilitation Team suggested affirming this proposal as there was broad support amongst all discussion groups who submitted notes regarding this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

#### Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick

GC44 2022-26

That the 44th General Council, 2022, affirm the proposal *WOW02 Including Rest and Renewal for General Council and Regional Staff on Extended Developmental Leaves*.

**Carried**

### Way Forward 07: GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada

The Facilitation Team reported broad support for this proposal across a significant majority of discussion groups. There were helpful comments from the discussion groups about implementation, including the participation of the national Indigenous church, and the timeliness of the work, that should be reviewed by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith

Committee. The Facilitation Team also suggested that it may be helpful to include an additional framework of using public international legal frameworks, when they are appropriate, in our justice work. They suggested that the General Council affirm this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-27**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, affirm the proposal *GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada*.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 08: GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel**

The Facilitation Team reported general support for affirmation of this proposal. There were comments regarding the need for clarification which should be reviewed in moving forward with this approach. Some discussion groups suggested that *GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada* should be implemented first. The Facilitation Team struggled with the chicken/egg nature of the relationship between these two proposals, and suggest that the General Council take no further action on this proposal until the completion of the work of *GCE03*. The polling questions were asked and responded to. Prior to the proposal being moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, and comments. At this time it was suggested that rather than indicate no further action on the proposal it instead be tabled definitely until the work of *GCE03* was completed. After the proposal was moved and seconded this suggestion was again put forward by several speakers.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-28**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on *GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel* until the completion of the work of *GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada*.

**Motion to Table Definitely: Beth Johnston/Paul Douglas Walfall**

That *GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel* be postponed definitely until the completion of the work of *GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada*.

**Carried**

After this decision Graham Brownmiller led the Council in a time of prayer.

**Way Forward 31: NIC01 National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church**

The Facilitation Team noted broad support for this proposal, including the importance of moving forward on proposal *GS10 Living into Reconciliation*, in order to keep commitments The United Church of Canada has made in affirming the Calls to the Church at GC43. They suggested that General Council 44 affirm the proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-29**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *NIC01 National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church*, affirms the proposal.

**Carried****Way Forward 32: GS10 Living into Reconciliation**

The Facilitation Team noted that all groups affirmed this proposal. Several groups raised concerns about what would happen if the remit failed. The Facilitation Team suggested affirmation of this proposal and adding direction to the General Secretary regarding educational resources for the remit process. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-30**

That the 44th General Council 2022, in response to *GS10 Living into Reconciliation*, affirms this proposal, and directs that the General Secretary make resources available for education and awareness through the remit process.

**Carried****Elder Response**

In response to the approval of these motions, Honoured Elder the Rev. Elenor Thompson said: “Today all of me, my whole heart, loves the United Church. So very proud of the church and the people. The United Church made history two days in a row for me.” Particularly thanking the Rev. Murray Pruden, Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice, she reminded the Council that “the hard work is to be done.”

Paul Douglas Walfall requested that the rejoicing of the General Council for the decisions made on these proposals, and the hope for a new relationship with the Indigenous church, be noted in the minutes.

**Way Forward 09: CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02 Peace in Palestine and Israel**

The Facilitation Team noted that discussion groups asked that the six regional council proposals on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be dealt with together. Some discussion groups affirm that this justice work is important and should continue given the number of proposals that came to GC44 from the regions. Specifically, there is strong support for maintaining solidarity with Palestinians living under occupation, and holding that in tension with the desire to be good interfaith partners with Jewish communities in Canada and abroad. The Facilitation Team heard the desire to stand in costly solidarity with Palestinians through specific tactics like BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), and promoting human rights of Palestinians as important and immediate actions. There was expressed discomfort with using the term apartheid, especially in light of the history of that system of oppression’s origins in Canada’s Indian Act. They also heard general feedback that the proposals from the regional councils might be stronger once shaped by the principles-based approaches in *GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada* and *GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel*, and that many groups generally did not feel well-equipped to have informed conversations

about the proposals. The Facilitation Team noted the wisdom of the court that enacting *GCE03* will lead to enacting *GCE04* and is, in fact, the way forward to address the issues contained in these six proposals. They suggested that the General Council take no further action on these proposals. The polling questions were asked and responded to. Prior to the proposal being moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions and comments. There was significant discussion during which there was a request to separate proposal *RC1501 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine* and deal with it separately due to the urgent situation in Palestine currently. After the proposal was moved there was further urging to act on the proposals.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-31**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 take no further action on proposals *CS01 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel*, *SW09 Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel (NEW)*, *FSL01 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine*, *PM02 A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine Cry of Hope*, *RC1501 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine*, *SW02 Raising our Voice for Human Rights*.

**Defeated**

As this motion was defeated, the proposals were referred to the Business Table to find time in the agenda for them to be dealt with.

The Moderator offered a prayer acknowledging the challenge and pain surrounding the proposals relating to Palestine and Israel.

**Equity Team Reflection**

Maedith Radlein, a member of the Equity Team, encouraged all members of Council to reflect on equity personally, through all aspects of their daily lives.

Former Moderator Jordan Cantwell stepped into the chair for the final portion of this session, as Moderator Richard was not feeling well.

**Friends in Council**

The Friends in Council requested prayers for all Indigenous peoples given the arrival of Pope Francis in Canada, as well as for Elder Bernice Saulteaux, who is seriously ill.

**Elder**

Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson offered a brief teaching and shared how she was raised with two belief systems—both Indigenous and Christian. She closed this session with a blessing in her language.

**Worship Elements**

Former Moderator the Very Rev. Dr. Marion Parry shared her understanding of Jesus, reflecting on the shifts throughout her lifetime. Claiming “scripture as her song for the journey,” she invoked the prophetic Christ who “ends oppression and sets all people free.” For her, Jesus is the “living parable of kin-ship of God, who death cannot hold.”

## Monday, July 25, 2022

### Decision Session VIII

#### Opening

The Moderator welcomed everyone to the final day of decision-making for General Council 44, 2022. He thanked former Moderator Jordan for stepping into the chair at the end of the previous day. He then let the Council know that the “chat” had been closed due to the concerns, which had been raised by many participants, regarding the distraction being caused by comments.

#### Youth Forum Update

Thea Sheridan-Jonah and Sophie Hubber shared how the 50 members of Youth Forum (participants and leaders) had prepared for General Council by engaging with guests and one another in a virtual space that had felt like “family.” Throughout August, youth would be engaging in “passion projects” on Climate, Indigenous Justice, Anti-Racism and Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ and Gender Justice—themes emerging from the Strategic Plan. Inspired by Jeremiah 1:7, Sophie spoke about how youth are “not just the church’s future, but its present, and here now!”

#### Business Table Updates

Allan Buckingham let the Council know that an evaluation would be sent to Commissioners in early August for feedback on the format of the business processes.

#### Way Forward 29: GS07 Remit Process Revisions

The Facilitation Team noted that while several discussion groups expressed support and several had no comment, a number of groups raised concerns about 90-day timelines. One group suggested that with General Council meeting annually, the enactment of remits didn’t need to be delegated to GCE. The Facilitation Team felt that the proposal allowed for more flexibility without constraining the church and addressed the concerns raised in the discussion. They suggested affirmation of this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

#### Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick

GC44 2022-32

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS07 Remit Process Revisions*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried**

#### Way Forward 30: GS09 Affirm Existing Assessment Rate and Related Principles

The Facilitation Team noted that there was broad support for this proposal and suggested affirmation of *GS09 Affirm Existing Assessment Rate and Related Principles*. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.



**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-33**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS09 Affirm Existing Assessment Rate and Related Principles*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried****Way Forward 39: GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was broad support for this proposal and suggested affirmation of *GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model*. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. In response to a question, it was clarified that the offshore nature of this insurance plan is not to do with tax avoidance, but rather to leverage structures and governance frameworks in place overseas that allow the insurance services to be provided to the church at a reasonable cost.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-34**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried****Way Forward 01: GS08 Climate Justice Commitment**

The Facilitation Team noted that there was broad support for the proposal with some concern to strengthen the language from “could” to “will.” It was also noted that there needs to be recognition that some smaller Communities of Faith need to move at their own pace. In general, there is concurrence with the goal of moving a target for 80% reduction in emissions from 2050 to 2030. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council affirm this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. In response to a question about timelines, the General Secretary noted that this proposal is part of the one of the strategic objectives that will be reported to the wider church at least on an annual basis. Some reporting is currently done through the Faithful Footprints program. Another speaker noted the cost of an 80% reduction in emissions would be beyond the capacity of most communities of faith.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-35**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS08 Climate Justice Commitment*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried****GS16 re: GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s, Part B**

Allan Buckingham introduced this proposal regarding Part B of *GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s*, which had been before the Council in decision session five. In order to move this work forward, the Business Table proposed that the General Council Executive be asked to consider the question of the status of Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs). Several speakers voiced their desire that DLMs be recognized as ministry personnel.

The General Secretary noted that the GCE would need to find a process with which to engage the church in conversation on this issue.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-36**

That the 44th General Council, 2022 refer section B of *GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s* regarding Designated Lay Ministry back to the GCE for further discussion and clarification, to be returned to the next annual meeting of the 44th General Council; and as an interim measure, regional councils are encouraged to grant a licence to perform the sacraments to retired DLMs who are providing Sunday Supply to communities of faith until the next meeting of the 44th General Council.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 12: GS14 Challenging Antisemitism in The United Church of Canada**

The Facilitation Team noted broad support for this proposal. Some discussion groups made connections to the church's justice work on the Palestine Israel conflict. Several groups also highlighted the importance of coming to a clear definition of what we mean by the term antisemitism. In addition, there were calls for educational resources that are informed by a diversity of Jewish voices, so that we can continue to grow together. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council affirm this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There were various comments affirming this proposal, as well as those noting that all forms of injustice, oppression and discrimination were wrong.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-37**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS14 Challenging Antisemitism in The United Church of Canada*, affirm this proposal.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 11: SW01 Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction**

The Facilitation Team reported strong support for the proposal, with most discussion groups affirming its direction. Some groups had suggestions, including raising issues of safe-supply as part of harm reduction, and using language that is reflective of current terminology, such as replacing "people with substance use disorder" with "people who use drugs." This affirms the reality that not all individuals and families impacted by the opioid crisis are diagnosed with disorders - many have been recreational users. The Facilitation Team suggested affirmation of this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was a comment that using phrasing like "substance use/abuse" includes alcohol and prescription pills.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-38**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *SW01 Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried**

### Way Forward 33: N:ka03 Recognition of La Table des ministères en français

The Facilitation Team reported general support for the recognition of francophone ministries as an important constituency of The United Church of Canada, and for language diversity more broadly. The discussions surfaced our challenges of not having lived into being a truly intercultural church. Many of the groups raised practical questions regarding shifting a network into a structural part of the church. The Facilitation Team suggested referring the proposal back to the General Secretary for further review of the discussion group comments to determine a way forward. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was significant discussion on this motion and some Commissioners urged passage of the original proposal.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-39**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *N:ka03 Recognition of La Table des ministères en français*, refers this proposal to the General Secretary for further review of the discussion group comments to determine a way forward.

**Carried**

### Worship Elements

This session began with former Moderator the Very Rev. Lois Wilson sharing her vision of Jesus—human face of God, prophet, and energizer towards the not yet in the now. Lois spoke of Jesus as salvation, understood as wide, spacious, liberated and free, deliverance from all that impedes growth, and authentically one's self.

## Decision Session IX

### Agenda Update

Allan Buckingham outlined the work still remaining before the 44th General Council, and his belief that much of it could be accomplished before the end of the session. Any work not completed would be referred to the General Council Executive.

### GS17 Regarding CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02 Peace in Palestine and Israel

The Council returned to the series of proposals originating from regional councils related to Palestine and Israel (referred to as CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM 02, RC1501, SW02). In response to the defeat of *Way Forward 09: CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02 Peace in Palestine and Israel*, and in an attempt to hear what the Council was saying about the dislike for the words being used in that proposal, the Business Table suggested new wording regarding this set of proposals. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. There was an explanation of the phrase "postpone definitely." This was followed by significant discussion on this motion.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-40**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *CS01 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, SW09 Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel (NEW), FSL01 Responding to our Global Partner*

*Kairos Palestine, PM02 A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine Cry of Hope, RC1501 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine, SW02 Raising our Voice for Human Rights* postpone definitely these proposals until the implementation of GCE04.

**Carried**

Following this motion, acknowledging the deep challenge and pain, the Moderator paused the process for a time of prayer.

**Way Forward 36: PM03 & SW06 Pension & Salary Equity**

The Facilitation Team reported that discussion groups were unclear on ways to move forward on these proposals. However, through the discussions they heard concern over issues of compensation, including retirement benefits. There was broad support in discussion groups for the intent of these proposals, and, more broadly, to examine how compensation contributes to the United Church's equity work and strategies. One of the groups suggested that "the church needs to work to honour our equity aspirations." The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council ask the General Secretary to create a task group to study total compensation, including our theology of compensation. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

**GC44 2022-41**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *PM03 Pension Equity for United Church of Canada Pension Plan Members* and *SW06 Ministry Personnel Salary Equity*, direct the General Secretary, General Council to create a task group to study total compensation, including our theology of compensation.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 37: RC1502 Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave**

The Facilitation Team noted general support from the groups that discussed the proposal, including non-support for General Council offices supporting the cost implications. They commended the discussion notes for implementation and suggested that this proposal be affirmed, moving forward with the policies including inclusive/non-binary language. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns. An amendment was carried to change the wording in the third point of the original proposal being affirmed:

- Ensure that funds for the maternity/parental leave top-up payments come from the national ~~or regional~~ level in order to share the cost across the wider family of the church, including those who will benefit from the minister's experience and service in later years.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

GC44 2022-42

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *RC1502 Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave* affirms this proposal, moving forward with the policies including inclusive/non-binary language.

**Amendment: Murray Speer/Penny Nelson**

That the reference to funding coming from regional councils be removed.

**Carried**

**Motion as Amended**

**Carried**

**Way Forward 41: NEW03 Supporting Immigration Process for Ministry Personnel**

The Facilitation Team reported broad support from discussion groups for this proposal. This proposal is another way to live into becoming an intercultural church. There were questions about “what does appropriate legal support” mean specifically? Some groups suggested it is not only legal counsel needed but immigration process support. One group offered questions about whether or not we could have an ecumenically shared resource with other denominations to support immigration processes. There was support for the need for education regarding the strengths, challenges and opportunities in supporting immigration of ministers seeking positions in the United Church. The Facilitation Team suggested affirmation of the proposal, with the discussion group noted to be referred to the General Secretary for further review to determine a way forward on implementation. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick**

GC44 2022-43

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *NEW03 Supporting Immigration Process for Ministry Personnel*, affirms the proposal and refers the proposal back to the General Secretary for further review of the discussion notes to determine a way forward on implementation.

**Carried**

**Way Forward 27: GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations**

The Facilitation Team noted support from nearly all groups that discussed this proposal. The comments included underlying concerns and tensions around power and accountability in the process of amalgamation. This proposal regards enabling changes in *The Manual* to add an additional step in the amalgamation process. The step includes the amalgamating congregations jointly preparing a ministry plan for the newly amalgamated congregation, indicating the property and other resources required to carry out the plan. It is hoped that requiring amalgamating congregations to prepare a ministry plan will provide a clearer picture of the resources actually needed. The Facilitation Team suggested that the General Council affirm this proposal. The polling questions were asked and responded to. After the proposal was moved and seconded there was opportunity for questions, comments or concerns.

**Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-44**

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to *GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations*, affirms this proposal.

**Carried**

As the business before General Council 44 came to an end, the Moderator spoke of the challenges of decision-making as a Council, recognizing that even when decisions are deeply painful, we express our respect and care for all those voices who have spoken.

The General Secretary spoke about the work of developing principles for justice action to which the Council has committed the church. He indicated that he has heard about the urgency of that work and will seek to begin it as soon as possible with the Theology, Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Committee. He reminded the court that engagement in solidarity for justice and companionship in partnership has not changed.

**Worship Elements**

Former Moderator the Very Rev. Stan McKay continued his reflections on Jesus as family and liberator. He spoke of the need to liberate theology, and recognizing the ways denominations are failing in unity, expressing his hope that we will continue to seek to be family, relatives of one other in the spirit of the Jesus of reconciliation.

**Covenanting with the General Council Executive**

The Council covenanted with the 44th General Council Executive who will lead the church over the next three years.

**Courtesies**

The General Secretary, Michael Blair, extended gratitude to the many committees, task groups, and people who have made the General Council possible, finishing with thanks to the Commissioners of this extended Council, and to the Moderator who, despite ill health, led this Council with grace and love.

**GC44 Closing Procedural Motions****Motion: Michael Blair/Susan Brodrick****GC44 2022-45***Authority of the Executive of the General Council*

That the authority of the Executive of the General Council is as set out in *The Manual*.

*Referral of Business from the 44th General Council*

That all unfinished business of the 44th General Council be referred to the Executive of the General Council, together with all reports of the Discussion Groups and Facilitation Team.

*Preparation of Remits*

That the General Council authorize all necessary remits, and that they be categorized as Category 2 remits, except if this General Council has already specifically categorized them in its decisions as Category 1 or 3 remits.

*Summary of Actions of the Executive and Sub-Executive of the General Council*

That a summary of the actions of the Executive and Sub-Executive of General Council be made available to Commissioners of the 44th General Council 2022 between the meeting of this General Council and that of the 45th General Council 2025. This summary will be included in the documentation for the 45th General Council 2025.

*Authority for Changes in The Manual and Record of Proceedings*

That the General Secretary authorize the approval of the *Record of Proceedings of the 44th General Council*. The Record of Proceedings will be used to make the necessary changes in *The Manual* resulting from the decisions of the General Council. Any changes to *The Manual* will be effective on January 1, 2023 unless not yet published, in which case, changes will be effective on the date of publication of *The Manual*.

*Publication of the Record of Proceedings*

That the *Record of Proceeding of the 44th General Council* be published in accessible formats throughout the church.

*Adjournment*

That the meeting of the 44th General Council be closed at the end of the Service of Installation on Sunday, August 7, 2022.

**Carried**

**Elder Reflection**

In her final reflection, Rev. Elenor Thompson shared words of gratitude and thanks, and closed by saying say that we are all beautiful creatures and children of the creator God.

**Extinguishing the Christ Candles**

Rev. Graham Brownmiller and Rev. Kenji Marui led the community in extinguishing the worship candles.

**Sunday, August 7, 2022**

The 44th General Council reconvened on August 7, 2022, to share in closing worship and the installation of the incoming Moderator. In a joyful service, the Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Kwisa'lakw was installed as the 44th Moderator of The United Church of Canada. Held on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the service was live streamed across the country with over 500 people watching.

Attended by hereditary chiefs, including from Moderator Lansdowne's own Heiltsuk Nation, as well as by national, regional, ecumenical, and interfaith guests, the worship marked a series of historic firsts. Moderator Lansdowne is the first Indigenous women to lead The United Church of Canada. Hosted at Canadian Memorial United, the installation was the first to be held in a specific community of faith, rather than at a General Council venue. Through a stirring

commemoration led by Vanessa Richards, it was the first official marking by the United Church of Emancipation Sunday.

Led by the Rev. Graham Brownmiller, Chair of the GC44 Worship Team, and Rev. Beth Hayward, Minister of Canadian Memorial, the worship moved between languages, with prayer, song, and scripture offered, including in French, Heiltsuk, Gitxan, and Cree. Woven in this tapestry, and led by the 43rd Moderator, Richard Bott, and the General Secretary, Michael Blair, were commitments made by and to the new Moderator. The service also included the laying on of hands by representative leaders and Elders, and the presentation of gifts from Rev. Lansdowne's nation and the Indigenous Church, as well as the traditional stole, Bible, and talking stick.

Moderator Lansdowne spoke of her own experience and understanding of Jesus, and challenged the church to embrace a radical commitment to listen to oppressed communities. Speaking of the "unfinished business" to which the church must attend, she urged the denomination to make thoughtful choices, that lead to healing for marginalized communities and for the Earth itself. Pressing the church to be brave, she called for "deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice," a practice "that won't be safe, but it can be good."

Close to the end of the service, people important in the life of Moderator Lansdowne and her family were gifted blankets by her mother, Dolly Lansdowne, Aunt Brenda Humchitt, and Honoured Elder Elenor Thompson. Hereditary Chiefs, including Heiltsuk Chief Harvey Humchitt, invited the church and gathered community to continue in the work towards reconciliation. Chief Dr. Robert Joseph began a chorus of "How Great Thou Art," which brought the congregation to its feet, joining him in song. Moderator Lansdowne led the procession from the church accompanied in Heiltsuk song and drum.



## **BUSINESS OF THE 44TH GENERAL COUNCIL**

### **Proposals to the 44th General Council**

#### **THEMES AND RELATED PROPOSALS**

Unassigned

Consent

Deepen Integrity

Embolden Justice

Invigorate Leadership

Invigorate Leadership: Human Resources

Nurture the Common Good

Strengthen Invitation

## UNASSIGNED

### GS01 OPENING PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

**Origin:** General Secretary

#### **Corresponding Members**

That the following persons who are in attendance be corresponding members of the 44th General Council 2022 and as such, be entitled to speak but not to move motions or to vote:

- all former Moderators;
- global partner representatives, ecumenical, inter-faith and official guests of the 44th General Council 2022;
- nominees for Moderator
- members of the General Council Executive, National Indigenous Council, and National Indigenous Elders Council who are not Commissioners;
- Youth Forum participants who are not Commissioners;
- those who have been requested by the General Secretary, General Council to serve as resource persons to the Council;
- members of the Business Committee who are not Commissioners;
- General Council Officers, Executive Ministers, Executive Officers, and Regional Councils Executive Ministers.

#### **Resource People**

##### ***Business Committee Membership***

That the Business Committee for the 44th General Council be:

- Allan Buckingham, Chair
- Richard Bott, Moderator
- Sue Brodrick, Chair, General Council Planning Committee
- Michael Blair, General Secretary, General Council
- Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, Northern Spirit, Living Skies, Prairie to Pine Regional Councils
- Rosemary Lambie, Executive Minister, East Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario Outaouais, Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Councils
- Nicole Treksler, Legal Counsel
- Maya Douglas, Ministry Personnel, St. James United Church, Etobicoke, Ontario

##### ***Friends in Council***

That the Friend(s) in Council for the 44th General Council be:

- Nancy Nourse
- Marie-Claude Manga

***Scrutineers***

That the Scrutineers for the 44th General Council 2022 be:

- Cam Watts
- Sarah Charters
- Faith March-MacCuish

***Facilitation Team***

That the Facilitation Team for the 44th General Council 2022 be:

- Mardi Tindal
- M (Meghan) Chorney
- Hewitt Holmes
- Carmen Lansdowne
- Eric Lukacs

***Equity Support Team***

That the members of the Equity Support Team for the 44th General Council be:

- Sharon Ballantyne
- Albertine Chokoté Naoué
- Koshy David
- Steven Johann
- Jenni Leslie
- Torrin Maag
- Maedith Radlein

**Business before the 44th General Council 2022**

That the reports and proposals provided along with any additions, and any new business received by the deadline for new business, be received for consideration by the 44th General Council 2022.

**Business Procedures**

That the following business procedures be adopted:

The Moderator will chair the meeting, making any rulings necessary and ensuring that there is full opportunity for discussion and decision making.

Business at the meeting will be considered according to the following three-phase process:

1. *Learning phase*: Information sessions will inform Commissioners about the issues related to the various proposals on the agenda. These sessions will take place between March 9, 2022 and May 4, 2022. Commissioners will participate either in person or by viewing the recordings on the PheedLoop application.

2. *Discussion phase:* The discussion phase will take place between June 17–19, 2022. Commissioners and corresponding members will meet in online discussion groups with pre-named hosts and a rapporteur. Within the discussion groups, they share what they have heard through the listening phase so everyone is informed about all the issues. Discussion groups deliberate on the proposals. Rapporteurs will record comments, affirmations, and suggestions in a summary paragraph or two capturing the essence of the discussion, not necessarily specific things said. The discussion groups confirm the information to be recorded and shared. Reports from all discussion groups are available for viewing by the entire Council and the Facilitation Team.
- 2a. *Synthesis of the discussions:* The Facilitation Team will analyze all the Discussion Group notes looking for common and important thoughts on each item before the Council. After thought and discussion, the Facilitation Team will compile Suggested Ways Forward based on the original items before the Council and the feedback received from the Discussion Groups.
3. *Decision-making phase:* The Facilitation Team will prepare refined proposals based on their discernment from the discussion group reports. These refined proposals will be available prior to the start of the decision-making session on July 22, 2022. There will be debate and further refinement of proposals in plenary, if needed, with the Facilitation Team returning to do more refinement as necessary. The process concludes with a motion in response to the proposal, final debate and a vote on the motion.

During the decision-making phase in plenary, the Moderator will apply the rules set out below and the rules set out in *The Manual* Appendix, Procedures for Holding a Meeting and Decision-Making.

Commissioners and corresponding members wishing to speak will:

- raise their virtual hands to be included on a speakers list. The Equity Team will support the Moderator to ensure that a variety of voices are heard. Speakers will not necessarily be heard in the order in which they raised their hand;
- be recognized by the Moderator or Discussion group host, prior to speaking;
- begin comments by identifying themselves by name, role, and Regional Council (or position as appropriate);
- only speak once to a given proposal except at the discretion of the Moderator;
- each new speaker should offer a new perspective or information;
- speak for no longer than 90 seconds except at the discretion of the Moderator;
- use the designated procedural toggle to raise a point of order, that is to raise a specific question of procedure with the Moderator;
- use the designated toggle to raise points of personal privilege, to be limited to comments noting that the individual raising the point has been insulted or maligned in the current debate.

For multi-part motions, a separate vote will be conducted on each part if requested by a Commissioner.

Note: General concerns about the meeting (inability to hear, missing documentation) will be raised directly with the Friends in Council, who will determine how the concern will be addressed. Concerns for the well-being of individuals, celebrations of birthdays, etc. will be made to the Friends in Council, who will coordinate these for “community moments.”

Voting at the meeting will be by electronic ballot unless otherwise specified.

### **Prioritizing Work**

The work of the 44th General Council 2022 will be assigned based on the priorities named by Commissioners of the 44th General Council 2022, as determined through consultation prior to the discussion sessions. The Business Committee will review and group all proposals by theme/issue based on the strategic objectives of the GCO Strategic plan. Following the learning sessions, General Council Commissioners will be asked to prioritize the proposals. The proposals named by the General Council Commissioners will serve as the priority agenda for the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022. Any proposals not dealt with during the meeting will be referred to the Executive of the General Council or the General Secretary.

### **Procedure for Withdrawing Proposals from the Consent Motion**

The following procedure will apply in the event that a Commissioner desires that a proposal be withdrawn from the consent motion and/or that a proposal be assigned to a body other than that recommended by the Business Committee:

1. The Commissioner making such a request will have one minute to make their request and provide their rationale for their request;
2. The request will be granted only if a majority of Commissioners vote in favor of it; and
3. If an item of business is removed from the consent motion, the Moderator will direct the Business Committee to find a place for the work consistent with the request.

### **New Business**

Any new business submitted between February 13, 2022 and March 30, 2022 will be dealt with by the 44th General Council, any other new business submitted after March 30, 2022 will be sent to the Executive of the General Council for disposition or may be considered in this meeting at the discretion of the Business Table.

Notices of new business (including the draft proposal) will be presented in writing to the Business Committee. The Business Committee will report items of new business and might recommend for incorporation into the agenda for the decision of the Council based on the following criteria:

- a. arising unexpectedly in response to the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022;
- b. arising in response to global or national matters that occur during the meeting of the 44th General Council 2022; and
- c. as determined by the court on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

New business not dealt with by the 44th General Council 2022 will be dealt with by a motion to refer to the Executive of the General Council or the General Secretary.

### **Election of Moderator**

That the following be approved as the process for nominations and election of the 44th Moderator of The United Church of Canada:

1. Nominations from Regional Councils and the National Indigenous Council will be closed on May 30, 2022. Nominations may be made by Commissioners from the floor until June 17, 2022. There must be a mover and a seconder, and the nominee must indicate willingness to stand for election and provide confirmation that they are a member of The United Church of Canada (per *The Manual 2022*, D.4.1.1). The Moderator will call for any further nominations just before the official close of nominations from the floor.
2. Nominations from the floor of the 44th General Council 2022 will be declared closed during Discussion Session A, on June 17, 2022.
3. After the closing of nominations, all nominees will be introduced to the Council.
4. Nominees will address the 44th General Council 2022, individually, on July 22, 2022, by recorded video.
5. Voting will be by ballot and take place on July 23, 2022.
6. Any nominee who receives 50% plus one of the votes cast will be declared elected as the new Moderator.
7. The name on the ballot with the lowest number of votes will be released from subsequent ballots; if there is a tie in the number of votes cast for the nominees with the lowest number of votes in their favour, the nominees who are tied will be released from subsequent ballots.
8. The results of each ballot will be announced to the nominees on that ballot, before being announced to the Council.
9. Announcements of the results of the ballots will take place at times determined by the Moderator with advice from the Business Committee.
10. Tallies of votes will not be announced.
11. The new Moderator will be installed on Sunday, August 7, 2022 at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto.

### **Minutes of the 43rd General Council 2018**

That the minutes of the 43rd General Council 2018 be approved.

### **Minute Secretary**

That the Minute Secretary for the 44th General Council 2022 be Shirley Welch.

### **Reports**

That the 44th General Council 2022 accept the accountability report of the Executive of the General Council.

That the 44th General Council 2022 receive for information the following reports:

- Moderator's Accountability Report
- Moderator's Advisory Committee Report
- General Secretary's Accountability Report
- National Indigenous Council Accountability Report
- Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Accountability Report
- Report on Membership
- Report on Questions to be Asked of Persons to be Commissioned, Ordained, Recognized or Admitted in the Celebration of Ministries Service
- Board of Vocation Accountability Report
- Manual Committee Report
- General Council Judicial Committee Report
- Minutes of the Executive of the General Council – June 2018 to June 2022 (found in the [United Church Commons](#))
- Actions of the Executive of the General Council – Summary Report (found in the [United Church Commons](#))

### **Agenda**

That the 44th General Council 2022 accept, as its agenda, the agenda as circulated and approved, on the understanding that the agenda may be changed, as necessary, by the action of the 44th General Council 2022, on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

### **Budget Constraints**

All motions having significant budget implications for the General Council Office shall be considered "in principle only" and, if adopted, be referred to the Executive of the General Council to implement to the fullest extent possible within adopted budgetary constraints.

### **Executive of the General Council**

That the Executive of the 43rd General Council be authorized to deal with all routine and emergency work of the General Council during the recess times of this 2022 meeting of the 44th General Council.

### **GS02 PLENARY CONSENT**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that:

The 44th General Council (2022) approve the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals:

- GS03 Amalgamation of Congregations
- GS04 Approving Minutes via Emails
- GS05 Discipline of Members and Adherents
- GS06 Formal Hearings and Appeals – Extension of Time Periods
- GS07 Remit Process Revision
- GCE01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program
- GCE02 Updated Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process – Short Term Supply
- NS01 Commemoration of Emancipation Sunday
- SW07 Review of New Structure
- SW08/ARW05 Care of the Church’s Marginalized (Discontinued Service List)



## CONSENT

### GCE02 UPDATED DIACONAL SUPPLY/ORDAINED SUPPLY POLICY AND PROCESS – SHORT TERM SUPPLY

Origin: Executive of the General Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

While *The Manual* points toward further policy for ministers serving under diaconal supply or ordained supply appointments in an ethnocultural or linguistic specific congregation, there is no policy or process for ministry personnel from other denominations who want to serve in a United Church community of faith for a short period of time (normally up to 2 years) without leaving their denomination and becoming a member of the order of ministry of the United Church.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

A “diaconal supply” is a diaconal minister (or equivalent) of another denomination who is not in the process of admission to the order of ministry of the United Church. An “ordained supply” is an ordained minister of another denomination who is not in the process of admission to the order of ministry of the United Church (*The Manual* I.1.2.4.a).

Communities of faith are currently being served by ministers under a diaconal supply or ordained supply appointment and these ministers from other denominations who do not wish to enter the admission process. These ministers serve a United Church community of faith for a short period of time, but we do not have any policy or process to guide these appointments. This policy seeks to clarify the process for those who serve under diaconal supply or ordained supply appointments, separately from those who serve under the exception for ethnocultural or linguistic specific congregation.

#### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?

Regional council staff with a responsibility to support the pastoral relations system were consulted many times during the development of this proposal and the draft procedural policy. This consultation was important so that the proposal could meet the needs they have identified in their regional councils. They shared about how in some regional councils there are many communities of faith that cannot find United Church ministry personnel (including Admission Ministers and Candidates) to fill their available positions.

The impact of this proposal would be that communities of faith who have trouble finding a United Church ministry personnel could then be served by a minister from another denomination in a short-term supply appointment. In the midst of a vacancy, this proposal advantages the community of faith because it allows them to be served by a supply minister and provides a continuity in leadership. Also, the procedure developed by the Standards for Accreditation Committee of the Office of Vocation anticipates that before being appointed the Admission Board will inquire about the minister’s review of United Church of Canada doctrine and commitments to equity.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

That the General Council Executive recommends to the 44th General Council a change to the policy for Diaconal or Ordained Ministers from another denomination:

A diaconal or ordained minister from another denomination may serve in an appointment to a United Church community of faith for a period of time, normally up to two years, without a requirement that they be in the process of admission to the order of ministry in the United Church.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

##### *Appendix*

In parallel to the development of procedures for those serving under the ethnocultural or linguistic specific exception, the Standards for Accreditation Committee also developed the following procedural details if the General Council approves the above proposal.

Before a minister from another denomination seeks a short-term appointment with a community of faith, they must meet the following requirements:

- a. submit a current police records check
- b. submit a letter of standing and a record of service within the denomination, to verify that the minister is in good standing in their denomination and not facing disciplinary action
- c. submit proof of completion of the mandatory workshops for all ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada:
  - a. Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders
  - b. Racial Justice Workshop
- d. sign an agreement that they are aware that they will normally be allowed to serve a United Church community of faith for up to 2 years and that they are not eligible to serve another United Church community of faith unless they enter the admission process.

Upon successful completion of these requirements:

1. the Office of Vocation will determine whether the minister meets the eligibility requirements for credential clearance.
2. The minister will be interviewed by the Admission Board, a commission of the Office of Vocation. As part of the interview, the Admission Board will inquire about the minister's review of United Church of Canada doctrine and commitments to equity, including what resonates with them and any concerns they have.

If approved by the Admission Board, the Office of Vocation will provide the minister with limited access to ChurchHub to complete the annual declaration and the record of appointment

forms. The minister will not be able to search for another pastoral relationship within ChurchHub.

These ministers would not be on the registry of accredited ministry personnel. However, as ministry personnel serving under a diaconal supply or ordained supply appointment, they would be on the roll of the regional council.

In matters of discipline, for example a complaint of harassment, they would be accountable to the Office of Vocation. The Office of Vocation would oversee the complaint process, including placing the minister on administrative leave. The Office of Vocation would notify the minister's denomination and provide the findings of the review or investigation.

If the ministry personnel and community of faith are finding that the pastoral relationship is healthy after one year, the ministry personnel does have the option of entering the Admission process and possibly staying in the pastoral relationship for more than 2 years. Instead of serving as Diaconal Supply or Ordained Supply under this policy, they would be an Admission Minister in the Admission process. Because of the time-limited nature of these supply pastoral relationships, the regional council needs to set a clear end-date for the appointment, so that the ministry personnel and the community of faith are aware of the time-limited nature of this pastoral relationship. However, depending on the local context and availability of ministry personnel, the regional council has the discretion to decide on the length of these types of appointments.

## **GS06 FORMAL HEARINGS AND APPEALS: EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to provide flexibility in the United Church's judicatory processes of formal hearings and appeal hearings.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Rigid rules on meeting procedures and time limits provide no accommodation for the personal circumstances of participants in the judicatory processes nor for extraordinary events like a pandemic. The existing rules may negatively impact on the fairness and smooth functioning of judicatory processes.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Giving judicatory bodies more discretion in how they hold hearings and on the time limits involved in judicatory processes will help to remove physical and cultural barriers for full participation in these processes and make them more inclusive.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Secretary proposes that the 44th General Council approve a change to The Manual to give Formal Hearing Committees and Appeal Committees the authority:

- a) to meet electronically or hold Formal Hearings and Appeal Hearings by any electronic means which permit all persons present to hear or otherwise communicate with each other in real time; and
- b) to grant extensions to any time limits in extraordinary circumstances, such as war, civil disorder, disasters and pandemics.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

N/A

### NS01 COMMEMORATION OF EMANCIPATION SUNDAY

**Origin: First United Church, Fort Saskatchewan Community of Faith**

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe Jesus is calling the General Council to name the first Sunday of August to be observed as Emancipation Sunday throughout The United Church of Canada.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

Slavery was fully abolished in Canada (British North America) by an act of the British Parliament that came into force on August 1, 1834. With that act it meant that no human being could be owned by another in Canada. This also meant that there was an implicit acknowledgement that this was but the beginning of a journey that we as a nation continue. August 1 is an important date in the history of Canada, and the significance of the date should be remembered and acknowledged annually.

The Judeo-Christian scripture makes clear that remembering is an important action for the people of God. The scripture also places importance on the commemoration of some historic events. The need to remember and commemorate is two-fold. It calls on us to remember the redemptive love of God in specific events of the past, and it is also an opportunity to celebrate the continuing redemptive work of God to oppose the things that enslaves us. It is in this regard, for example, that we note the words of Moses to the people of God in the book of Deuteronomy.

The call of Jesus to his disciples, on the night before he was betrayed, that they should break bread and drink the cup in remembrance of him continues the call of remembering. In this regard the word remembrance used denotes a recognition of an event or person to be commemorated. Specifically, in the context of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we recall the work of Jesus and more so his sacrificial death.

Our Christian tradition makes a priority of remembering as it enables the faithful handing on of truth (paradosis) from one generation to the next. This paradosis enables the next generation to face the realities of the past and not simply to “cherry-pick” those parts that may be preferred to hear. It is regrettable that in Canada the fact that the enslavement of Black people occurred in British North America is either ignored or forgotten. Many persons will today express surprise when this fact is told. In tandem with this reality is the pervading narrative that British North America was only involved in slavery as a refuge for those who escaped from enslavement in the United States of America. The enslavement of Africans did not occur in the large numbers as it occurs in the British colonies to our south. However, in all instances this was chattel slavery where Black people were stripped of their inherent humanity and treated as objects to be bought and sold, owned, and treated in inhuman and brutal ways.

This absence of remembering makes it difficult for a wholesome discussion of the legacies of slavery in Canada and the ways in which systemic racism continues to exist in the country. A failure to acknowledge this part of our history fails to take into consideration the reality in our history of segregated schools, discrimination in housing and employment, and the use of immigration rules to negatively discriminate against Black people.

In October 2020, the 44th General Council declared that The United Church of Canada is becoming an anti-racist church. Part of the process of becoming anti-racist includes a willingness to confront with humility those parts of our history that are painful and full of hurt as they display evidence of racism. An annual observance of the day of Emancipation will not immediately solve the issues cited above. However, it will be more than a symbolic step. It will begin, at least within the church, an acknowledgement to face bravely the full truth of the history of Canada and the continuation of a spirit of maturity within the society.

The prophetic role of the church makes it incumbent on the church to proclaim the vision of the rule of God in the hearts of people. This is a vision for righteousness, justice, truth, and love. The prophetic role of the church also seeks for healing of the historic hurts and to work towards reconciliation. The church has the responsibility to not uphold a “false hope” based on a skewed narrative but to hold up hope, righteousness, and love; love that calls on all to face truth.

### 3. How might the regional council or General Council respond to the issue?

The Northern Spirit Regional Council could propose to the 44th General Council:

- a) to set the first Sunday in August each year to be observed as Emancipation Sunday in The United Church of Canada;
- b) to encourage communities of faith and regional councils to share worship resources and liturgies that have been developed for this event.

**Regional Council Action:** Northern Spirit Regional Council agreed with the proposal and will pass it on to the 44th General Council for action.

## DEEPEN INTEGRITY

### GS08 CLIMATE JUSTICE COMMITMENT

**Origin:** General Secretary

#### 1. What is the issue?

The voices of Indigenous peoples and global partners have longed raised the concerns about an impending climate crisis now a climate catastrophe. Manifest in very tangible ways in communities, there is no denying the grave threat to our planet and the need for emergency action. This accelerating catastrophe deepens existing social and economic vulnerabilities, through insidious strategies such as environmental racism. The devastating impact is felt not only on humanity, but on the very web of creation God loved into being.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

In “such a time as this,” (Esther 4:14), the integrity of our theological commitments to care and live in respectful relationship with creation requires bold, daring, and public action. The United Church of Canada is required to put its own house in order. We are called to collaborate deeply with Indigenous peoples, global partners, the ecumenical community, civil society, and governments in change strategies. We are invited to robustly reflect Indigenous self-determination, renewed eco-spirituality, youth engagement, and sustained advocacy.

The United Church of Canada has a particular responsibility as a religious institution to dramatically reduce our carbon footprint. The focus of these efforts must be our buildings, where heat and light continue to be the largest contributor to emissions. [Faithful Footprints](#) has been successful in offering congregations, along with United Church camps, education centres, and community ministries, opportunities to improve their building’s energy and carbon performance. The emergency nature of this crisis requires this work be expanded with a more ambitious emissions reduction target for the church as a whole. As the pandemic draws to a close, transportation emissions may present another important place for sustained emissions reduction. [United Property Resource Corporation](#)’s (UPRC’s) commitment to net zero redevelopment should be affirmed as a contribution to sector and system change.

As well as buildings, denominational green spaces offer opportunities for reconnecting with the earth and deepening ecological commitment with opportunities to strengthen biodiversity protection and local food security. Further opportunities exist to deepen relationships with species who are our relatives, more strongly locating communities of faith as disciples in their watersheds.

We have spoken out on environmental and climate issues for more than 40 years, adjusting and revising our commitments over time. The current climate catastrophe and the launching of a new strategic plan call us to once more articulate the work that we are doing and more consistently engage all parts of our church.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Facing up to this moment includes acknowledging the interconnections between ecocide and genocide and Christianity's collusion in both. We are required to recognize the role of historic biblical interpretations in ecological degradation and the repression of the wisdom and spirituality of Indigenous peoples through generations. We must seek to participate in a climate movement with a particular responsibility to be guided by Indigenous peoples around the globe who have been consistently faithful in the care and protection of creation, based in deep knowledge and relationship. This is one way of living into our commitment to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Calls to the Church* as we strive to renew our ecological understandings and commitments in gratitude for God's gift of a creation that is very good.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

As part of the General Council Office [strategic plan](#), the General Council Executive adopted the following strategic objective: **amplify and integrate current initiatives in a bold, hopeful denominational climate strategy that accelerates reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030**, with a commitment to measure, report, and adjust based on learnings.

The General Council could make this a **whole church commitment**. We could strive to make a faithful and ambitious contribution to the climate movement, as part of the necessary transformation required to protect God's living world.

We could face this emergency through deepened commitment to reducing our carbon emissions, robustly integrating this goal across programs, services, and operations, with continued emphasis on lowering the energy footprint of our buildings from which the majority of our carbon emissions come, as well as an increased focus on transportation-related emissions.

- We could invite and support United Church communities of faith to spearhead church-wide climate action, including in our buildings. We could encourage members and adherents to embolden commitment in their own households and across their communities.
- We could encourage ongoing learning, particularly as offered by Indigenous communities and Nations, and right relations between people and the land. This could facilitate reconnection to the earth, and exploration of the intersections between eco-spirituality and social justice.
- We could support strategies of camps and outdoor education centres to be a resource to living with respect in creation and a model for carbon emissions reduction.
- We could intensify our historic commitment to climate justice through stronger denominational advocacy and investor action.

- We could build solidarity support for environmental anti-racism and for land, water, and climate protection, particularly as led by Indigenous communities, in Canada and globally.
- We could support adaptation, building local community resilience to climate impacts by strengthening the vital role that local United Churches play in grassroots “neighbours helping neighbours” support networks. This is especially urgent in marginalized communities where the impact of climate destabilization is devastating.
- We could strengthen collaborations with Indigenous communities, global partners, and ecumenical bodies, deepening movement building for climate justice. One opportunity is a renewed faith-in-action campaign—[For the Love of Creation](#)—which offers new possibilities for United Church communities to collaborate in climate action.
- We could leverage the unique regional infrastructure of the United Church to work in partnership with provinces/territories and municipalities to support Canada’s legislative climate targets.
- We could build relationships with young people, whose moral leadership has been unparalleled, amplifying their advocacy.

We could integrate the call to live with respect in creation across all our operations and ministries and intensify church-wide participation in bold, daring, and hopeful climate action.

##### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

The United Church of Canada has a long record of commitment to ecological conservation, environmental activism, and advocacy for climate justice. In 2015, General Council 42 [approved a carbon emission goal](#) consistent with the Paris Agreement and took bold investor action. In 2018, during General Council 43, Faithful Footprints was launched through a public commitment of 80% reduction by 2050 and a public goal of engaging 500 United Church congregations in the program by 2025.<sup>1</sup> The climate catastrophe requires a bold, daring, whole-church commitment with an expedited timeline and strengthened effort.

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1. See GS 81 United Church Building Emissions Reduction: Five Year Action Plan on [commons-united-church.ca](https://commons-united-church.ca) (Governance > General Council Executive > GC43 Executive 2018-2022 > Meeting Documents > 2020-11-20-21 > Background Documents > Faithful Footprints 148-149 GS 81).



## EMBOLDEN JUSTICE

### CS01 JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

**Origin: Canadian Shield Regional Council**

#### 1. What is the issue?

The issue addressed by this proposal is the inequity and human rights violations caused by the State of Israel in its ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories. How are we, as followers of Jesus, called to respond to the suffering of our neighbours?

Kairos Palestine is a coalition of Palestinian churches and Christian organizations. It issued the [Cry for Hope](#) document in July 2020 in response to the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. *Cry for Hope* calls on Christians and churches around the world to:

- a. Begin processes at all levels that recognize the urgent requirement for action
- b. Theological study – from the point of view of colonizer and colonized
- c. Affirm the right to resist and join in nonviolent resistance, using Boycott/Divest/Sanction as a framework for exerting pressure on Israel to comply with international law
- d. Demand governments employ political, diplomatic, and economic means to stop Israel's violations of human rights and international law
- e. Oppose anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, racism; work for justice
- f. Support interfaith and Israel Palestine partnerships that build mutual respect
- g. Encourage Come and See visits to Palestine, and stand with grassroots initiatives for a just peace.

In May 2021, the world witnessed the impact of direct armed violence and indirect systemic violence on the people of Palestine and Israel. We saw the inter-connectedness of suffering experienced by both peoples, and the disproportionate impact on the Palestinian people, as evidenced in the horrific bombing of Gaza.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada has long been a proponent of social justice. Over the years our church has passed many resolutions and proposals condemning violence in the Middle East, and encouraging respect for the rights of all people in the region.

The Israeli Knesset, the Israeli Supreme Court, Israeli military and police forces, and illegal settlers are all involved in the continual dispossession of more and more Palestinians from their lands and homes, and in removing Palestinian control over their essential life resources, such as water and electricity, as well as severely restricting the movement of the Palestinian people.

Many respected human rights groups, such as Kairos Palestine, Human Rights Watch, B'tselem, and Independent Jewish Voices, have named the actions of the Israeli government as apartheid. In the 1970s and 80s, Canada led the way in naming the South African situation as apartheid and taking strong action to hold the government of South Africa accountable.

Now is the time to hold the state of Israel accountable for its persistent violations of international human rights law, including the 4th Geneva Convention.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

As noted above, this proposal is in response to the explicit call for justice by Christians in Palestine, including United Church of Canada partners there.

As The United Church of Canada seeks to heal its own participation in settler colonialism and racism, it is time to explicitly and publicly reiterate the church's stated position on human rights for Palestinians, and facilitate ethical investment decisions that respect those rights, and other actions by all church bodies holding funds in trust in the form of stocks. To be faithful to its understanding of the gospel is to take and publicize action in response to the widespread and devastating human rights offenses against Palestinians. This is consistent with our opposition to discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity, and our commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

In order to stop the escalating violence affecting both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, and to non-violently pursue peace and justice for all in the region, it is proposed that The United Church of Canada take seriously the calls to action made by our church partners in the 2020 *Cry for Hope* document and that its response include the following:

- Declare Israel to be an apartheid state;
- Advise and equip United Church of Canada regions and communities of faith, before the end of 2023, with strategies to continue, deepen, or initiate divestment action, including strong encouragement for United Church of Canada bodies holding shares as part of trust funds, to divest from those corporations located in illegal settlements or that profit from the occupation of Palestinian territory, including companies that provide security apparatus that enables the oppression of all Palestinians, and;
- Immediately declare its public and explicit support of the non-violent Boycott/Divest/Sanction (BDS) movement in an effort to
  - a) pressure the government of Israel to respect international law, and the rights of all peoples of Israel and Palestine and
  - b) to urge the Government of Canada to take more assertive actions, within the international community, to end the occupation and respect the human rights of Palestinians.

*Reference:*

- *Cry for Hope* (Kairos Palestine, 2020) [cryforhope.org](http://cryforhope.org)

**FSL01 RESPONDING TO OUR GLOBAL PARTNER KAIROS PALESTINE****Origin: Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters****1. What is the issue?**

Our Palestinian partners are calling on The United Church of Canada and other ecumenical partners to stand in solidarity with their suffering and to listen to their cries for a just peace by taking action on the requests from Kairos Palestine.

We believe that God is calling us to have ears to hear the pleas of the direct descendants of the first followers of Jesus, the Palestinian Christian community, and to respond to their requests that our denomination through study, action, and advocacy help shed light on the reality of the tragedy and ongoing and deepening oppression.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

The United Church of Canada recognizes that “we are not alone.” Inherent within our creed is our support for solidarity with partners in Canada and beyond. Unfortunately, as one of our global ecumenical partners pointedly reminded the Commissioners to GC42 after it failed to address global partners concerns, the United Church needs the international ecumenical community. Further, the United Church has a responsibility to recognize its responsibility to stand in solidarity with global partners.<sup>1</sup>

We have also come to more fully understand the influence that those who hold power exercise in the media. We realize that often the cries of God’s people for justice who are marginalized are often overwhelmed by those who benefit from oppression. Jeremiah warned against those who say, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14). We believe, as followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that there cannot be lasting peace without justice. This is evidenced in our work for justice for the First Nations people of Canada and our anti-racism work. Further, as the Rev. Dr. Munter Isaac has pointed out, our faith in North America is actually rooted in the first followers of Jesus, who were Palestinian Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Many who have travelled to Palestine, including over 25 Ecumenical Observers appointed by the denomination, are gravely concerned that the plight of the Palestinian people is at a critical point. The State of Israel’s adoption of the Nation State Law in 2018 legalized institutional racial discrimination in Israel and the Palestinian territories that further deprived Palestinians of their rights to life, livelihood, and a future in their homeland.

Recent acts of the U.S. administration have supported Israel’s ongoing illegal seizures of land taking and attaining control over the entire territory of Palestine. These include the 2018 move of its embassy to Jerusalem, its announcement in 2019 that the U.S. government no longer

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1. Rev. Philip Peacock, World Council of Reformed Churches, Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness.

2. Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac is the pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. He also serves as Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College. In addition, he is the director of the “Christ at the Checkpoint” conference, and is a board member of Kairos Palestine.

deems West Bank settlements to be “inconsistent with international law,” and the 2020 “Peace to Prosperity” plan. Fueled by U.S. support and emboldened by the silence of the international community, the state of Israel has continued the expansion of illegal settlements. Daily, Israel continues to violate international law and the Geneva Conventions through its attacks on and control over the Palestinian people, including children.

Since the 1967 illegal occupation, successive governments of Israel have made it clear through their actions that the state has no intention of honouring their obligations as an occupying power under the Geneva Conventions. Nor do they seek to protect the rights of the Palestinian people guaranteed under the UN Human Rights Charter to dignity, self-determination, and the fundamental human rights including the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

It is time for the United Church, in light of these events, to recognize what Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated in an open letter to the General Council 41, “I saw the marks of apartheid in the policies of the Israeli government continued to the present day. The Palestinians are forced to live in segregated areas, often relocated to less desirable land so Jewish settlers can live in fine red ceramic-roofed houses with paved roads while most Palestinians live in squalor in villages and refugee camps. Water is diverted to settlers so that they can have nice green lawns, irrigated fields and community swimming pools while Palestinians endure shortages and dusty roads. I have looked at this and seen the ugly face of apartheid and the racism within it.”<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that the situation of the Palestinians has deteriorated significantly since then.

United Church partner, Kairos Palestine, calls on churches and all followers of Jesus to take decisive action. “The very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake. We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin. We assert that Christian support for Zionism as a theology and an ideology that legitimize the right of one people to deny the human rights of another is incompatible with the Christian faith and a grave misuse of the Bible.”

They further call upon churches, “to engage in a process of study, reflection and confession concerning the historic and systemic deprivation of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the use of the Bible by many to justify and support this oppression. We call on churches to reflect on how their own traditions can express the sacred duty to uphold the integrity of the church and the Christian faith concerning this issue. We cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians.”

Around the globe, many other churches and ecumenical organizations have recognized that this is a time of crisis for Palestinians and have taken strong stands in solidarity with their cry of hope. This includes the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) that in 2017 affirmed

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3. The General Secretary refused to circulate the letter formally because it came in after the proposal was received. Copies of the letter were distributed to all of the table groups at GC41.

“that with respect to the situation of injustice and suffering that exists in Palestine, and the cry of the Palestinian Christian community, that the integrity of Christian faith and praxis is at stake.”

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice, a worldwide coalition born in response to the Kairos Palestine “Moment of Truth: a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering,” have asked the global churches to stand in solidarity with the proposals that are listed in the next section.

### 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

That the 44th General Council direct the General Secretary, General Council, to respond affirmatively to the call to action by the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, Kairos Palestine, and the Global Kairos Network by implementing the call to action issued in July 2020:

- a) Initiate processes at all levels of the church that recognize the urgent requirement for decisive action regarding the denial of Palestinian rights and the misuse of the Bible directed toward helping United Church members better understand the injustice faced by Palestinians.
- b) Provide resources for study and discernment at all levels of the church and all United Church theological schools with respect to theologies and understandings of the Bible that have been used to justify the oppression of the Palestinian people. Help identify theologies that prophetically call for an inclusive vision of the land for Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Canadian First Nations, affirming that the Creator God is a God of love, mercy, and justice, not of discrimination and oppression.
- c) Affirm the Palestinians’ right to resist the occupation, dispossession, and abrogation of their fundamental rights.
- d) Endorse the 2005 Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) that provides a framework for direct political advocacy as nonviolent means to end occupation and oppression. (The purpose of BDS is not to punish or isolate Israel. It is rather to exert pressure on Israel to comply with international law, and to call upon its government and its people, in the spirit of the Word of God, to enter into the ways of justice and peace, thereby affirming its own rights as well as the rights of the Palestinian people.)
- e) Actively lobby the Canadian government to employ political, diplomatic, and economic means to stop Israel’s violations of human rights and international law. Also, develop resources that assist denominational members to also call for justice for Palestinians with political leaders.
- f) Oppose anti-Semitism by working for justice against anti-Judaism, racism, and xenophobia; oppose the equating of criticism of Israel’s unjust actions with anti-Semitism.
- g) Support initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians and interfaith partnerships that combat apartheid and occupation and create opportunities to work together for a common future of mutual respect and dignity.

- h) Develop and publicize recommendations for tours of Palestine and Israel to help United Church members see the reality in the Holy Land with compassionate eyes for the suffering of Palestinians.

## **GCE03 A PRINCIPLE BASED APPROACH TO JUSTICE WORK IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

### **Origin: Executive of the General Council**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

Engaging the work of justice is part of the DNA of The United Church of Canada since its founding in 1925. The church understands its ministry to partner with God and others in the transformation of the world. To create spaces where all of creation can enjoy the fullness of life. This was rearticulated in many statements of the church including: *Mending the World*, (1997); *Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God's People* (2000); *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire* (2006); and *Towards 2025: Justice Seeking Justice Living Church* (2012).

The church has used a policy-based approach to its justice and advocacy ministry, and this has largely served us well over the years. For the most part the policies are reflective of a particular time in history and limited by the current realities of the time. Changes to policies are often slow because of our governance processes. With dynamic and evolving contexts, policy statements made in specific moments in time find us out of sync with the calls of partners and with rapidly changing global realities. Increasingly, because of changing global and political contexts and requests from partners and other civil society partners, the United Church finds itself unable to be responsive because of the limitations of its policies. We believe it is time for the church to consider using a principal-based approach to its work: that the church identifies a set of principles that would govern its ability to respond to historic, current, and emerging social justice issues.

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

The 43rd General Council reaffirmed the denominational commitment to social justice as a core aspect of its identity. Furthermore, it also recommended that: "...a dedication to speaking out, when others are mostly silent, with people who are on the margins in our society" be a criterion on issues of decision-making based on research with people in the pews and people in the decision-making structures of the church.

As a member of the World Council of Churches, the United Church has affirmed the WCC's 2013 Statement on Mission and Evangelism: *Together Toward Life*: "Jesus Christ relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society, in order to confront and transform all that denies life. This includes cultures and systems which generate and sustain massive poverty, discrimination, and dehumanization, and which exploit or destroy people and the earth."

In 1988 the United Church affirmed in its Global Partnership Statement that partnership is “becoming involved with others in God’s mission for wholeness of life, especially with those who suffer the effects of systems of injustice...”

A principle-based approach would strengthen our commitment and ability to be responsive to the commitments we have made and calls from people who are at the margins.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. There are places where the church is already living into a principle-based approach to its justice and advocacy work, such as:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the church’s identity, mission, and vision ([commons.united-church.ca](#) > What We Believe and Why > Ministries in French);
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](#) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion); and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

The church’s commitment to relationships of mutuality, accompaniment, solidarity, and partnership will be strengthened by action. Partners continue to call us to a more robust costly solidarity.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Executive of the General Council proposes that the 44th General Council could:

Request that the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee develop a framework for a principle-based approach to all the justice work of The United Church of Canada and report back to the 45th General Council for adoption.

## 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

The proposal furthers the commitment to Costly Solidarity expressed in the 2018 proposal PMM20 Towards Peace in Palestine and Israel: A Call to Costly Solidarity and the 2021 proposal GS129 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel.

### GCE04 JUST PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: A CALL TO COSTLY SOLIDARITY

**Origin: Executive of the General Council**

#### 1. What is the issue?

The proposal *Towards Peace in Palestine and Israel: A Call to Costly Solidarity (PMM20)*, adopted by the Executive of the 42nd General Council, called for a process to review the church's policy on Palestine and Israel in light of the changing context and partner calls for solidarity. In November 2018, the Executive of the 43rd General Council of The United Church of Canada appointed a reference group of four persons to:

- undertake a review and consider current United Church of Canada policies on Palestine and Israel in light of the current reality and partner requests;
- receive perspectives from members of the United Church, partners, and other relevant organizations; and
- provide advice and recommendations to the Executive of the General Council.

The task group is offering to the church a new approach to responding to calls for justice and solidarity.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church has had a long history of responding to issues of injustices around the globe, and in particular to request from partners for accompaniment and solidarity. The ongoing occupation in Palestine has been a critical part of the engagement of the church. However, the context in the region has changed significantly, and the last major review of the church's policy on Palestine and Israel was done in 2012. The church currently finds itself out of step with partner calls for solidarity, the position of many of its ecumenical partners, and the implications of the current reality on the ground.

There are three principal areas in which the church's policy on Palestine and Israel diverges from what partners in Palestine and Israel and the global ecumenical community are requesting: (a) whether Israel's policies and practices towards Palestinians constitute apartheid according to international law; (b) recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, and (c) adoption of economic and other measures of non-violent resistance against the Israeli occupation.

The full report of the Just Peace Task Group can be found on the United Church Commons ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > Governance > General Council > 44th General Council > 4. Background Documentation).



### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

The task group engaged in numerous consultations in-person and online, and received written submissions (both by request and voluntarily). The task group consulted with partners and others in the region, ecumenical partners in North America and globally, as well as members of the church.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Executive of the General Council recommends to the 44th General Council:

- a) the adoption of a principles-based approach to its justice work on Palestine and Israel;
- b) the adoption of the following principles as lenses for discerning concrete actions in response to proposals from partners and councils with regard to peace building and solidarity in Palestine and Israel:

We are a church:

- i. with zero tolerance for all forms of racism, including antisemitism;<sup>1</sup>
- ii. committed to listening to partners, and resisting the temptation to jump in as a “saviour”;
- iii. learning that listening may demand a response that invites us to costly solidarity;
- iv. seeking to speak truthfully, even when the truth is painful; with courage to name things as they are;
- v. seeking to decolonize the justice works of the church;
- vi. striving to speak and act with humility;
- vii. open to fresh revelations of historic injustices which compel us to shape and re-shape our understanding of the demands of justice;
- viii. that affirms peoples' right to engage in non-violent resistance to injustice;
- ix. that promotes respect for and commitment to upholding international law, including political, civil, cultural, economic and social rights—including the right to self-determination;
- x. that promotes equity, mutuality, and respect as the path to right relations, in the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- xi. that supports processes and systems that lift up those who are marginalized and oppressed;
- xii. that recognizes that in some situations there are multiple oppressions and injustices and seeks to avoid false dichotomies in our analyses and statements;

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1. The United Church of Canada's Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) reviewed the definition of antisemitism as defined in the March 2021 Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA), and recommended that the Just Peace Task Group might consider it a helpful definition to use ([jerusalemdeclaration.org](https://www.jerusalemdeclaration.org)).

- xiii. that is accountable for how our words and actions can be misused to fuel polarizing controversies, and historical and existing injustices;
- xiv. that has a deep desire to stay in dialogue with partners and to stay in relationship even when we are in disagreement.

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

*Members of the Just Peace Task Group are:* Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile (chair), Rev. Brenna Baker, Very Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Rev. Jim Cairney, Rev. Michael Blair (until November 2020). Staff resource from the Church in Mission unit.

**PM01 MAKING IT RIGHT: ALBERNI INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (AIRS) BRINGING LOST CHILDREN HOME**

**Origin:** Pacific Mountain Region/Region 1

**1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to respond directly to the requests being made by Tseshaht First Nation leadership along with survivors of the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS).

**2. Why is this issue important?**

Road to Reconciliation (RtR) gatherings called ? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap (meaning – make it right) the name gifted to us by Nuuchah Nulth Elder Levi Martin, have been hosted for over 2 ½ years. In these gatherings, settlers, listeners, and 5–10 residential school survivors have sat in these ? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap circles. These survivors consistently say that the church and all Canadians need to follow through on all the TRC Calls to Action. They wonder if more United Churches are interested in reconciliation and if they will be invited to share their story and this circle process the RtR has developed.

Church members have sat with residential school survivors for the last 15 years from three nations: Gitksan, Carrier-Dene, and 2 Nuuchah Nulth. In all three of those nations, survivors have told stories of children, and in some cases babies, dying while at residential school. Those survivors thought the children's bodies had not been sent home. There is honour in carrying those stories, and being trusted by survivors. This proposal is what has been requested over the last 10 years, in response to listening to the Nuuchah Nulth leadership, community, residential school survivors, and intergenerational survivors. This proposal is a call to action not a reaction.

This proposal is honouring the agency of Tseshaht community and leadership as a sovereign nation. The asks in this proposal are an offering which may be accepted, rejected, or called out; they are what the community is requesting. Ta7taliya Michelle Nahanee reminds us that "A Decolonizing practice is, stop asking us, Indigenous peoples, to tell you what to do. Listen, listen, listen, hear what we are asking for, educate yourself, and then respond. If you get it wrong, we will call you out. To ask us to tell you what to do is a colonial act." (Decolonizing

Practices Training and Decolonize First). As the Tseshaht have reminded us, we must proceed at the pace of trust.

Since the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc discovery at the Kamloops Residential School of 215 children unceremoniously buried in unmarked graves, people have experienced sorrow and renewed grief. Creation weeps. Residential school survivors weep. Second- and third-generation survivors weep. God weeps. Settlers weep. Our spirits lament at the inhumanity of it all.

The issue this proposal addresses is that The United Church of Canada has known that children died at United Church of Canada-run Indian Residential Schools. The United Church of Canada has the responsibility of naming and redressing the pain and hurt that has been caused with tangible, expedient action that is more than admiration for resilience and a promise to behave differently.

The seven-year Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings told us that they heard unsettling stories of children dying and cremated babies. In response to unrecorded deaths, the TRC Calls to Action #71–76 outline what the survivors and the TRC Commission calls for. TRC Commissioner Murray Sinclair stated “That the TRC asked the federal government to help fund a series of projects that would identify burial site locations of children at residential schools. The request for funding was denied.” TRC Call to Action #74 states: “We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child’s burial location and to respond to families’ wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers and reburial in home communities where requested.”

In May of 2021, Moderator Richard Bott of The United Church of Canada shared these words in a prayer for students of the Kamloops Residential School: “But, God, if we truly listened, we can’t be surprised. The Elders and the Communities had already told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, told the governments and the world, the stories of the children, dead and buried, unnoted by the settler systems, but never ever forgotten by their siblings, their parents, their communities.” It is time for the settler church to finally listen. It is time to respond with tangible action. The church, our church, must respond. It must take action.

At a memorial held at the new Tseshaht Administration Building, on Tseshaht reserve land on May 31, 2021, Brenda West of Courageous Community Center (a Pacific Mountain Region UCC church plant in Port Alberni) connected with a survivor of the Kamloops Residential School. Together they placed empty shoes on the orange bridge that forms the entrance to reserve land, where children crossed on their way to AIRS. They prayed together, listened together, talked together. The United Church communities in Port Alberni have been engaging in this kind of effort for many years: deep listening, admitting wrong-doing, relationship building, and walking the road to reconciliation. Tseshaht have already engaged in work and ceremony around bringing the lost children home (for example: AIRS: Healing the Lost Souls Event, in September of 2019.)

Tseshah community has been clear about what they need from the church, and it is more than one congregation, and one church plant can do alone. It is clearly a call to action.

- On June 8, 2021, the Courageous Community Centre (CCC), which has Indigenous representation, arrived at consensus that these recommendations be made to PMRC and UCC.
- On June 9, 2021, AVUC Council unanimously passed a motion that these recommendations be made to PMRC and UCC.
- On June 10, 2021, Norah Martin, AIRS survivor and co-lead of ? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap circles of the Road to Reconciliation project (RtR) received a copy of this proposal.
- On June 10, 2021, Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), Tseshah First Nation, Elected Chief Councillor received a copy of this proposal.

As members of The United Church of Canada, we have benefitted from the practices of colonialism. We must also take responsibility for our actions, historically and presently. While we should partner, collaborate, and advocate, we should not wait for governments to do what is right. It is up to us. Together we have the capacity to make it right by walking the talk of reconciliation, advocating in the halls of political power, leading by example, keeping before the church, the federal government, and the country the urgent need to step up and address the harm we have perpetrated. We are at a watershed moment of awareness with so many finally asking “What can I do? How can I help? What is my responsibility?” Let’s answer those questions. It is going to take every one of us accepting responsibility and contributing actions to make this right and to transform systemic anti-Indigenous racism in Canada.

Canada will not thrive until what has been unearthed is made right. Our weeping must lead to action. We cannot stop in the sadness. May we listen to Mother Earth, who is calling for healing. She calls because she has held these children in the safety of her arms. She has held them and now the time to make it right is here, to care well for these ones, the ones yet to be unearthed, and their relations.

The United Church of Canada has issued formal apologies, adopted UNDRIP, implemented an Indigenous-made plan to create a self-determining Indigenous Church, denounced the Doctrine of Discovery, established the Healing Fund, established the Justice and Reconciliation Fund, and compensated Indian Residential School survivors individually. Now it is time to offer more reconcile-action on the long journey of living into right relationships. The Indigenous community tells us that if we do what is ours to do in our own generation, then seven generations from now we will know what it is to live in right relationship. Delaying action now will prolong the torment, deepen the divide, and, sadly, take more than seven generations to heal.

On June 1, 2021, Courtenay-Alberni MP Gord Johns brought forward a request to the House of Commons from the Tseshah First Nation. The Nation is asking for resources from the federal government to remove the remaining buildings that belonged to the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS) and replace them with a healing centre for survivors.

“If the government and the churches can build these horrible places, they can build healing places to take their spots,” said Johns. “[The Tseshaht] made it very clear that they need action, not more words. They don’t want to be known as the place that had a residential school that caused harm. They want a place where they can reclaim their power.” (Alberni Valley News, June 5, 2021)

### 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might undertake the following action to further address the harm caused by its Alberni Indian Residential School:

- 1) offer to conduct a forensic archeological search of AIRS in order to locate any bodies of children buried on the site in unmarked graves;
- 2) offer to exhume, identify and repatriate, as requested, the bodies of any children buried on the AIRS site to their home, or for appropriate commemoration ceremonies, and markers;
- 3) offer to safely remove and dispose of the remaining AIRS buildings from the territory;
- 4) develop a plan and funding model for a Healing Centre on the former AIRS site;
- 5) develop a plan to engage in deep listening to the Indigenous Elders in the territories of the other UCC residential schools to determine actions to offer in each context.

### 4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).

## PM02 A LIVING COMMITMENT TO THE KAIROS PALESTINE “CRY FOR HOPE”

Origin: Pacific Mountain Region/Region 1

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to join in solidarity against the actions of the Government of Israel and join in sanctions.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

In July 2020, KAIROS Palestine issued a CRY FOR HOPE to the churches of the world. In order to stop the escalating violence affecting both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, and to non-violently pursue peace and justice for all in the region, it is proposed that the United Church take seriously the calls to action of our partners.

Kairos Palestine is a coalition of Palestinian churches and Christian organizations. It issued the Cry for Hope document in July 2020 (summarized below) in response to the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. Cry for Hope calls on Christians and churches around the world to:

- a) Begin processes at all levels that recognize the urgent requirement for action
- b) Theological study – from the point of view of colonizer and colonized
- c) Affirm the right to resist and join in nonviolent resistance, using Boycott/Divest/Sanction as a framework for exerting pressure on Israel to comply with international law
- d) Demand governments employ political, diplomatic, and economic means to stop Israel's violations of human rights and international law
- e) Oppose anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, racism; work for justice
- f) Support interfaith and Israel Palestine partnerships that build mutual respect
- g) Encourage Come and See visits to Palestine and stand with grassroots initiatives for a just peace.

In previous years the United Church of Canada has passed many resolutions and proposals about Palestine and Israel. It has condemned violence in the region, and continues to do so.

In May 2021 we witnessed the impact of direct armed violence and indirect systemic violence on the people of Palestine and Israel. We saw the interconnectedness of suffering experienced by both peoples. In the 70s and the 80s Canada led the way in naming the South African situation as apartheid and taking strong action to hold the government of South Africa accountable. Now is the time to hold the state of Israel accountable for its persistent violations of international law including the 4th Geneva Convention.

As our church and country struggles to acknowledge and redress our own colonial history and the current day-to-day reality of people here, we acknowledge our complicity in the illegal colonization of Palestine through direct support of the Government of Israel.

The Israeli Knesset, Supreme Court, military forces, and settlers (illegal Israeli colonizers) are each involved in the continual dispossession of more and more Palestinians from their lands and homes. Every part of the Israeli establishment named above also supports, enables, encourages and participates in the illegal arrest, detention, and assassination of Palestinians exercising their UN rights to protest and oppose the illegal occupation of their lands.

### **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Council might affirm the recent declarations by various human rights groups that the actions of the Government of Israel conform to the definition of an apartheid state. (Kairos Palestine, B'tselem, Human Rights Watch, and Independent Jewish Voices), and to join the international campaign of Boycott, Divest and Sanction against the Government of Israel until such time as it respects international law and the equal rights of all people living in Israel and Palestine

**RC1501 RESPONDING TO OUR GLOBAL PARTNER KAIROS PALESTINE****Origin: Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee, Regional Council 15****1. What is the issue?**

Our Palestinian partners are calling on The United Church of Canada and other ecumenical partners to be in solidarity with their suffering and to listen to their cries for a just peace by taking action on the requests from Kairos Palestine.

We believe that God is calling us to engage with the pleas of the direct descendants of the first followers of Jesus, the Palestinian Christian community, and to respond to their requests that our denomination through study, action and advocacy help shed light on the reality of the tragedy and ongoing and deepening oppression.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

The United Church of Canada recognizes that, “we are not alone.” Inherent within our creed is our support for solidarity with partners in Canada and beyond. Unfortunately, as one of our Global Ecumenical partners pointedly reminded the Commissioners to GC42 after it failed to address global partners concerns, the United Church needs the international ecumenical community. Further, the United Church has a responsibility to recognize its responsibility to stand in solidarity with global partners.<sup>1</sup>

We have also come to more fully understand the influence that those who hold power exercise in the media. We realize that often the cries of God’s people for justice who are marginalized are often overwhelmed by those who benefit from oppression. Jeremiah warned against those who say, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14). We believe, as followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that there cannot be lasting peace without justice. This is evidenced in our work for justice for the First Nations people of Canada and our anti-racism work. Further, as Rev. Dr. Munter Isaac has pointed out, our faith in North America is actually rooted in the first followers of Jesus who were Palestinian Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Many who have travelled to Palestine, including over 25 Ecumenical Observers, appointed by the denomination are gravely concerned that the plight of the Palestinian people is at a critical point. The State of Israel’s adoption of the Nation State Law in 2018 legalized institutional racial discrimination in Israel and the Palestinian territories that further deprive Palestinians of their rights to life, livelihood, and a future in their homeland.

Recent acts of the U.S. administration have supported Israel’s ongoing illegal seizures of land taking and attaining control over the entire territory of Palestine. These include the 2018 move of its embassy to Jerusalem, its announcement in 2019 that the U.S. government no longer deems West Bank settlements to be “inconsistent with international law,” and the 2020 “Peace

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1. Rev. Philip Peacock, World Council of Reformed Churches, Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness.

2. Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac is the pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. He also serves as Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College. In addition, he is the director of the “Christ at the Checkpoint” conference, and is a board member of Kairos Palestine.

to Prosperity” plan. Fueled by U.S. support and emboldened by the silence of the international community, the state of Israel has continued the expansion of illegal settlements. Daily, Israel continues to violate international law and the Geneva Conventions through its attacks on and control over the Palestinian people including children.

Since the 1967 illegal occupation, successive governments of Israel have made it clear through their actions that the state has no intention of honouring their obligations as an occupying power under the Geneva Conventions. Nor do they seek to protect the rights of the Palestinian people guaranteed under the UN Human Rights Charter to dignity, self-determination, and the fundamental human rights including the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

It is time for the United Church, in light of these events, to recognize what Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated in an open letter to the General Council 41, “I saw the marks of apartheid in the policies of the Israeli government continued to the present day. The Palestinians are forced to live in segregated areas, often relocated to less desirable land so Jewish settlers can live in fine red ceramic-roofed houses with paved roads while most Palestinians live in squalor in villages and refugee camps. Water is diverted to settlers so that they can have nice green lawns, irrigated fields and community swimming pools while Palestinians endure shortages and dusty roads. I have looked at this and seen the ugly face of apartheid and the racism within it.”<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that the situation of the Palestinians has deteriorated significantly since then.

United Church partner, Kairos Palestine, calls on churches and all followers of Jesus to take decisive action. “The very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake. We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin. We assert that Christian support for Zionism as a theology and an ideology that legitimize the right of one people to deny the human rights of another is incompatible with the Christian faith and a grave misuse of the Bible.”

They further call upon churches, “to engage in a process of study, reflection and confession concerning the historic and systemic deprivation of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the use of the Bible by many to justify and support this oppression. We call on churches to reflect on how their own traditions can express the sacred duty to uphold the integrity of the church and the Christian faith concerning this issue. We cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians.”

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3. The General Secretary refused to circulate the letter formally because it came in after the proposal was received. Copies of the letter were distributed to all of the table groups at GC41.



on how their own traditions can express the sacred duty to uphold the integrity of the church and the Christian faith concerning this issue. We cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians.”

Around the globe, many other churches and ecumenical organizations have recognized that this is a time of crisis for Palestinians and have taken strong stands in solidarity with their cry for hope. This includes the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) that in 2017 affirmed “that with respect to the situation of injustice and suffering that exists in Palestine, and the cry of the Palestinian Christian community, that the integrity of Christian faith and praxis is at stake.”

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice, a worldwide coalition born in response to the Kairos Palestine “Moment of Truth: a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering,” have asked the global churches to stand in solidarity with the proposals that are listed in the next section.

### **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

We request the 44th General Council to direct the General Secretary, General Council to respond affirmatively to the call to action by the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, Kairos Palestine and the Global Kairos Network by implementing the call to action issued in July 2020:

- a) Initiate processes at all levels of the church that recognize the urgent requirement for decisive action regarding the denial of Palestinian rights and the misuse of the Bible directed toward helping United Church members better understand the injustice faced by Palestinians.
- b) Provide resources for study and discernment at all levels of the church and all United Church theological schools with respect to theologies and understandings of the Bible that have been used to justify the oppression of the Palestinian people. Help identify theologies that prophetically call for an inclusive vision of the land for Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Canadian First Nations, affirming that the creator God is a God of love, mercy and justice; not of discrimination and oppression.
- c) Affirm the Palestinians’ right to resist the occupation, dispossession, and abrogation of their fundamental rights.
- d) Endorse the 2005 Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) that provides a framework for direct political advocacy as nonviolent means to end occupation and oppression. (The purpose of BDS is not to punish or isolate Israel. It is rather to exert pressure on Israel to comply with international law, and to call upon its government and its people, in the spirit of the Word of God, to enter into the ways of justice and peace, thereby affirming its own rights as well as the rights of the Palestinian people.)
- e) Actively lobby the Canadian government to employ political, diplomatic and economic means to stop Israel’s violations of human rights and international law. Also, develop resources that assist denominational members to also call for justice for Palestinians with political leaders.

- f) Oppose antisemitism by working for justice against anti-Judaism, racism and xenophobia; oppose the equating of criticism of Israel's unjust actions with antisemitism.
- g) Support initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians and interfaith partnerships that combat apartheid and occupation and create opportunities to work together for a common future of mutual respect and dignity.
- h) Develop and publicize recommendations for tours of Palestine and Israel to help United Church members see the reality in the Holy Land with compassionate eyes for the suffering of Palestinians.

Kairos Palestine/Global Kairos for Justice Cry for Hope – [cryforhope.org](http://cryforhope.org)

## **SW01 DECRIMINALIZATION OF ILLICIT SUBSTANCES FOR PERSONAL USE AND HARM REDUCTION**

**Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

Within The United Church of Canada, we are called to seek out spaces in which harm may be reduced through meaningful engagement opportunities. This looks and feels differently for each of us, and in this proposal, it is in the understanding that God calls us to seek wisdom and engage more extensively with people living with an active substance-use disorder. If we consider Jeremiah 29:11, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (NRSV), then we are following God's call to be agents of care, more aware of the needs of society, and prepared to be part of the building of a hopeful welfare that reduces harmful societal realities.

The United Church of Canada must accept the responsibility of "care" for all people in society and rewrite its policy approved by the 28th General Council of 1980: "The Use and Misuse of Drugs," which stated "urge the government to use extreme caution regarding changes to legislation that might be interpreted as a relaxation of control of marijuana," and the policy approved by the 30th General Council in 1984 that stated, "there must be a court appearance" and that "an administrative record of convictions must be kept so that second and subsequent offences can be treated more severely than the first." In each of these instances, penalties were encouraged. Today, society has begun to recognize that substance use disorder, often connected to illicit substances, is a mental health illness, and as such, must be treated in this capacity. Harm reduction itself is not the encouragement of illicit substance use, but rather providing a safe space where trained personnel can come to the aid of the person who uses illicit substance. Harm reduction then becomes a "philosophy of care" for all people that there are support people and resources readily available to them.

Harm reduction advocates across Canada have called upon the Government of Canada to consider the ways in which people may access services, including a national decriminalization of

illicit substances for personal use. In *The Georgia Straight*, June 4, 2018, article titled, “Why decriminalize?” Vancouver’s First United at a public discussion, Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne stated, “there are many people for whom using drugs is decriminalized already, just by virtue of the other privileges that they hold in society. And so by making it a health issue and not an issue of criminality, we are removing a barrier that people in this community face.” The United Church of Canada must join with community and medical services across the country in calling on the Federal Government to decriminalize illicit substances for personal use.

The United Church of Canada must also call on itself to engage in harm reduction practices with intentionality and communal response. This proposal calls on The United Church of Canada to study ways in which it can be engaged in harm reduction practices—policies, potential community partnerships, and conversations at the national level.

## 2. Why is this issue important?

As we learned in the “Seeking to Reduce Harm” conversations that were hosted nationally through The United Church of Canada’s United in Learning, the call to be a harm reductionist church is both personal and public. Many of our members have been touched by family members or friends who have been lost due to the toxic drug crisis in Canada.

Reverend Barry Morris, who works for the Longhouse Council of Native Ministry in east Vancouver, who shared in the *Vancouver Sun* article “Hitting too close to home: Minister who conducts funerals for overdose victims loses own son to poisoned drugs,” shared that he has worked with people who have lost family members due to overdose/toxic drug deaths, and as a parent who also lost his own son he stated that he often wonders, “the impulsivity that goes with (drug addiction), it seems it’s so strong, so enduring, so haunting and hounding, that I have to wonder, as I have many times, not just in Eli’s case, as to what possibly can intervene?” What Rev. Morris is asking himself is the same question the church should be asking itself. How might The United Church of Canada engage in harm reduction and how might it live out the deep sense of justice that is required to engage moving forward.

For many, substance use disorder is a reality that is lived out daily. It is part of the way in which they navigate the world, but there are ways to mitigate the harm that results. The United Church of Canada, and the wider church, is called by God to seek out places and spaces in which harm maybe reduced. Such pieces include: Naloxone training and availability for those who need this life saving intervention. Naloxone has often been dubbed “the Lazarus drug.” Naloxone is a medicine that, when administered, reverses opioid overdose. It is an “opioid antagonist.” Naloxone will not influence a person if they do not have opioids in their system, but has been proven effective in reversing overdoses related to substances like heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, and morphine. While Naloxone is not the only pathway forward, it is one of the many tools within a harm reductionist’s toolbox. It is imperative that communities of faith consider the importance of training in administering Naloxone, which saves lives.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, opioid related deaths have been escalating at a higher rate than before. The church has an important role to play to address this crisis in our midst. By

calling on the federal government to act in decriminalizing illicit substances for personal use, the number of needless deaths due to opioid and drug use will be fewer and the church will also become a true “agent of God” more aware of the needs within their own communities of faith.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

This proposal highlights the need for us to be a church that barrier-free, one that truly examines how we might be able to live into the mission of being a church that is called to “love and serve others.”

By engaging further in our own learning, we are opposing the discriminatory practices within the legal systems of Canada, in relation to illicit substances, and ensuring that each person is treated with dignity and with agency. The differences between decriminalization and legalization of illicit substances is clear, and decriminalization, as the pathway forward suggested by this proposal, would allow for the church’s commitment towards acknowledging that there is discrimination in relation to people who utilize illicit substances for personal use would create space for people who live within a societies’ margins to be able to fulsomely engage with harm reduction services and practices.

The criminalization of illicit substances for personal use disproportionately affects racialized people. In 2020, the Ontario Human Rights Commission published an article titled *Racial Disparity in Arrests and Charges* in relation to substance use and noted that Black males are 3.6 times more likely to utilize illicit substances in comparison to White males. In a similar consideration, the report also acknowledged that Black people are more likely to experience such tactics as “stop and frisk,” and in turn the racialization of those who utilize illicit substances for personal use has been disproportionately affected by specific police tactics.

It is important to recognize the historic realities of Canadian drug laws. Early drug laws were written to target racialized communities, specifically Asian Canadians. To this day, racialized people are more disproportionately affected by laws related to illicit substances in Canada, for example, according to Harm Reduction TO, “Indigenous Canadians account for 24.4% of the federal prison population, and just 4.3% of the general population”; Indigenous people are 500 % overrepresented in prisons across Canada.

This proposal was built out of several consultation factors. First, it was brought forward through The United Church of Canada’s United in Learning events “Seeking to Reduce Harm,” in which people shared about their own experiences working with/living through their own substance use disorder. It was also written in consultation with people who currently live with an active substance use disorder or are in recovery.

This proposal will allow for the church to engage more fulsomely in relating to people who live with substance use disorder as it will, allow the church to engage a framework of harm reduction that is immediate, but also examining the grace in which the church may share within the wider context of its community.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Shining Waters Regional Council recommends that

1. The General Council is to engage nationally with communities of faith, and its members to continue to develop a framework in which the United Church of Canada may work towards harm reduction practices and provide resources for communities of faith to engage locally in conversations relating to substance use disorder and the decriminalization of illicit substances for personal use.
2. The United Church of Canada call on the Federal Government of Canada to decriminalize illicit substances for personal use.
3. The General Council work with the regional councils across Canada, in supporting and working with, communities of faith to be trained in administering and housing Naloxone at each community of faith.
4. The United Church of Canada recognize and reflect on its historical stance in relation to the use of illicit substances and the damage it created mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually for people, and those closest to them, in relation to living with substance use disorder.
5. Persons preparing for ministry in The United Church of Canada be oriented/educated towards understanding the realities of people and their families living with substance use disorder.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Tina Conlon/Lois Brown that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-03 Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction, to General Council with concurrence

MOTION

CARRIED

### SW02 RAISING OUR VOICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

At the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, half the Arab people of Palestine were driven from their homes, and their land. They have never been allowed to return, and life has become progressively worse ever since for those who remained. In recent decades, Israeli settlers have begun to move into the occupied Palestinian territories, setting up homes, businesses, and communities that are illegal under international law, further restricting the human rights of Palestinians. The separation wall erected by Israel prevents free movement of Palestinians for work, health, emergencies, family connections and farming. B'Tselem, a widely respected non-governmental human rights organization in Israel declared in 2020 that due to its policies

regarding Palestine and Palestinians, Israel has become an apartheid state. Human Rights Watch made the same declaration in 2021.

*(The term apartheid was first used to describe South Africa's racist segregation against non-white citizens. Apartheid—Afrikaans for "apartness"—is a crime against humanity under international law. Under the 1998 Rome statute that established the International Criminal Court, it was defined as "institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other" with the intent of maintaining that regime.)*

The Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 created hope that a lasting, equitable solution might be found to assure the continued existence and security of Israel and Palestine. Since then, however, the Palestinian people have been intensely frustrated not only by lack of progress toward peace but by the deepening and broadening of oppression by the Israeli armed forces and the rapid expansion of illegal settlements. In 2020, the government of Israel proposed to annex the Jordan valley and other areas, signaling its abandonment of the Oslo process. The daily struggle for Palestinians includes the military detention of children and youth and extrajudicial killings of civilians, destruction of homes and olive groves, a series of political and judicial decisions, and severe restrictions on their access to water, electricity, and medical services. All Palestinians are affected, and all aspects of their society. While people of Jewish heritage are afforded the right to return to Israel, whether or not their forebears ever resided there, Palestinians forced out in 1948, 1967, or subsequently do not have that right, even those with deeds and keys to property.

In response to the deteriorating human rights situation there, The United Church of Canada has spoken out about the plight of Palestinians frequently over the decades. One of the actions it has recommended is that faith communities and United Church entities holding investment funds take economic and other measures to draw attention to the occupation of Palestinian lands, and in particular, to illegal settlements.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

The United Church has a long relationship with the Jewish people, as described in *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church–Jewish Relations (1997)* and in United Church policy. However, in the face of systematic abuses by Israel against Palestinians, whose homeland Israel is occupying, the church must speak humbly and also with persistence. The covenant between humankind and the Holy One does not accord rights to some people that others lack. The shining message of the Torah, the prophets, and the entire biblical witness is that those with power look after those without it. It affirms human rights and dignity for all. We seek justice. We resist evil.

Adoption of a strong human rights stance regarding Palestinians and choosing to divest from businesses profiting from illegal Israeli settlements sends a message to Israel that its behaviour is unacceptable to us, and that we will not profit from the Occupation. Muting ourselves on this issue sends a very different message, one that puts the moral authority of the church in jeopardy by tolerating the persistent oppression of Palestinian sisters and brothers.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Christians have lived in Palestine since the time of Jesus. In 2020, Palestinian churches (including United Church partners) joined together to issue *A Cry for Hope*, evoking the biblical call to do justice. This proposal is in response to that call.

As the United Church seeks to heal its own participation in settler colonialism and racism, it is time to explicitly and publicly reiterate the church's stated position on human rights for Palestinians, and facilitate pro-rights investment decisions and other actions by all church bodies holding funds in trust in the form of stocks. To be faithful to its understanding of the gospel is to take and publicize action on widespread and devastating human rights offenses against Palestinians. This is consistent with our opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity and our commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Shining Waters Regional Council suggests that General Council 44 commit itself to speak out on human rights for Palestinians in an effort to support the ending of the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands.

In this calendar year, the United Church could:

- publicize its support for the human rights of Palestinians and its continued opposition to illegal settlements through a media release and on its website;
- urge the Canadian Government to support the International Criminal Court in its investigation of violations of international law and the Geneva conventions, including the illegal settlements in Occupied Palestine, and the blockade of Gaza, which is a violation of the prohibition of collective punishment.

In this triennium, the United Church could:

- share its support for the human rights of Palestinians and its continued opposition to illegal settlements with communities of faith;
- inform and advise congregations and other bodies holding funds about the divestment actions already taken by the United Church; and how to divest from companies doing business in or supporting the creation, management or security of illegal settlements on Palestinian territories with resources for education and action;
- renew and increase promotion of advocacy campaigns, such as "Unsettling Goods," and other theological and educational resources to raise awareness of the situation in Palestine;
- develop a plan in conjunction with UNJPPI National to recognize UC communities of faith that commit to action on justice and human rights for Palestinians including divestment.

*Resources, background on Palestine and United Church policy*

- *Cry for Hope* (Kairos Palestine, 2020) [cryforhope.org](http://cryforhope.org)
- *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church–Jewish Relations Today* (United Church of Canada, 1997, including the 2003 Statement on United Church–Jewish Relations Today) [ecumenism.net/archive/docu/1997\\_ucc\\_bearing\\_faithful\\_witness.pdf](http://ecumenism.net/archive/docu/1997_ucc_bearing_faithful_witness.pdf)

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

MOTION by Robin Wardlaw/Brian McIntosh that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-02 *Raising Our Voice for Human Rights* to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION

CARRIED

**SW09 JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

**Origin: Ken McEvoy and Barbara Lloyd of the Shining Waters Palestine Network**

**1. What is the issue?**

Kairos Palestine is a coalition of Palestinian churches and Christian organizations. It issued the *Cry for Hope* document in July 2020 in response to the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. *Cry for Hope* calls on Christians and churches around the world to:

- a. Begin processes at all levels that recognize the urgent requirement for action
- b. Theological study—from the point of view of colonizer and colonized
- c. Affirm the right to resist and join in nonviolent resistance, using Boycott/Divest/Sanction as a framework for exerting pressure on Israel to comply with international law
- d. Demand governments employ political, diplomatic, and economic means to stop Israel's violations of human rights and international law
- e. Oppose anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, racism; work for justice
- f. Support interfaith and Israel Palestine partnerships that build mutual respect
- g. Encourage Come and See visits to Palestine, and stand with grassroots initiatives for a just peace. (*For full text, see link, below.*)

In May 2021, the world witnessed the impact of direct armed violence and indirect systemic violence on the people of Palestine and Israel. We saw the interconnectedness of suffering experienced by both peoples.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

In previous years The United Church of Canada has passed many resolutions and proposals. It has condemned violence in the region, and continues to do so.



Two respected human rights groups have named the actions of the Israeli government as apartheid. In the 1970s and the 80s, Canada led the way in naming the South African state as apartheid and taking strong action to hold the government of South Africa accountable.

The Israeli Knesset (parliament), the Israeli Supreme Court, Israeli military and police forces, and illegal settlers are each involved in the continual dispossession of more and more Palestinians from their lands and homes, and in removing Palestinian control over essential life resources, such as water and electricity, as well as restricting the movement of people within Palestine.

B'Tselem, a non-governmental human rights organization in Israel, declared in 2020 that due to its policies regarding Palestine and Palestinians, Israel has become an apartheid state. Human Rights Watch made the same declaration in 2021. Now is the time to hold the state of Israel accountable for its persistent violations of international law including the 4th Geneva Convention.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

As noted above, this proposal is in response to the explicit call for justice by Christians in Palestine, including United Church partners there.

As the United Church seeks to heal its own participation in settler colonialism and racism, it is time to explicitly and publicly reiterate the church's stated position on human rights for Palestinians, and facilitate pro-rights investment decisions and other actions by all church bodies holding funds in trust in the form of stocks. To be faithful to its understanding of the gospel is to take and publicize action on widespread and devastating human rights offences against Palestinians. This is consistent with our opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity and our commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

In order to stop the escalating violence affecting both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, and to non-violently pursue peace and justice for all in the region, it is proposed that the United Church take seriously the calls to action made by our church partners in the 2020 *Cry for Hope* document and that its response include the following:

- Declare Israel to be an apartheid state.
- Advise and equip United Church regions and communities of faith, before the end of 2023, with strategies to continue, deepen, or initiate divestment action, including strong encouragement for United Church bodies holding shares as part of trust funds, to divest from those corporations located in illegal settlements or that profit from the occupation of Palestinian territory, including companies that provide security apparatus that enables the oppression of all Palestinians, and;
- Immediately declare its public and explicit support of the non-violent Boycott/Divest/Sanction (BDS) movement in an effort to a) pressure the government of Israel to respect international law, and the rights of all peoples of Israel and

Palestine and b) to embolden the government of Canada to take more assertive actions, within the international community, to end the occupation and respect the human rights of Palestinians.

*Resources, background on Palestine and United Church policy*

- *Cry for Hope* (Kairos Palestine, 2020) [cryforhope.org](http://cryforhope.org)
- [\*Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church–Jewish Relations Today\*](#) (United Church of Canada, 1997, including the 2003 Statement on United Church-Jewish Relations Today)

## INVIGORATE LEADERSHIP

### CS02 ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT

**Origin: Little Current Pastoral Charge, Canadian Shield Regional Council**

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe our Holy Reconciler is calling us to address the body of Jesus, the Church, as it is formed as The United Church of Canada, to reaffirm what it means for us to be in essential unity in Christ. The United Church of Canada continues to review, refine, and update as appropriate its governance policy and procedures as the Spirit moves us. While one cannot anticipate every eventuality, we can and must pause to reflect: do these revisions and updates adequately reflect our covenants with God and each other?

The specific event that sparked this proposal is the November, 2018 confidential settlement between a former Conference of The United Church of Canada, a specific United Church community of faith, and an ordained minister who is allowed to continue in her ministerial role despite the fact that this clergy person has renounced the vows taken at the time of her ordination.

It is not our intent to “relitigate” this settlement but, in the spirit of “continuous improvement,” to seek avenues to bolster the policies and procedures of The United Church of Canada. As Churchill said, “Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.” To be united, and to seek to be uniting, we must have a way to stay united and in essential agreement; and also have a path forward for those who are not in essential agreement.

#### 2. Why is this issue Important?

The Little Current Pastoral Charge in its letter of January 28, 2019, to the Moderator, Richard Bott, raised the question of “unintended consequences” that may arise from this confidential settlement. Could a local pragmatic settlement have country-wide precedent-setting repercussions?

The February 6, 2019, correspondence from the national church in response to our Little Current Pastoral Charge January, 2019 letter noted that “there are many who are dismayed at the recent settlement.” However, the settlement does not “set a precedent that binds any future complaints.” Are we certain of this? At the current time an individual community of faith or regional council could renounce their covenant and vows with the others of our denomination and yet remained part of the United Church.

In our June 1, 2019 submission to the Canadian Shield Regional Council, we said that it is the expectation of the members and adherents of The United Church of Canada that while we are “pilgrims each with our own cultural values, assumptions, and world views,” that nationwide there will be, in general terms, a consistency of worship and core beliefs as overseen by the regional councils for communities of faith and the Office of Vocation for ministry personnel.

This concern and proposal were discussed initially by the Little Current Pastoral Charge Council in December, 2018 and January, 2019 and approved at the Pastoral Charge Annual Meeting in February, 2019. The letter to the Moderator, Richard Bott, was reviewed with the North Shore Cluster of the United Church (Manitoulin Island communities of faith and the north shore of Lake Huron communities of faith) on January 31, 2019. The proposal was submitted and approved at the Canadian Shield Regional Council meeting in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, on June 1, 2019.

We believe this is important to our shared mission to be one in Christ. Without clear guidelines and procedures, we do not have a way to seek reconciliation with those individuals or communities who are no longer in essential agreement. We also do not have a way to peacefully part ways should the parties find essential agreement to be not possible at that time. This model of seeking unity, and parting in peace if not possible, is given to us by Jesus in Matt. 18:15–17.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

A clearer policy on both how to stay in essential agreement, and how to peacefully part ways when it is not possible, will help the church live out its commitment to being an intercultural church. Conflicts naturally arise among all of the people of God. The more diverse we become, the more likely we will have conflicts born of different cultures, backgrounds, theologies, symbolism, and experiences. Conflict in and of itself is not bad. Jesus readily entered debate with others and accepted the correction of the woman in Matt. 15:27. How to manage conflict is a gift of the Spirit.

As God is calling to all peoples to be hospitable, and to welcome the stranger as family, while yet remaining authentically who God made us to be—we *will* have more conflicts and disagreements in the future. We will have more family who seem to be strangers; and strangers who are family. The Family of God, known as the Church of God, must seek ways to “if possible, as much as it depends on [us], live at peace with everyone” (Rom. 12:18). Planning ways through conflict, misunderstandings, and reconciliation, or mutually parting with blessings, is a way to plan for peace with all cultures and peoples.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the Issue?**

This proposal is submitted to the General Council in an effort to clarify and enhance governance policies and procedures for The United Church of Canada so that the national church has a clear and consistent approach and policy coast to coast to coast in order to deal with any future comparable situations.

Our proposal is that The United Church of Canada undertake steps to 1) Identify, 2) Investigate, and 3) Implement measures in the United Church *Manual* (2019), including but not necessarily limited to:

- J.1: Regional Council Oversight of Communities of Faith
- J.2: Office of Vocation Oversight of Ministry Personnel

- J.4: Accountability
- J.6: Office of Vocation Action – Ministry Personnel

So that the appropriate action is taken when ministry personnel, or communities of faith, renounce their ordination vows and/or covenants. Such a review will strive to ensure nationwide consistency of approach to ministry personnel matters among communities of faith and regional councils. We do not seek to bring discord from the past, but rather to plan for the future so that when we come together with our different hymns, instructions, revelations, tongues, and interpretations, we come together in a manner that builds the church and each of us up (1 Cor. 14:26).

#### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council**

2019 Canadian Shield Regional Council Meeting (June 2019 in Sault Ste. Marie, ON) – Proposal Proposal #2019-01: *Resolution, Little Current Pastoral Charge*

**MOTION** by Barbara Nott/Bill Jones

RC Mtg 2019-06-01-06

**That the Canadian Shield Regional Council forward proposal #2019-01, *Resolution, Little Current Pastoral Charge* to the General Council with concurrence.**

**CARRIED**

There were abstentions to the vote.

### **CW01 REQUIRING ONGOING ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

**Origin: Chinook Winds Region/Region 3**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

Our church's requirement that ministry candidates be in "essential agreement" with our Statement of Doctrine, and to accept it as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, does not currently hold already ordained/commissioned/recognized ministry personnel accountable to the same standard.

We believe that God is inviting us to consider clarifying this in our theology and practice. It is our belief that, in order to continue to be suitable for ministry in The United Church of Canada, ongoing essential agreement (as it has been defined by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee) should be required of all ministry personnel throughout their service to the church.

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

The theological diversity of The United Church of Canada has long been rooted in the concept of "essential agreement." This term is used in the Polity section of *The Manual* (2021), III.13.2—as well as in several subsequent sections—in reference to requirements for readiness for commissioning, ordination, or recognition of ministry candidates (H.4.7); readiness and suitability of clergy from other denominations for admission to the order of ministry (H.6.1);

and under the requirements for readmission of those who have previously been placed on the Discontinued Service List(s) (H.8.2).

As was expounded in a recent statement by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, “Essential agreement means that the examining committee must be able to find that the candidate they are interviewing stands sufficiently within the Christian tradition, as expressed in the United Church’s Statement of Doctrine.”<sup>1</sup>

However, we do not currently have any policy or mechanism for requiring or checking essential agreement from those already serving in ministry. This is concerning. It creates the potential for a scenario in which a ministry candidate may be found to be in essential agreement at a single point in time (prior to their ordination/commissioning/recognition), but whose theological perspective(s) may evolve over a period of years/decades to the point where they are no longer in essential agreement, yet still authorized to preach and teach as ordered ministers. In recent times, this has resulted not only in divisive debates at every level of the church, but also in legal action being taken over disagreements about the interpretation of our polity. This threatens the unity and mission of the church, and it harms our public witness.

### 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We request that the 44th General Council consider:

- Authorizing an amendment to *The Manual* to include language around essential agreement as an ongoing requirement of all ministry personnel; and/or
- Directing the Office of Vocation to develop a policy/procedure/covenant/etc. in regard to requiring ongoing essential agreement as a permanent criterion of suitability for ministry; and/or
- Directing the Office of Vocation to develop a process by which the ongoing theological expectations of ministry personnel are made clear, and they are formally held accountable to those expectations; and/or
- Adding an affirmation/check-in regarding essential agreement to the mandatory declarations/trainings that ministry personnel are required to affirm on ongoing basis; and/or
- Creating a third “tier” of the Discontinued Service List that would provide grace and accompaniment for ministry personnel who are found to be no longer in essential agreement. Currently, there are only two DSLs: Disciplinary and Voluntary. A third tier could serve as an intermediary DSL for ministry personnel who are sincerely no longer in essential agreement but whom the church does not want to lose their pension and benefits; and/or
- Taking some other action that would clarify the expectations of the church in regards to established ministry personnel and essential agreement.

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1. “Essential Agreement Summary Statement” (April 23, 2019). [commons.ubc.ca](https://commons.ubc.ca) > Governance > 43rd General Council > GC43 > Updates.

## **ECO01 CLERGY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Origin: East Central Ontario RC**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

The General Council sets various requirements of employment for United Church of Canada Order of Ministry personnel and Designate Lay Ministers (hereafter clergy). It also sets the terms of pension contributions, the group benefits package offered/required, and the minimum salary to clergy. These terms form the basis for compensation negotiations in communities of faith, and in other cases define the total compensation offer of the church to the clergy.

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

When The United Church of Canada makes decisions regarding the terms of employment or remuneration of clergy, it has previously made statements committing itself to supporting the clergy whose serve their vocation across the denomination.

Through the pandemic several decisions have been taken which will have a long-term effect on the financial well-being of clergy and their households. Examples include

- pausing the triennial cost-of-living group reassignment, at a time when the cost of housing across Canada has increased dramatically;
- eliminating the Optional Health and Dental Benefit Plan, effective January 1, 2022;
- threatening to garnish the wages, via ADP, of clergy who had not completed their annual police records declaration.

These decisions and actions were undertaken with neither the consultation of a diverse group of clergy, nor with an effective communication plan. In each case, clergy were blindsided by the communication after the fact.

Senior staff of the General Council then enter social media groups to defend the decisions they have recommended. The results of these defences are, at best, mixed; some clergy feel the additional information is helpful, others were offended by some of the suggestions made.

Not taking action will continue a process of decision-making and communication that supports the growth of cynicism and “opting out” on behalf of clergy. Other clergy will seek to support a formal “union drive” to ensure the denomination must consult and negotiate.

#### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

This proposal could assist us to live into our commitments of equity by bringing diverse clergy voices to consider the implications of decisions made.

#### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The (regional council) proposes that the General Council could:

- a) hold a conversation on the above-named issues;

- b) invite clergy supporting a “union drive” to share their reasons with the General Council;
- c) undertake new research on how the issues affecting clergy have changed or developed since the last time such research (e.g. “Isolation in Ministry Report”) was completed;
- d) offer preliminary terms of reference for the nomination of a diverse clergy consultative committee that could further develop a consultation plan; and
- e) ask GCE to formulate a response by December 21, 2023.

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

**2021-10-15-16\_0 08 MOTION** (Ryan McNally/Stephen Coles) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council forward to the General Council the Clergy Consultative Committee Proposal as amended:

- Add under section 4 “E. For GCE to formulate a response by December 21<sup>st</sup> 2023.”

CARRIED

**ECO02 COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AND ALTERNATIVE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS PROPOSAL**

**Origin: East Central Ontario Regional Council**

**1. Sustaining ministry in small communities of faith**

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to find creative ways of responding to the large number of small communities of faith across the country that lack the financial ability to sustain full-time ministry personnel and are unable to call ministry personnel to part-time positions. This proposal seeks to establish guidelines for the formation of cooperative ministries among pastoral charges, recognize them as a community of faith, and enable them to participate through ChurchHub as a unit.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

In a post-Christian society, and as many rural communities are being depopulated, and urban centres experience changing demographics, an increasing number of communities of faith experience declining membership resulting in financial limitations. The inability or unsuccessful search to call part-time ministry personnel results in pulpit vacancy and accelerates community of faith decline.

A reversal of this trend requires creative measures of support. As a denomination, we have long held the belief “that every pastoral charge shall have, as far as possible, a pastorate without interruption.” Our very being as a denomination was based on the cooperation of faith communities and we continue to support inter-denominational shared ministries.



One of the creative solutions undertaken by pastoral charges is cooperating with other pastoral charges in search to together create and seek full-time ministry (teams) to be shared among the cooperating pastoral charges. Cooperative ministries of this nature have not been formally acknowledged and exist with a lack of consistency. Recognition will establish common practices and increased security for participating pastoral charges and the ministers that serve in these ministries.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Small congregations are disadvantaged in many ways: financial and leadership being two important considerations. Communities of faith that have entered cooperative ministries have identified the absence of resources and guidelines. They have further noted that ChurchHub does not adequately, nor correctly, accommodate either the pastoral charges or ministry personnel who participate in such ministry arrangements. This proposal would recognize and support communities of faith that have already entered or are exploring entering a cooperative ministries partnership. The failure to recognize and accommodate these congregations continues to perpetuate an uncertain future.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The East Central Ontario Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

- identify cooperative ministries as a faith community structure within the United Church;
- develop resources, guidelines for the formation and governance of cooperative ministries;
- ensure that cooperative ministries, pastoral charges, and ministry personnel serving in such arrangements are able to participate accurately and fully through ChurchHub.

### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

**2021-10-15-16\_007 MOTION** (Stephen Coles/Phil Wilson) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council forward to the General Council the Cooperative Communities of Faith and Alternative Pastoral Relationships Proposal.

CARRIED

## **GCE06 MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH IN THE 2020s**

**Origin: Executive of the General Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

The 43rd General Council (2018) received several proposals in response to concerns that the vocational ministry needs of smaller, often rural, ministries are not being adequately met in

these changing times. As well, other issues related to designated lay ministry and licensed lay worship leadership were recognized as relevant to the concerns for vocational ministry service in rural and smaller communities. The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary to conduct a comprehensive study on these issues and develop a strategy for meeting the ministry needs of all communities of faith, including access to the sacraments. A task group was established in 2019 to engage in this comprehensive study.

The task group has concluded that it is not reasonable to assume that every pastoral charge can have a pastorate without interruption (Basis of Union Section 10.10.2) as it might have been imagined or intended in 1925. The contexts and expectations in our communities, in Canadian society, and in ministry personnel lives have changed dramatically since union. Despite these changes, or because of them, even where our policies or expectations have not kept up, vibrant faithful ministry is happening in rural and smaller communities of faith, led by vibrant and faithful lay members and by generous, resilient, and theologically astute ministry personnel, active and retired. These proposals imagine that Section 10.10.2 of The Basis of Union can be fulfilled in new and different ways 97 years later.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

The task group has understood the purpose of the church is to be a community that embodies “Christ’s presence in the world” (A Song of Faith), seeking to love God and to love neighbour. That purpose is lived out through its communities of faith. Those communities of faith are where the faith tradition is taught and nurtured, where “gifts are shared for the good of all” (A Song of Faith), where persons are strengthened to resist the forces in our world that would marginalize, exploit, and destroy. Christian tradition has seen the church as an instrument “of the loving Spirit of Christ” (A Song of Faith) for the mending of creation.

The church has said that we believe that “for the sake of the world, God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry” (A Song of Faith). Each of us has a call that sets us apart for a particular task or tasks. Call can take different forms at different times in our lives. That call can be as a teacher, a pharmacist, a janitor, a nurse, a farmer, and the list goes on. As a denomination, we have not honoured these various calls as much as we could, especially given some reflection in scripture about the church, reflection that reminds us of the variety of gifts God has given (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12).

Some persons are called to exercise their ministry in and for the service of the church. Such leadership is necessary if the church is to fulfill the role God has for it, by helping to create and nurture the community that teaches, comforts, confronts, serves, and witnesses to the wider world concerning God’s creating, redeeming, and abiding love. In the community of faith, some leadership is volunteer, involved in its educational, outreach, and governance activities, and accountable to the community of faith. Some leadership is paid and accountable to the denomination. It focusses on equipping the saints for their ministry in the world.

Designated lay ministry was established by the 37th General Council in 2000 as a continued evolution of lay ministry. It was expected that it would meet the localized needs of smaller rural congregations, thus site-specific and time-limited. In practice, however, it opened vocational

ministry to a significant cohort of called, faithful leadership who had previously felt that they had no access to vocational ministry, effectively establishing a third stream of paid accountable ministry largely indistinguishable in call and function from ordered ministry. Most designated lay ministers describe a lifelong call to vocational ministry in the whole of the church.

The church has been more than willing to bend the definitions and limitations of designated lay ministry to call up and appoint designated lay ministers into traditional pastoral ministry roles. Remit Six authorized by the 42nd General Council, however, rejected the inclusion of designated lay ministry as a stream into the Order of Ministry. The task group and GCE have had to honour this decision of the church. This has left designated lay ministry in a sort of limbo. Designated lay ministers are drawn on to fulfill all the functions of ministry in pastoral charges and in serving the wider church but are not granted the same status as ordered ministers.

The designated lay ministry educational pathway/pedagogy is not dissimilar to that of other theological programs that integrate academic study and practice of ministry (for example, the Centre for Christian Studies and the summer distance program at the Atlantic School of Theology). The task group concludes that there is a role for the original conception of designated lay ministry (from the 37th General Council) while noting there are educational avenues of theological formation for ordered ministry that were not as accessible in 2000. The task group also heard that the designated lay ministry program was not accessible for some lay people who wish to offer trained ministry in their home communities of faith (often rural and/or smaller communities of faith). These realities led the task group to recommend refocusing the designated lay ministry program on the original intention to prepare paid accountable lay leaders for ministry in their home community of faith.

The task group and the GCE recognize the long and faithful ministry that current designated lay ministers offer to the church, in all councils of the church, and thus propose to the 44th General Council that the church develop pathways that recognize the experience, service, and commitment of individuals currently serving as designated lay ministers, in meeting the criteria for Testamur and, thus, eligibility to be commissioned or ordained. These pathways to ordination or commissioning will be optional for current designated lay ministers.

The full report of the task group may be found on the United Church Commons ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > Governance > General Council > 44th General Council > 4. Background Documentation).

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

The task group met from December 2019 through July 2021 and consulted with approximately 350 people from all regional councils:

- lay leaders of congregations without ministry personnel for extended periods of time (two consultations with members identified by regional council ministers);
- designated lay ministers (two consultations self-selected from an open invitation plus a survey [128 responses to the survey]);

- diaconal ministers (with experience in rural and urban communities of faith identified by regional council pastoral relations ministers);
- ordained ministers (with experience in rural and urban communities of faith identified by regional council pastoral relations ministers);
- staff of field-based theological education programs (Atlantic School of Theology summer distance program for ordination; Centre for Christian Studies for diaconal ministry; program for designated lay ministry at St. Andrew's College);
- community development capacity coordinators, regional pastoral relations and community of faith support ministers;
- Indigenous Ministries and Justice and Indigenous Office of Vocation staff;
- Christine Jerrett, Network and New Ministries Animator, General Council Office;
- Éric Hébert-Daly, Ministères en français.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

\*Note: It is suggested that the General Council consider Section A and Section B separately.

The Executive of the General Council proposes that the 44th General Council could:

##### A. Better Supporting Rural and Smaller Communities of Faith

###### 1. Lay-led Communities of Faith

- a) affirm the importance and value of "lay-led congregations" (a descriptive term, not a formal "class," loosely describing a congregation without called or appointed ministry personnel for more than a year) continuing to be linked to the denomination and supported in governance by a regional council appointed pastoral charge supervisor;
- b) affirm the role of the regional councils in assisting communities of faith in determining appropriate governance and decision-making practices and necessary oversight of any person paid for services (custodial, administrative, ministry, etc.).

###### 2. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

- a) reaffirm that licensed lay worship leaders continue to be limited to worship leadership on an occasional basis, "occasional" determined by the regional council;
- b) revise the policy with respect to licensed lay worship leaders to require that where the community of faith requires a larger scope of service, or more than "occasional" leadership, than is within the scope of a licensed lay worship leader, the regional council work with the community of faith to develop either a collaborative ministry or a congregational designated ministry role with its attendant accountabilities and ensure adequate training and oversight of congregational designated ministry.

3. Congregational Designated Ministry
    - a) revise the policy with respect to congregational designated ministers to require that
      - i. if a congregational designated ministry position includes worship leadership the congregational designated minister must successfully complete the licensed lay worship leadership program of that regional council, or an equivalency determined by the regional council, and be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
      - ii. if the congregational designated minister is the primary individual leading worship, then they must be a full member of The United Church of Canada;
      - iii. revise Section I.1.11.4 d) of *The Manual* to delete the requirement that there be a ministry personnel appointed or called to the community of faith and replace it with the requirement that the regional council ensure that there is adequate and appropriate support and oversight of the ministry.
  4. Pastoral Charge Supervisors
    - a) affirm the importance of the role of pastoral charge supervisors to nurture the connexion with and support of the United Church with churches that do not have appointed or called ministry personnel;
    - b) direct the General Secretary, with the regional councils, to consider how the role of paid pastoral charge supervisors may support the development and evolution of collaborative ministries.
  5. Technology
    - a) encourage regional councils to give priority to and encourage leveraging technology to support communities of faith in the provision of worship and pastoral care and for supporting oversight, supervision, and governance.
- B. Designated Lay Ministry - in light of the rejection of the One Order of Ministry remit proposal in 2018:
1. For Current Designated Lay Ministers
    - a) direct the General Secretary, in consultation with designated lay ministers, to develop a proposal to enable current recognized designated lay ministers to meet the Testamur requirements for ordering (commissioning or ordination). Such a proposal will recognize the lifelong vocational call of many current designated lay ministers; honour and value their many years of service to the church; and credit their theological education and formation for ministry. These criteria should form the basis for any prior learning assessment that may form part of such a proposal. Such a proposal should also take into account that there may be current recognized designated lay ministers who already meet the criteria for Testamur and qualify for immediate transition into ordered ministry; and

- b) direct the General Secretary to consider recognition of status of designated lay ministers who are retired.
2. For Future Designated Lay Ministers
- a) limit designated lay ministry to that which was conceived by the 37th General Council;
  - b) refocus the designated lay ministry program to reflect the specific original focus;
  - c) refocus designated lay ministry as a lay practice of ministry specifically on localized and time-specific appointment within their community of faith, or the current community of faith appointment;
  - d) articulate the distinction between those called to ministry in the community of faith or pastoral charge where their membership resides and those called to life-long denominational vocational ministry;
  - e) encourage the Board of Vocation and candidacy boards to direct people discerning a call to life-long church-wide ministry towards ordered ministry preparation and formation;
  - f) the church stop “using” designated lay ministers as if they are ordered ministers with privilege of call, lifetime service throughout the church and recognition in retirement while at the same time restricting them to appointment, providing no status between appointments or in retirement, and paying them less;
  - g) in consideration of the localized character of the practice of designated lay ministry, request that regional councils not approve appointments of designated lay ministers to communities of faith that are not the home communities, or current site of appointment, of the designated lay minister.

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

The United Church—through its faith statements, practices, and policies—has made theological affirmations about the paid, accountable ministry that is carried out in and for the service of the church:

- God calls individuals to ministries of Word, Sacrament, Education, Service, and Pastoral Care.
- Call has both an inner dimension (the individual must believe themselves called to such a ministry by God) and an external dimension (others must see in the individual the gifts and graces necessary for such a ministry); the church tests that call at various points in an individual’s journey to become a paid, accountable minister in the church.
- Changing context requires rethinking ministry, and the United Church’s streams of ministry, in the same way it requires rethinking all other aspects of our theology. In the church’s history, different ministry streams have emerged alongside the ordained and diaconal streams whose roots lie in the early history of the Christian Church. Some streams have changed and evolved; others have existed for a time and disappeared. At present, our changed context requires rethinking how the categories of designated lay

ministry, licensed lay worship leaders, and congregational designated ministers have been understood. The current context also requires adaptation in the ways diaconal and ordained ministers who are serving communities of faith carry out their ministry.

Ministry in rural areas and in smaller communities of faith is not a problem to be solved but an evolving reality to be embraced. In many cases the church's rules and regulations need allow for new understandings of and criteria for denominational accountability and due diligence. While some standards of accountability need to be denominational, many, particularly those for lay leadership and community of faith oversight, are contextual and need to be determined regionally. COVID has taught us that rules are regional and often time-limited. We need to be nimble, flexible, and responsive.

## **N:ka01 THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

**Origin: Nakonha:ka Regional Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

The catastrophic situation faced by many theological training institutions is raising grave concerns, and it dictates that we urgently conduct an objective evaluation of all our theological education and training. The French Ministries Table is especially concerned about the future of education in French, given the context of the referral adopted by a large majority at the 2009 General Council ensuring that francophone candidates receive training in French.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Theological education is a cornerstone of The United Church of Canada. The survival of our church and its place within the global ecumenical community depend on the good health of our theological training institutions.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);

- working towards functional bilingualism and ensuring that francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > What We Believe and Why > Ministries in French);
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion); and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

*Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed "with" people, or "on behalf of" people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?*

In point of fact, theological education touches every aspect in the life of The United Church of Canada. It has enabled the church to assume prophetic stances and will play a vital role in the success or failure of achieving an intercultural, anticolonial, inclusive, and deeply engaged vision in the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

#### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The Nakonha:ka Regional Council proposes to General Council 44 that:

Given the precarious situation in which the United Theological College finds itself, a reality shared by several other institutions of higher learning that provide theological education on behalf of The United Church of Canada, we propose that the 44th General Council urgently request reports on the general state of theological education within The United Church of Canada for the purpose of finding a sustainable solution and ensuring a quality education to our future ministers and theologians.

#### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

To our knowledge, this proposal has no precedent. It concerns francophone and anglophone communities equally.

2021-11-12-13\_018 MOTION (M. Grenon/S. Dansokho) That the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council forward to the General Council the Theological Education proposal with consensus.

CARRIED



**WOW01 CONCERNING FAITHFUL MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

**Origin: Huron Shores United Church, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, Meeting of May 26, 2019**

**1. What is the issue?**

Huron Shores United Church believes God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to respond to the closed settlement of 2018 between Reverend Gretta Vosper and Toronto Conference and its impact on The United Church of Canada. We are concerned that this action has cast a shadow, and raised questions for our wider church, especially relating to the faith of actively serving ministry personnel. Our Council heard the concerns of some members of our congregation and our community. These were referred to a working group to create this proposal, supported by our congregation, community, and Council. This proposal includes our requested course of action by The United Church of Canada in a deliberate and transparent manner.

*Note: Proposals for the General Council are for issues of denominational responsibility that go beyond the bounds of a regional council.*

**2. Why is this issue important?**

- a. The settlement has raised the question that some ministry personnel have left their faith, but are not being open about it, leading to a lack of confidence in public proclamation and testimony.
- b. The wide publicity around the settlement has been framed as an unstated position of The United Church of Canada, which appears to permit “atheist clergy.”
- c. Partner churches within the World Council of Churches, and other ecumenical bodies, need assurance that The United Church of Canada has faith in God, honours scripture, and properly administers the sacraments.

**3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

General Council could clarify expectations regarding the faith of ministry personnel, and develop procedures to provide a mechanism to review the faith of ministry personnel.

**4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:  
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Meeting, May 26, 2019****MOTION**

**Moved by:** Kate Crawford, **Seconded by:** Lynn Hamilton

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees with Huron Shores proposal.

CARRIED [16 Opposed]

## NEW01 DIACONAL EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE (v2)

Origin: Rebecca Whiting, Jessica Swance

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

Engage the topic of educational pathways in the diaconal ministry stream.

Ordered ministry in The United Church of Canada is made up of ordained and diaconal ministers. However, the current pathways of education available are not accessible to all who seek to answer God's call to ordered ministry.

*As a point of clarification, this proposal addresses the diaconal program through the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS). The Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre also provides a diaconal education program for Indigenous ministry. However, we respect the self-governance of this program and therefore will be focusing on the program available through the CCS.*

The diaconal program is unique and blessed by its commitment to non-traditional forms of learning. This allows individuals who do not have a bachelor's degree or do not thrive in traditional academic educational systems to answer their call to ministry. However, the current format of the diaconal education program is not accessible to all people, especially based on age or ability. To complete the required components of the program while also providing for oneself requires a three-quarter to full-time commitment, a reality that not all individuals are able to make. Many modifications that would make the program accessible to those who cannot work full-time lead to the program being unreasonably extended, and the financial consequences that accompany reduced earnings and continuing education costs. Additionally, it is less accessible for older adults who may have fewer years of service before retirement due to the length of the program with limited time in active supervised ministry.

This is a gap in the United Church's commitment to theological education and social justice.

**Therefore, we believe that we are being called to examine this issue with the purpose of determining the need and viability of an additional pathway through the diaconal program.**

This may look similar to the different pathways of ordained education (three-year MDiv vs. AST Summer Distance Program), or may take a new unforeseen direction. We feel the driving focus of this inquiry should be to fill the gaps of accessibility for all demographics, while maintaining the integrity of the diaconal program.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

Examining the need for an additional pathway is important because 1. it is a justice issue and 2. it is important theologically for the discernment of those answering their call.

1. The United Church is committed to being a just church. Time and time again we have taken steps to become a justice-seeking institution, but we also know that work is not finished. Diaconal ministry has a long and rich tradition of engaging social justice issues but, even with that commitment, has limitations with its model. As the church becomes aware of the pervasiveness of ableism and begins to explore theologies of disabilities,

the time is ripe to consider expanding the preparation for diaconal ministry to ensure no one is excluded. For example, for some who have illnesses, conditions, or disabilities that are energy-limiting, the program is not able to be stretched over time while maintaining a livable income. Additionally, for some seniors who are answering their call to ministry, the program is not a good fit because of its length and limited time in active ministry. These are just two examples where someone may have to seek out the ordained pathway, or non-ordered ministry, not based on their call but on the accessible options available to them.

It can be hard to see the places where our systems are unjust until those with lived experiences speak out. It can be even harder to do something about it when it seems it may only affect a small population of people. However, it is essential that we as the United Church continue to be justice-seeking, which requires a faithful examination of where we may be creating barriers for our future leaders.

2. The calls to ordained, diaconal, and designated lay ministry are distinct from one another and need to be prayerfully discerned by candidates. This discernment should not be based on the educational pathways that are accessible to an individual, but based on God's call. This is a theological cornerstone of the candidacy process. However, within the current system individuals are having to make these decisions based on practical accessibility. At times, the programs available can even prevent someone from answering the call to ministry altogether. Our church is blessed by a diverse leadership, where our unique gifts and talents weave together into a greater picture. We need to continue to ensure that our systems allow people of diverse backgrounds, ages, and abilities to answer God's call to ordered leadership.

If you wish to continue to research the current diaconal pathway, the following links show the basic outline of the diaconal educational program:

[ducc.ca/diaconal-education/centre-for-christian-studies](http://ducc.ca/diaconal-education/centre-for-christian-studies)  
[ccsonline.ca/program/diaconal-diploma](http://ccsonline.ca/program/diaconal-diploma)

### **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

Name a possible response that the General Council might consider:

1. We could consider affirming the importance of accessibility to training for all streams of ministry.
2. We could ask the General Secretary to work in partnership with CCS to develop alternate/additional pathways for meeting the requirements of the diaconal program.

## **ARW01 SENIOR GCO AND REGIONAL STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

**Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- be leaders in the area of human relations, accountability, transparency, and workplace justice
- engage the topic of assisting employees in personal and professional self-development
- respond to the challenge of the separation of the vision and mission of the church from the employment conditions of the senior staff
- ensure a transparent process that is absent of unconscious bias and is accountable to the whole church on a regular basis
- to exercise accountability to employees, members, partner agencies, and the public as a registered charity
- to use recognized best practices Full Circle (360°) (see note) performance reviews for GCO and regional staff

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

- James 2:1–7 instructs the church to engage in justice and to do the best possible to mitigate biases.
- The church is an institution that is privileged to be given charitable status by the Government of Canada and provincial governments and it is incumbent upon it to respect this status by utilizing the best practices in evaluation of the interaction of its staff with employees, members, partner agencies, and the public.
- Without a Full Circle review embedded, unconscious biases in evaluation and staff development could emerge/continue; systemic power imbalances can allow abuses to emerge/continue. The absence of a Full Circle review continues a lack of transparency regarding institutional systems and inter-faith/agency relationships.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Engaging in the Full Circle process gives voice to those who may have been silenced in the past.

- Adopting the Full Circle performance review gives voice to First Nations partner agencies/organizations to participate in the performance reviews of those people representing the church who interact with them.
- Adopting the Full Circle performance review will empower ministries and personnel by engaging in the review process of those who interact with them most closely, including: Indigenous partners, the sexual and gender oppressed.
- Adopting the Full Circle review will be one additional step to mitigating discrimination, intentional and enculturated, individual and systemic by engaging individuals and partner organizations/agencies who represent a variety of races, ethnicities, and heritages.

Parish and community ministry personnel, academics, students, and lay members of the church representing both French and English, seniors and youth, gender diversity, and those who have various physical, mental, and cognitive abilities have spoken informally and in various support groups to develop this proposal. The impact of the proposal would be to mitigate personal and systemic biases within the church and its oversight personnel. It reduces power inequities and enhances the identification of strengths and developmental needs for individual employees and for systems.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that the General Council:

- Adopt a policy that The United Church of Canada will engage in Full Circle (360°) performance review for its GCO and regional office staff that is to be no less frequent than biennial.

A Full Circle review process is not static. The General Council should engage skilled representatives from labour and industrial relations to work with those responsible for overseeing performance reviews to develop Full Circle performance assessment tools that respond to the variety of individuals, positions, and environments in which people perform their ministries.

**Note:** *The term is called a “360 review” because performance feedback is solicited from all directions in the organization. The objective of the feedback is to give the employee the opportunity to understand how their work is viewed in the total organization by coworkers in any position—various cultures, ethnicities, heritages, races, differing physical, mental, and intellectual abilities, francophone.*

#### **MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #11: Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews* as presented on Page 41 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

#### **ARW02 VOCATIONAL REVIEW AND DISCIPLINE ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council**

##### 1. What is the issue?

While there is a great deal of accountability for ministry personnel within the denomination, there is little accountability for those overseeing the review and discipline process.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Ensure that ministry personnel are treated equitably, competently, justly, and with compassion.
- Ensure that the Offices of Vocation and review and discipline processes are transparent and accountable to the broader church.
- Ensure review and discipline decisions are subject to analysis and assessment by the broader church as well as by past and current ministry personnel.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

- The call to ministry is a sacred covenant with God that needs to be respected and cherished. Those who are called to this covenant will be treated with respect and justice.
- There is a wide divergence in review and discipline practices in the regions, and even between various subjects of review and discipline within individual regions. This may be due to divergence in the competence of Offices of Vocation staff and reviewing disciplining bodies.
- We are a justice-seeking church, and justice requires fairness and impartiality.
- The apparent arbitrariness of the justice issue causes distrust between General Council, the regions, and the communities of faith who are in relationship with ministry personnel.

## **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Many current and former ministry personnel who have been subjects of discipline in the church have given input in the drafting of this proposal.

They have identified feeling unduly reviewed and disciplined on the basis of age, gender identity, education, disability, ethnicity, culture, and race.

Current and former ministry personnel who identify with each of these communities have given input to the development of this proposal.

Creating a more transparent and equitable review and discipline process benefits all ministry personnel and the communities they serve.

## **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that the General Council will:

- Establish a discipline process oversight body that includes non-staff representatives from each region, with a mandate to conduct regular assessments of the Offices of Vocation and its review/discipline actions and activities.
- There will be SMART (Standardized Metrics that are Achievable and Realistic in an appropriately Timely manner) requirements for review/disciplinary action.

- Establish a central repository of official review and disciplinary documents accessible for analysis and assessment.
- Upon completion of a review and/or disciplinary process, the subject of the review, and the subject's companions, families, and advocates will be invited to conduct a confidential review of the review and disciplinary process and structures, and of the Office of Vocation.
- Provide to the advocate of any subject of review and discipline access to all meetings associated with the review and discipline action when the subject of the review and discipline wishes.

### **MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #12: Vocation Review and Discipline Accountability* as presented on Page 43 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

### **ARW03 VOCATIONAL PROCESS ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

While there is a great deal of accountability for Candidates and Inquirers within the denomination, there is virtually no accountability for those overseeing the vocational process.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Ensure that Candidates for ministry are treated equitably, competently, and with compassion
- By ensuring that the Offices of Vocation and Candidacy Boards are transparent and accountable with their processes
- And are subject to review by the broader church as well as by past and current Candidates and Inquirers

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

- The call to ministry is a sacred covenant with God that needs to be respected and cherished. Those who are called to this covenant will be treated with respect and justice.
- There is a wide divergence in requirements for vocational training across the regions, and even from Candidate to Candidate within individual regions. There is also a broad divergence in the competence of Offices of Vocation and Candidacy Boards.
- The new governance model promised greater flexibility and more individualized pathways to ordination and commissioning, but this has opened the door for

favouritism and/or discrimination. (We know of Candidates whose process has increased in time and requirements, we know of none whose time has decreased no matter what previous education or experience the Candidates had.)

- The national church voted against “settlement” at GC43. Some Candidacy Boards and Offices of Vocation appear to be re-implementing settlement by unilaterally appointing students to communities of faith without appropriate input from the students or the communities of faith.
- We are a justice-seeking church, and justice requires fairness and impartiality.
- If we do not address this issue we will continue to see a rise in distrust between General Council, the regions, and the communities of faith who are in relationship with Candidates and Inquirers, which subsequently leads to distrust between the broader church and clergy and communities of faith.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

Many students have been consulted in the drafting of this proposal. They have identified feeling discriminated against on the basis of age, gender identity, education, disability, and race. Students who are named under each of these identities have been actively consulted in the development of this proposal. Creating a more transparent and equitable vocational process benefits our Candidates, future (and present) clergy, and the congregations they serve.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that the General Council:

A. Establish an oversight body (of the Candidacy Board and Offices of Vocations) that includes past and present Candidates and Inquirers.

- With a mandate to conduct regular assessments of the Offices of Vocation and Candidacy Boards.
- The assessment will include an analysis of how many Candidates complete their process over a reasonable period of time.
- There will be SMART (Standardized Metrics that are Achievable and Realistic in an appropriately Timely manner) requirements for Candidates and Inquirers including a set expectation of how many Learning Competencies and additional education modules (e.g., CPE) are required.
- There will be an analysis of how many Candidates/Inquirers maintain the baseline, and how many diverge from that baseline. Any divergence will require a written rationale from the OV Minister and the Candidacy Board.
- Upon ordination or commissioning, ordinands and commissionands will be invited to conduct a confidential review of the Candidacy Board and the Office of Vocation.



B. Candidates and Inquirers will have the right to a support person of their choosing to attend any meetings with the Candidacy Board, Office of Vocation, or their representatives.

- The options for attending support persons will not be limited by the Office of Vocation or Candidacy Board (e.g., faculty, family members, or of denomination staff may not be excluded).
- The support person of any Candidate or Inquirer will attend all meetings of the Board or Office in which the Candidate or Inquirer is discussed, so as to provide transparent and accurate feedback for the Board and the Candidate or Inquirer.

C. Candidates and Inquirers will apply for Learning Sites through ChurchHub.

- The Office of Vocation and Candidacy Board will not appoint or dismiss students to/from sites without consultation and authorization of the community of faith and the Candidate or Inquirer.

**MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #9: Vocational Process Accountability* as presented on Pages 38 and 39 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

**MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

Antler River Watershed Regional Council adds the following statement to its acceptance of Proposal #9:

Antler River Watershed Regional Council asks that "C" be amended to read "The regional council will not appoint or dismiss students to/from sites without prior consultation with the community of faith and the Candidate."

CARRIED

**MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

Antler River Watershed Regional Council adds the following statement to its acceptance of Proposal #9:

This proposal includes all streams of ministry.

CARRIED

**ARW04 A JURISDICTION OF CLERGY****Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- accept that the Optional Benefits Package available to workers in The United Church of Canada is no longer sustainable.
- acknowledge that ministry personnel are aging, experiencing more chronic illness and more stress-related illnesses than the church has previously experienced
- recognize that the conciliar system no longer functions as a balanced and supportive system for clergy within The United Church of Canada.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

- The United Church of Canada was founded on what was called the conciliar system of governance in 1925. That system worked on the basis of interlinked forms of governance that were shared between clergy and lay people.
- In this time of systemic institutional decline, it is the clergy who are bearing the brunt of the effect of the dramatic changes that the church is undergoing.
- There are increasing mental health challenges, bullying, and abuse of clergy, as congregational anxiety is directed at ministers.
- There is feedback that the restructuring has led to greater isolation and vulnerability for those in ordered ministry.
- There is frequently little recognition of the education and expertise of ordered ministers regarding liturgy and theology.
- This crisis for the order of ministry makes difficult and painful for many existing ministry personnel and will very likely deter others from hearing or accepting a call to ministry.

**3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. Describe in broad terms the ways in which this proposal engages with some of these principles:

- Clergy affected by disregard are found in a variety of communities, ethnicities, cultures, gender identities and orientations, races, and abilities. The diversity of clergy in the United Church is greater than it has ever been and the discounting of clergy training, expertise, and gifts have never been so great.

A consultation of 78 church workers supplied much of the information for this proposal.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that the General Council:

- recognize that the restructuring has led to greater isolation and vulnerability for those in ordered ministry and that it create opportunities for collegiality and support.
- undertake a review of the authority of clergy to deal with bullies in the congregation, without the fear that by doing so they will lose their jobs.
- undertake a full review of the current system of local and regional governance with respect to the support and accountability of clergy be conducted, with a focus on the challenges that ministers are currently facing in a time of systemic decline. Integral to this review will be a consultation with all ordered clergy.
- make no changes to benefits or the pension plan without a consultation with all those affected.
- direct that each region employ a chaplain whose sole job is the support of clergy.

#### **MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with Proposal #7: A Jurisdiction of Clergy as presented on Pages 34 & 35 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

#### **MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

Antler River Watershed Regional Council adds the following statement to its acceptance of Proposal #7: That the line included in the proposal: "direct that each region employ a chaplain whose sole job is the support of clergy," be removed.

CARRIED

### **GCE01 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL SUSPENDED WHILE IN A DIRECTED PROGRAM**

**Origin: Executive of the General Council**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

The policy regarding financial support for ministry personnel (*The Manual* J.6.7) lacks flexibility and discretion of application. It currently reads:

### J.6.7 Financial Support

This section (J.6.7) applies if

- a. the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation requires the ministry personnel to take a directed program, and the ministry personnel is not serving in a community of faith while taking the directed program; or
- b. the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation has suspended the ministry personnel for a specified period of time.

The ministry personnel is entitled to financial support from the Office of Vocation for the time period set by the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation. The financial support must be equal to the minimum salary and allowances set by the General Council. It will be discontinued if the ministry personnel does not take or complete any directed program as required.

The Office of Vocation since its inception in January 2019 is building a body of experience around the various situations where a ministry personnel is suspended and engaged in a directed program. A proportion of those ministry personnel are retired and may or may not be re-engaged pensioners. It is the wisdom of the Board of Vocation having consulted with both the Response and Remedial Committees within the Office of Vocation that flexibility around financial support is appropriate.

The Board of Vocation at its meeting on June 8, 2021, amended the *Procedures for Addressing Concerns about Ministry Personnel* (Appendix A, *Office of Vocation: Structure and Responsibilities*), including the following:

27. For a period of up to six (6) months, while a ministry personnel is on administrative leave/suspension and actively engaged and fully compliant with the processes of the Office of Vocation, the Office of Vocation will provide the ministry personnel with Personnel Emergency Funding equal to the ministry personnel's standard remuneration (less travel allowance) from their community of faith, **provided the ministry personnel is otherwise without remuneration from the Church, including pension income**. Ministry personnel will not accrue vacation or sabbatical leave credits while in receipt of Personnel Emergency Funding. In exceptional circumstances, the Office of Vocation, may, in its sole discretion, extend the Personnel Emergency Funding beyond six (6) months.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

The Personnel Emergency Fund within the Financial Assistance Committee is the source of salary continuance for ministry personnel who are on administrative leave or suspended from performing the functions of ministry. Since the denominational restructuring there is no income stream for this fund. Good stewardship suggests that this fund be invested in those ministry personnel who have future service ahead of them. Creating flexibility in the policy for Financial Support (*The Manual J.6.7*) would give discretion for situations where there is not the possibility of future service. As a matter of respect and dignity, on a few occasions a

Memorandum of Agreement between the ministry personnel and the Remedial Committee includes full retirement from the functions of ministry rather than disciplinary processes.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

In 2021, three bodies within the Office of Vocation—Response Committee, Remedial Committee, and the Board of Vocation itself—considered under what circumstances financial support ought to be provided. Each of these bodies reflects the diversities outlined in our commitments. With respect to the Indigenous Church, the Grandmothers' Circle (the advisory committee to the "Indigenous Office of Vocation within the Office of Vocation") would have the discretion about how the policy applies in the case of a ministry personnel serving an Indigenous community. The proposed change provides discretion to the appropriate body relating to provision of salary continuance to ministers in the remedial process, thereby allowing for the fair and equitable use of the General Council resources.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

That the General Council Executive recommend to the 44th General Council a change to the policy for financial support for ministry personnel who have been suspended by the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation or who are engaged in a remedial program, with the change set out below in the following proposed wording *for The Manual 2023*.

#### J.6.7 Financial Support

This section (J.6.7) applies where the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation has:

- a) suspended a ministry personnel; or
- b) required ministry personnel, who is not actively serving in a community of faith and who is otherwise without remuneration from the United Church, to engage in a directed program for the improvement of their pastoral skills

The appropriate body within the Office of Vocation may provide Personnel Emergency Funding in an amount not less than the minimum salary set by the General Council, for a period of time and subject to terms as set by the appropriate body.

### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

A review of the *Procedures for Addressing Concerns about Ministry Personnel* (Appendix A of *Office of Vocation Structure and Responsibilities*) was completed Spring 2021 and changes adopted by motion of the Board of Vocation June 8, 2021. This is the only change in the procedures that requires action of the General Council. At this time the Board of Vocation is accountable to the General Council through the General Council Executive.

## SW03 SENIOR GENERAL COUNCIL OFFICE AND REGIONAL STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

### Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- be leaders in the area of human relations, accountability, transparency, and workplace justice
- engage the topic of assisting employees in personal and professional self-development
- respond to the challenge of the separation of the vision and mission of the church from the employment conditions of the senior staff
- ensure a transparent process that is absent of unconscious bias and is accountable to the whole church on a regular basis
- to exercise accountability to employees, members, partner agencies, and the public as a registered charity
- to use recognized best practices Full Circle (360°)<sup>1</sup> performance reviews for GCO and Regional staff

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

For example:

- James 2:1–7 instructs the church to engage in justice and to do the best possible to mitigate biases.
- the church is an institution that is privileged to be given charitable status by the Government of Canada and provincial governments and it is incumbent upon it to respect this status by utilizing the best practices in evaluation of the interaction of its staff with employees, members, partner agencies, and the public.
- without a Full Circle review embedded, unconscious biases in evaluation and staff development could emerge/continue; systemic power imbalances can allow abuses to emerge/continue. The absence of a Full Circle review continues a lack of transparency regarding institutional systems and inter-faith/agency relationships.

#### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Engaging in the Full Circle process gives voice to those who may have been silenced in the past.

- adopting the Full Circle performance review gives voice to First Nations partner agencies/organizations to participate in the performance reviews of those people representing the church who interact with them.

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1. The term is called a "360 review" because performance feedback is solicited from all directions in the organization. The objective of the feedback is to give the employee the opportunity to understand how their work is viewed in the total organization by coworkers in any position.

- adopting the Full Circle performance review will empower ministries and personnel by engaging in the review process of those who interact with them most closely, including: Indigenous partners, the sexual and gender oppressed, various cultures, ethnicities, heritages, races, differing physical, mental, and intellectual abilities, francophone, differing classes
- adopting the Full Circle review will be one additional step to mitigating discrimination, intentional and enculturated, individual and systemic by engaging individuals and partner organizations/agencies who represent a variety of races, ethnicities, and heritages.

Parish and community ministry personnel, academics, students, and lay members of the church representing both French and English, seniors and youth, gender diversity, and those who have various physical, mental, and cognitive abilities have spoken informally and in various support groups to develop this proposal. The impact of the proposal would be to mitigate personal and systemic biases within the church and its oversight personnel. It reduces power inequities and enhances the identification of strengths and developmental needs for individual employees and for systems.

#### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

Adopt a policy that The United Church of Canada will engage in Full Circle (360°) performance review for its GCO and regional office staff that is to be no less frequent than biennial.

A Full Circle review process is not static. The General Council should engage skilled representatives from labour and industrial relations to work with those responsible for overseeing performance reviews to develop Full Circle performance assessment tools that respond to the variety of individuals, positions, and environments in which people perform their ministries.

#### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

MOTION by Brian McIntosh/Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-07 *Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews* to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION

CARRIED

## **SW04 VOCATIONAL PROCESS ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

While there is a great deal of accountability for Candidates and Inquirers within the denomination, there is virtually no accountability for those overseeing the vocational process.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Ensure that Candidates for Ministry are treated equitably, competently, and with compassion
- By ensuring that the Offices of Vocation and Candidacy Boards are transparent and accountable with their processes
- And are subject to review by the broader church as well as by past and current Candidates and Inquirers

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

- The call to ministry is a sacred covenant with God that needs to be respected and cherished. Those who are called to this covenant will be treated with respect and justice.
- There is a wide divergence in requirements for vocational training across the regions, and even from Candidate to Candidate within individual regions. There is also a broad divergence in the competence of Offices of Vocation and Candidacy Boards.
- The new governance model promised greater flexibility and more individualized pathways to ordination and commissioning, but this has opened the door for favouritism and/or discrimination. (We know of Candidates whose process has increased in time and requirements; we know of none whose time has decreased no matter what previous education or experience the Candidates had.)
- The national church voted against “settlement” at GC43. Some Candidacy Boards and Offices of Vocation appear to be re-implementing settlement by unilaterally appointing students to particular communities of faith without appropriate input from the students or the communities of faith.
- We are a justice-seeking church, and justice requires fairness and impartiality.
- If we do not address this issue we will continue to see a rise in distrust between General Council, the regions, and the communities of faith who are in relationship with Candidates and Inquirers, which subsequently leads to distrust between the broader church and clergy and communities of faith.

#### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

Many students have been consulted in the drafting of this proposal. They have identified feeling discriminated against on the basis of age, gender identity, education, disability, and race. Students who are named under each of these identities have been actively consulted in the development of this proposal. Creating a more transparent and equitable vocational process benefits our Candidates, future (and present) clergy, and the congregations they serve.



#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The regional council proposes that the General Council could:

- A. Establish an oversight body (of the Candidacy Board and Office of Vocation) that includes past and present Candidates and Inquirers
  - With a mandate to conduct regular assessments of the Offices of Vocations and Candidacy Boards
  - The assessment will include an analysis of how many Candidates complete the process over what period of time
  - There will be SMART (Standardized Metrics that are Achievable and Realistic in an appropriately Timely manner) requirements for Candidates and Inquirers including a set expectation of how many Learning Competencies and additional education modules (e.g., CPE) are required
  - There will be an analysis of how many Candidates/Inquirers maintain the base line and how many diverge from that baseline. Any divergence will require a written rationale from the OV Minister and the Candidacy Board.
  - Upon ordination or commissioning, ordinands and commissionands will be invited to conduct a confidential review of the Candidacy Board and the Office of Vocations.
- B. Ensure that Candidates and Inquirers have the right to a support person of their choosing to attend any meetings with the Candidacy Board, Office of Vocation, or their representatives.
  - The options for attending support persons will not be limited by the Office of Vocation or Candidacy Board (e.g., faculty, family members, or members of denomination staff may not be excluded).
  - The support person of any Candidate or Inquirer will attend all meetings of the Board or Office in which the Candidate or Inquirer is discussed, so as to provide transparent and accurate feedback for the Board and the Candidate or Inquirer. Candidates and Inquirers will apply for Learning Sites through ChurchHub.
- C. Ensure that the Office of Vocation and Candidacy Board not appoint or dismiss students to/from sites without consultation and authorization of the community of faith and the Candidate or Inquirer.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Peter Hartmans/Cynthia O'Connell that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-06 *Vocational Process Accountability* to General Council **with non-concurrence**.

MOTION

CARRIED

**SW05 A JURISDICTION OF CLERGY****Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- accept that the Optional Benefits Package available to workers in The United Church of Canada is no longer sustainable.
- acknowledge that ministry personnel are ageing, experiencing more chronic illness and more stress-related illnesses than the church has previously experienced
- recognize that the conciliar system no longer functions as a balanced and supportive system for clergy within The United Church of Canada.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

- The United Church of Canada was founded on what was called the conciliar system of governance in 1925. That system worked on the basis of interlinked forms of governance that was shared between clergy and lay people.
- In this time of systemic institutional decline, it is the clergy who are bearing the brunt of the effect of the dramatic changes that the church is undergoing.
- There are increasing mental health challenges, bullying, and abuse of clergy, as congregational anxiety is directed at ministers.
- It is clear that the restructuring has led to greater isolation and vulnerability for those in ordered ministry.
- There is frequently little recognition of the education and expertise of ordered ministers regarding liturgy and theology.
- This crisis for the order of ministry makes difficult and painful for many existing ministry personnel and will very likely deter others from hearing or accepting a call to ministry.

**3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. Describe in broad terms the ways in which this proposal engages with some of these principles:

- Clergy affected by disregard are found in a variety of communities, ethnicities, cultures, gender identities and orientations, races, and abilities. The diversity of clergy in the United Church is greater than it has ever been and the discounting of clergy training, expertise, and gifts has never been so great.

A consultation of 78 church workers supplied much of the information for this proposal.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that the General Council:

- recognize that the restructuring has led to greater isolation and vulnerability for those in ordered ministry and that it create opportunities for collegiality and support.
- undertake a review of the authority of clergy to deal with bullies in the congregation, without the fear that by doing so they will lose their jobs.
- undertake a full review of the current system of local and regional governance with respect to the support and accountability of clergy be conducted, with a focus on the challenges that ministers are currently facing in a time of systemic decline. Integral to this review will be a consultation with all ordered clergy.
- make no changes to benefits or the pension plan without a consultation with all those affected.
- direct that each region employ a chaplain whose sole job is the support of clergy.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Barry Rieder/Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-04 *Jurisdiction of Clergy* to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Angus MacLennan/Audrey Brown that Shining Waters Regional Council attach a comment to the proposal #GC2021-04 *Jurisdiction of Clergy*, that the word “encourage” be added in front of the section suggesting chaplains.

MOTION CARRIED

### WOW02 INCLUDING REST AND RENEWAL FOR GENERAL COUNCIL AND REGIONAL STAFF ON EXTENDED DEVELOPMENTAL LEAVES

Origin: Executive, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

Make rest and renewal for General Council and regional staff on extended vocational and development leaves not just an option or a negotiated part of their plan but an expectation that it will be part of their development and vocational leave. It is a common spiritual need of all of God’s children and not just those in so-called spiritual leadership as in leading a congregation. We see this as a good practice issue, mental health support, positive modelling for the church, fair employment standard.

## 2. Why is this issue important?

The Sabbatical Leave for ministers is “rooted in the biblical practice of the Sabbath day...which Jesus kept...[when he] went away to pray and reflect in silence and meditation ‘on mountain tops and by lakesides.’” The policy recognizes that the daily practice of ministry may involve the pressure of many tasks compressed into too few hours, leaving little opportunity for reflective, prayerful time. In the context of ministry, sabbatical time is for learning through reflection, revitalization, and recreation. It is, therefore, personal and individual in nature. It may include study, spiritual retreat, and rest and will probably be a blend of all of these.

Many of our permanent program staff and management positions at the regional councils and General Councils are designated as ministers. All people of faith are called to serve God through their vocations. This means that all work has room for a spiritual component.

As our church continues to restructure and respond to the challenges of changing times our staff are “under increased pressure being asked to compress many tasks into too few hours.”

The current staff leave policy is based on professional and vocational development with exceptions made for those staff who have spiritual demands in their work. Like ministry personnel, all staff could benefit from rest, renewal, and space to be open to the Spirit, that may or may not be, found in the strict vocational and professional development leave model.

This proposal would see that the staff leave policy be amended, so all sabbatical times have room for rest and renewal, and allow space for openness to the Spirit to be part of a professional and vocational leave.

## 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?

It seems like an issue for all people. It is already common practice for the church to give this leave. What is not common practice is that rest and renewal are a part of all General Council or regional staff leaves. It depends on the interpretation of *Human Resources Manual Policy 2.15*. We think it is fair to have it stated as a clear and welcomed expectation.

## 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Executive of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

Rework *Human Resources Manual Policy 2.15 on Compensation and Leaves* and make the need for rest and renewal a part of any leave—not an option and not something you have to prove you need.

### **MOTION** Terry Smith/Bruce Dickson

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #6: Including Rest & Renewal for General Council and Regional Staff on Extended Developmental Leaves* as presented on Pages 31 & 32 of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

**MOTION** Cathy Larmond/Andrea Allan

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council adds the following statement to its acceptance of *Proposal #6*: Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was surprised to learn that rest and renewal was not already a component of Extended Developmental Leave.

CARRIED

## NURTURE THE COMMON GOOD

### ARW05 CARE OF THE CHURCH'S MARGINALIZED

Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

improve the church's policies and procedures regarding those on the Discontinued Service List (DSL).

- There are sections of *The Manual* that throughout history have undergone significant changes. This includes sections of *The Manual* referring to the Discontinued Service List (DSL).
- Individuals on the DSL are directly affected by the changes on *The Manual*—sometimes significantly.
- Currently, The United Church of Canada and its courts do not inform those on the DSL of those changes as they occur.
- Those on the DSL are marginalized and often do not receive this information informally.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

The impact of current policies and procedures can be considerable.

- Changes to *The Manual* cause individuals on the DSL to violate the parameters of the DSL regulations unknowingly
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the lives and volunteer work of those on the DSL
- Changes to *The Manual* are applied inequitably to those on the DSL
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the readmission process of individuals from the DSL to the Roll of Ministry

#### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Individuals on the DSL encompass all aspects of the church's diversity. Ensuring that justice is enacted to those on the DSL will include justice to those of a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, gender identifications, classes, abilities and challenges. People currently on the DSL have been consulted about this proposal. It was developed with them but is submitted on behalf of them as there is no mechanism for them to speak as a collective or participate in the courts of the church.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that:

- The General Council Office (GCO) will contact those individuals currently on the DSL to inform them of changes to *The Manual* since each individual's original placement on the DSL.

- Following each meeting of the General Council the General Council Office will contact each person on the DSL to inform them of any changes (or absence of changes) to sections in *The Manual* pertaining to those on the DSL.

**MOTION Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #10: Care of the Church's Marginalized* as presented on Page 40 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

**MOTION: Kenji Marui/Jim Evans**

Antler River Watershed Regional Council adds the following statements to its acceptance of Proposal #10:

1. that those on the DSL take the responsibility to keep their contact information updated with the GCO.

And

2. that a mechanism be developed by GCO to ensure that those on the DSL are able to communicate with the GCO.

CARRIED

**GS03 AMALGAMATION OF CONGREGATIONS**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

**1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to assist amalgamating congregations in starting their future ministry together through the joint development of a ministry plan, including the resources that will be needed to implement it.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

The process for congregations to amalgamate is set out in *The Manual*. One step in the process is for the regional council to consult with the amalgamating congregations on the property needs of the newly amalgamated congregation. The parties involved in this consultation would benefit from greater clarity and definition about the amalgamated congregation's ministry and the resources that will be needed to fund it. For that purpose, it would help to add another step prior to the consultation: the amalgamating congregations jointly prepare a ministry plan for the newly amalgamated congregation indicating the property and other resources required to carry out the plan. The amalgamating congregations would then make a decision on both the

amalgamation and the ministry plan, and the regional council would consider the ministry plan in determining if there is surplus property.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Requiring amalgamating congregations to prepare a ministry plan would provide a clearer picture of the resources actually needed and any corresponding surplus available to be applied for purposes determined by the regional council. This could include support for intercultural ministries, indigenous ministries, or other equity-advancing initiatives.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the 44th General Council 2022 amend the process for the amalgamation of congregations, as reflected in the following proposed amendments to *The Manual*:

#### G.1.4 Amalgamation of Congregations

Congregations considering amalgamation must jointly develop a proposal for amalgamation, including a ministry plan for the amalgamated congregation and the resources required. The process for an amalgamation is set out below. The congregation and regional council are each responsible for the steps assigned to them.

##### G.1.4.1 Decision by Congregations

Each congregation meets separately to make a decision on a proposal to amalgamate, including the proposed amalgamation, the ministry plan, and the resources required.

....

##### G.1.4.5 Property

The regional council consults with the congregations on the property needs of the new amalgamated congregation as set out in the ministry plan. A congregation may ask its governing body to represent it in this consultation.

- a) Surplus property of amalgamating congregations: The regional council may decide that some of the congregations' property will not be needed for the ministry plan of the new amalgamated congregation. Any property that will not be needed is called "surplus property."



## GS05 DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

### 1. What is the issue?

For many years, the United Church had a mandatory process for conflict resolution and the discipline for both ministry personnel and lay members/adherents. It involved a number of detailed steps and forms, and has not been not widely used for lay members/adherents.

When the Office of Vocation was established, there was a new approach adopted for conflict resolution and the discipline of ministry personnel. In short, it is now up to the Board of Vocation Response Committee to decide on the appropriate response to conflict or complaints about ministry personnel.

However, there was no parallel change made for lay members/adherents. The mandatory process still applies.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

The same approach should be followed for conflict resolution and discipline of lay members/adherents as for ministry personnel: the appropriate response should be determined by the body to which they are accountable. Congregational designated ministers are accountable for matters of discipline to the regional council; other lay members/adherents are accountable to the governing body of their community of faith.

The council [regional council or community of faith governing body] should decide on the best course of action in the circumstances, for example, consultation with the regional council, help from a United Church Conflict Resolution Facilitator, or ordering a formal hearing. More information about these options is already included in *The Manual* and related resources.

This change would not apply to complaints under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures. Complaints that fall under that policy would still be dealt with under that policy.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

This would give the regional council and community of faith governing body more flexibility to decide on the appropriate response to a complaint about a lay member/adherent rather than having to follow a detailed prescribed process. The response to conflict could be tailored to the context and people involved, including Indigenous Peoples and the intercultural church.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the 44th General Council 2022 revise the process for conflict resolution and the discipline of congregational designated ministers, and other lay members and adherents, as reflected in the following proposed amendments to *The Manual*:

## J.8 Conflict Resolution and Discipline—Lay People

### J.8.1 Informal Processes

The church has informal processes that people involved in a conflict may use to try to resolve the conflict themselves. They may call on others who are experienced in these processes to help them with resolving the conflict.

The church has people trained as conflict resolution facilitators \_\_\_\_\_ who can assist with the resolution of conflicts. For more information, contact the Office of Vocation, which maintains the list of conflict resolution facilitators.



~~This section (J.8) applies to lay members and adherents of the United Church other than ministry personnel.~~

~~For conflict resolution, oversight, and discipline processes that apply to ministry personnel, see sections J.6 above and J.9 below.~~



~~It also applies to congregational designated ministers, with one difference. When the person involved is a congregational designated minister, all references to the “governing body of the community of faith” in this section (J.8) should be read as “the regional council.”~~

### J.8.2 Dispute Resolution Process

~~There is a process for the resolution of conflicts. It includes the assistance of a conflict resolution facilitator appointed by the governing body of the community of faith.~~

~~See the Dispute Resolution resource available from \_\_\_\_\_ the General Council Office.~~



### J.8.2.1 Congregational Designated Ministers

The regional council is responsible for the discipline of congregational designated ministers. It must take seriously any disciplinary concerns that come to its attention about any congregational designated minister serving within the bounds of the regional council. It must respond in a way that it considers appropriate to the circumstances, within applicable policies set by the General Council or its executive.

The policies and procedures set out in section J.6 and in the Office of Vocation resources for ministry personnel available from the General Council Office may be adapted by the regional council for use with congregational designated ministers.



For formal complaints under the United Church’s Sexual Misconduct Policy, the process under that policy must be followed.

*The General Council has approved the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse including complaints made against lay members and adherents (the “Sexual Misconduct Policy”). It is available from the General Council Office.*



More information on the Sexual Misconduct Policy is also found in section J.12.1 below.

### J.8.2.2 When the Dispute Resolution Process Is Optional

~~The dispute resolution process may be followed in any case where the governing body of the community of faith decides it is appropriate.~~

### J.8.3 ~~Lay Members and Adherents~~ Formal Complaints

The governing body of a community of faith is responsible for the discipline of lay members and Adherents of the community of faith other than ministry personnel and congregational designated ministers. It must take seriously any disciplinary concerns that come to its attention about such lay members or Adherents. It must respond in a way that it considers appropriate to the circumstances, within applicable policies set by the General Council or its executive.

For formal complaints under the United Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy, the process under that policy must be followed.

*The General Council has approved the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse including complaints made against lay members and adherents (the "Sexual Misconduct Policy"). It is available from the General Council Office.*



More information on the Sexual Misconduct Policy is also found in section J.12.1 below.

*The Sexual Misconduct Policy must be followed for formal complaints of sexual misconduct as set out in that policy, available from the General Council Office.*



~~A formal complaint is a written document that meets the requirements set out in this section (J.8).~~

~~When a formal complaint is made against a person who is a lay member or adherent other than ministry personnel, it starts a dispute resolution process that must be followed.~~

~~See the Dispute Resolution resource available from the General Council Office.~~



### J.8.4 ~~Who May Make a Formal Complaint~~

~~A formal complaint may be made by~~

- ~~a) a member;~~
- ~~b) an adherent;~~
- ~~c) an employee of the United Church, its councils, or its communities of faith;~~
- ~~d) any ministry personnel; or~~
- ~~e) a council.~~

~~*There are additional people who may make a formal complaint under the Sexual Misconduct Policy. See section J.12.1 below. (2021)*~~



~~The person or council making the formal complaint is called the "complainant."~~

### J.8.5 ~~Basis for a Formal Complaint~~

~~The complainant must have personal knowledge (if the complainant is a person) or reasonable and probable grounds for believing (if the complainant is a council) that~~

- ~~a) a member;~~

- ~~b) an adherent; or~~
- ~~c) a congregational designated minister~~

~~has acted in a way that is a proper ground of discipline.~~

~~This may involve an action taken by the member or adherent, or congregational designated minister, or an action that the complainant believes the person should have taken but did not take.~~

~~The person named in the complaint is called the “respondent.”~~

#### ~~J.8.6 — Where the Formal Complaint Is Made~~

~~The formal complaint is made to the governing body of the community of faith.~~

~~There are two exceptions:~~

- ~~a) if the complainant is the governing body of the community of faith, the formal complaint is made to the regional council that has oversight of the community of faith; and~~
- ~~b) if the complainant is the regional council, the formal complaint is made to the General Council.~~

~~There is a dispute resolution process that must be followed when a formal complaint is made under section J.8. See the resource available from the General Council Office.~~



~~A formal complaint against a congregational designated minister is made to the regional council. See section J.8.1 above.~~



## GS07 REMIT PROCESS REVISIONS

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to equip the United Church with a process for making changes to the Basis of Union that will reflect the current General Council meeting cycle and provide greater administrative efficiency, while still allowing adequate time for study and reflection by regional councils and pastoral charges.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

The General Council now meets annually so there is the possibility of a remit being authorized at a meeting other than the in-person triennial meeting, and being enacted by the same General Council at a subsequent annual meeting rather than the next General Council at the in-person triennial meeting.

There are a number of improvements that could be made for greater administrative efficiency:

#### **Category 1 remits**

*[remits to update terminology, give corresponding membership to certain positions, change gender language]*

- A. The effective date of the change, if approved by remit, should not be tied to the Record of Proceedings of the triennial meeting but should be at the discretion of the General Council authorizing the remit.
- B. It would also be helpful to include a default effective date, which would be the date of enactment of the remit.
- C. There is no rationale apparent for requiring a 2/3 majority for the motion setting the effective date rather than a simple majority, as required for other General Council motions.
- D. Since *The Manual* is now published annually, the existing deadline for replying in time for the next edition of *The Manual* may not allow enough time for study by regional councils before they vote on the remit. There should be a specified minimum period of study.
- E. There is no rationale apparent for requiring a 2/3 majority regional council approval for a Category 1 remit to pass, given the minor administrative nature of these remits.

### ***Category 2 remits***

*[changes that are significant but not denomination-shaping]*

- A. There should be a specified minimum period of study for regional councils before the deadline for replying.
- B. The deadline should not be “no later than 18 months following the meeting of the General Council” since the General Council now meets annually. The deadline should be at the discretion of the General Council authorizing the remit, with a minimum 90-day period of study before the deadline for replying.

### ***Category 3 remits***

*[substantive changes that affect denominational identity]*

To fit the annual meeting cycle of the General Council, the period of study should be 6 months rather than 24 months.

*[Note: none of these proposed revisions requires a remit as the only changes would be to the bylaw part of The Manual.]*

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

Revisions to the Basis of Union will be necessary in the future to reflect the new relationship between the Indigenous Church and settler church, and to include Francophone ministries as an integral part of the formal polity of the United Church. An updated remit process will make major polity changes simpler and quicker, while maintaining important safeguards for informed voting on remits by regional councils and pastoral charges.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the 44th General Council 2022 approve certain administrative changes to the remit process, as reflected in the following proposed amendments to *The Manual*:

##### F.2.2 Process for All Categories of Remits

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##### F.2.2.6 Reporting Results of the Remit

The General Secretary must report the voting results to the Executive of the General Council and to the ~~next~~ General Council.

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##### F.2.3 Additional Process for a Category 1 Remit

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##### F.2.3.1 Effective Date of Change

The General Council ~~may~~must pass a resolution naming the date that the remit will come into effect if it is enacted ~~and passes~~, failing which it comes into effect when it is enacted under section F.2.3.3.

~~The date must be at least 90 days after publication of the Record of Proceedings of that General Council.~~

~~For this resolution to pass it must be approved by at least 2/3 of the member of the General Council voting on it.~~

##### F.2.3.2 Sending Remit Out Immediately

The remit must be sent to regional councils immediately after the meeting of the General Council.

The deadline for regional councils to reply must leave at least 90 days for study and information sharing~~enough time for the remit change to be included in the next edition of The Manual.~~

##### F.2.3.3 Enacting the Remit

If a remit has been approved by a majority 2/3 of all of the regional councils~~reply that they have voted in favour of the remit~~, the Executive of the General Council must decide whether or not to enact it~~may declare that the remit has been approved.~~

If a remit has not been approved, the Executive of the General Council may not enact it.

....

.....

##### F.2.3.4 Updating The Manual

If the remit has been enacted~~approved~~, the change will be included in the next edition of *The Manual*.

.....

#### F.2.4 Additional Process for a Category 2 Remit

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##### F.2.4.4 Deadline

The deadline for regional councils to reply must leave at least 90 days for study and information sharing ~~be no later than 18 months following the meeting of the General Council.~~

#### F.2.5 Additional Process for a Category 3 Remit

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##### F.2.5.5 Deadline

The deadline for regional councils and communities of faith that are pastoral charges to reply must leave at least six~~24~~ months for study and information sharing.

### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

N/A

## GS09 AFFIRM EXISTING ASSESSMENT FUNDING RATES AND PRINCIPLES

Origin: General Secretary

### 1. What is the issue?

With the enactment of “Remit 4: Funding a New Model,” it was intended that all pastoral charges would share in funding both regional and denominational governance work in a proportional and transparent way. The original implementation plan for transition to the new funding model (as approved with the ratification of Remit 4) contemplated a three-year transition plan with full implementation by 2022. It was further contemplated that General Council 44 in July 2021 might ratify certain principles and assessment rates going forward. COVID has impacted the schedule with the transition plan now extended into 2023 and there being considerable uncertainty regarding the longer-term financial impact on congregations.

Therefore, General Council 44 is being asked to affirm the current rates and principles for 2023 and potentially longer. At each annual recall meeting of General Council, there will be an opportunity to affirm or change these rates. Therefore in 2023, the General Council could potentially effect a change—but only if a proposal comes forward.

With three years of administrative experience, we have sought to simplify the administration of assessment and provide greater expense certainty for pastoral charges and revenue certainty for regional councils, the Indigenous church, and the denominational council. The new funding model as approved and ratified has held up reasonably well in both design and financial projections. In particular, target assessment levels have been reduced during the pandemic,

and will continue to align with what is happening at the congregational level. The original 2016 YouTube video is still applicable: [youtube.com/watch?v=fKCoadt8B2c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKCoadt8B2c).

In October 2021, the 43rd General Council approved an amendment to the assessment formula to exclude fluctuating annual investment results and instead use a smoothing approach based on a notional long-term return so assessment would be calculated from the investment balance reported. Investment results can fluctuate dramatically year over year, so even if the numbers are reported correctly, there can be considerable fluctuation in the reported investment income and consequently on the assessment calculation. For example, in 2018 most pastoral charges with assets invested in a typical balanced mandate (60% equities, 40% fixed income) would have incurred a small overall loss. In 2019, that same investment portfolio might have gained 10% or even more. The resulting assessment would fluctuate markedly. In order to avoid such extreme fluctuations, the assessment relating to investments or investment income will be based on the asset balance and will be calculated on the basis of 0.25% (one quarter of one percent) of the balance reported on the most current church statistics.

Since the lasting financial impacts of the pandemic on church finance will not be known for some time and the full implementation of the new funding model is imminent, it seems prudent to continue monitoring and evaluation instead of making any fundamental changes to the assessment formula. This will improve transparency and reduce the administrative burden for both pastoral charges and the General Council which administers assessment on behalf of the broader church.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

Any decision has significant financial impact to all parts of the church. A key principle is that all pastoral charges participate in the assessment system in a transparent and equitable manner. The greater the clarity of the calculation and the process, the greater the comprehension and support we can expect from pastoral charges. Affirming denominational assessment rates provides a degree of planning and budgeting certainty for all parts of the church. Given the degree of uncertainty around the longer-term financial impacts of the pandemic, any change to the existing model would create greater uncertainty and risk of unintended consequences.

## **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Secretary recommends

that the 44th General Council affirm the existing basis for calculation and allocation of the denominational assessment in order to provide a simple and predictable amount for pastoral charges to pay and for the broader church to rely on in its budgeting and financial forecasting. The key rates and principles are as follows:

- a) 4.5% of adjusted revenues (excluding investment gains/losses and monies raised for outreach initiatives).
- b) 0.25% or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of one percent of year end investment balance. The investment related portion of assessment would be calculated on the basis of a charge at 0.25% or one



- quarter of one percent of invested assets as reported in annual statistics and CRA filings. This rate cannot be changed without the express authorization of the General Council. The first \$100,000 of reported investments would be excluded from the calculation to provide for smaller pastoral charges that might still be invested in GICs.
- c) Equal sharing of the regional council allocation of assessment revenues (1/16 per regional council).
  - d) Maintaining the current proportional allocation of assessment revenue between denomination, indigenous church and regional councils subject to implementation of the denominational strategic plan, evaluation of the new structures and evaluation of the last financial impacts of the pandemic.
  - e) For church closures and amalgamations, assessment amounts would be calculated and payable for full calendar years based on when a pastoral charge requests revocation of charitable status, or when a newly amalgamated entity has approved a first budget.

And further, that the 44th General Council authorize the General Council Executive to make such administrative adjustments to the new funding model from time to time as the General Council Executive considers necessary for greater clarity and efficiency in implementation, provided that any such adjustments are in keeping with the principles approved by the United Church in Remit #4 enacted by the 43rd General Council 2018.

#### **4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Transmitted to the General Council with General Council Executive and Finance Advisory Committee recommendation for approval.

### **GS10 LIVING INTO RECONCILIATION**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

The 43rd General Council committed itself to living out its relationship with the Indigenous church through the lens of the Caretakers Call to the Church. In October of 2019 the Annual meeting of General Council 43 approved the establishment of the National Indigenous Organization. One of the principles agreed to in that motion was that the National Indigenous Organization:

*...will function within the United Church with a balance of independence from and relationship to the General Council. There will be a structural connection between the National Indigenous Organization and the General Council Executive or other way of maintaining the relationship between them, as determined by the Indigenous Ministries Organization and approved by the General Council Executive;*

The National Indigenous Council and Elders have been evaluating and working to clarify the implication of the Calls to the Church, with the aim of helping to create new pathways for the relationship and a more equitable understanding of how settler and indigenous church can live together. That work is pointing to some necessary changes that will require a remit process, which has a very colonial feel.

We believe God is calling us to develop processes for the National Indigenous Organization and the church to work together in ways that are decolonial and reflect the commitment to be in relationship that is organic and honours the spirit and history of the apologies.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

The United Church of Canada has been on a journey towards reconciliation and right relationship with the Indigenous communities. In 1986 and 1998, the church offered its apology acknowledging its complicity to the colonial project, which diminished Indigenous cultures and spirituality, and its role in the residential schools system.

The All Native Circle Conference was established in 1988. In 2006, the 39th General Council established the Aboriginal Ministries Unit/Circle. The church was an active participant in the Truth and Reconciliation process, which led to the Calls to Action to redress the legacy of residential schools.

In 2015, the church reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. When the church approved the denominational restructuring that year, the Indigenous Church had not yet defined its relationship with the settler church, and the 42nd General Council directed that there be continued conversations with Indigenous [Aboriginal] ministries to build a relationship based on mutuality, respect, and equity.

In 2018, the Caretakers Calls to the Church were received by the 43rd General Council. The Calls articulated the Indigenous Church's vision for the ongoing development of Indigenous Peoples' mission and ministry and communities of faith within the United Church. The General Council endorsed and committed the church to take steps towards fulfilling the Calls, including approving the creation of a National Indigenous Organization as a decision-making body within the United Church.

The church has also committed itself to becoming an antiracist denomination.

All these commitments require the church to seek to decolonize its imagination, policies, and practices. A new way of engagement is essential for the relationship with the Indigenous Church.

As a key example, the Indigenous Church is free to decide on its own structure, but must then obtain approval for it from the wider church through the remit process. A remit is legally necessary under The United Church of Canada Act. A more decolonized approach would be for the church to give pre-emptive remit approval for whatever the Indigenous Church determines in the future as the place it will have in the United Church, guided by the Calls to the Church.

This would create space for the Indigenous Church, in its own time, to develop a nation-to-nation relationship with the settler church without the need for any further remit approvals.

Since this remit is not for a specific policy change but rather to give pre-emptive approval for what the Indigenous Church determines as its place in the United Church, the prescribed 24-month period for information sharing and study would not be as necessary and could be shortened to 12 months for this remit only.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. Describe in broad terms the ways in which this proposal engages with some of these principles:

- adopting the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion); and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

The proposal was developed in consultation with the National Indigenous Council and Indigenous Ministries and Justice staff.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Secretary proposes that the General Council:

- a) authorize a Category 3 remit to approve a new structure of the Indigenous Church within the United Church, and relationship to the settler church, as will be determined by the Indigenous Church in its own time and through its own processes, within the framework of the Calls to the Church, and without the need for further remit approval; and
- b) approve shortening the time for study and information sharing for regional councils and pastoral charges from 24 months to 12 months for this remit.

### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

This proposal is meant to build on NIC 01 National Indigenous Council (General Council 43, Annual Meeting - October 19, 2019) and the work of the National Indigenous Council, National Indigenous Elders Council, The National Spiritual Gathering, and the Denominational Council to work together in determining a respectful relationship between the two parts of the church.

## NIC01 NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CIRCLE – RESTRUCTURING OF INDIGENOUS CHURCH

**Origin: National Indigenous Council**

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe Creator is calling us to continue constructing the governance framework of the National Indigenous<sup>1</sup> Circle.<sup>2</sup> This work necessitates changes to the United Church's structure so that it properly reflects the governance of the Indigenous United Church and its relationship to the General Council and General Council Executive.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

The Indigenous Ministries of The United Church of Canada have a long history. Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries came among us in the nineteenth century. Many of these missionaries were Indigenous. Our oldest congregation, the Grand River Methodist Mission, has been serving the people since 1825. In 1925, the United Church was born through the act of union. The Indigenous churches of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches were not consulted about union, they were simply moved between institutions and became United Church "missions." The first act of the United Church treated us "like children" unable to make our own decisions, and defending our rights as autonomous Nations has been a struggle ever since.

Indigenous people have met regularly over many decades and held deep and ongoing conversations about matters relating to our Indigenous Ministries and our relationship with the United Church. We have been evolving, struggling, adapting, and growing since church union. Unwittingly, the church restructuring of 2018, caused crisis in the National Indigenous Circle by destabilizing our ways of working together.

It is time for us to move towards a different relationship. It is time to set aside the notion of "missions to the Indians" and truly move towards being "partners in God's call to all the earth."

This means a change in structure for The United Church of Canada. The Haudenosaunee speak of the Two-Row Wampum. This covenant speaks of our two peoples traveling down a river, each in their own canoe. With respect, we need to allow one another to simply be who we are. It is time to remember this covenant and work as two bodies side by side—the United Church with all its complexity, the National Indigenous Circle with similar complexity. Together we will support each other's journey.

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1. By using the term Indigenous, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples are included.

2. The National Indigenous Circle embraces all Indigenous Ministries of the United Church of Canada across the land, both urban and rural. The National Indigenous Council is the Executive of that body.



Source: Nativemedia, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

This proposal begins to address the Indigenous framework envisioned in the *Calls to the Church* and accepted by General Council 43. It is the next step in creating a truly Indigenous United Church.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

The United Church of Canada has adopted the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). The Declaration identifies six key principles:

- the right to self-determination
- the right to participate in decision-making
- the right to cultural and spiritual identity
- the right to lands and resources
- the right to free, prior, and informed consent
- the right to be free from discrimination

This proposal begins to put into action these principles, and therefore begins to address in concrete terms the church's stated commitment to equity.

The United Church, at General Council 43, also adopted the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship between the United Church and the National Indigenous Circle.

- The framework for the National Indigenous Circle's governance structure is laid out in 5.B of the Calls to the Church.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The National Indigenous Council proposes that the 44th General Council act on the issue of autonomy of the Indigenous Church by directing the General Secretary to

- a. identify and remove all the structural barriers to developing and sustaining an autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada, consistent with the Caretakers Calls to the Church and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- b. continue the conversation of restructuring, right relations, and reparations with the National Indigenous Circle; and,
- c. report back to General Council 45 on the state of the dialogue and required next steps.

**N:ka03 RECOGNITION OF LA TABLE DES MINISTÈRES EN FRANÇAIS****Origin: Nakonha:ka Regional Council****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- be inclusive, adaptive, and live into our commitment to be a functionally bilingual church;
- recognize the way that God is at work in parts of our country that are significantly underserved by The United Church of Canada; and
- to be active and present in the mother tongue of one quarter of the country's population, one of the country's two official languages.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

With the loss of presbyteries in the restructuring of the church, the church lost one of its key Francophone voices with the closing of the Consistoire Laurentien, the United Church's French language presbytery. The General Council Executive recognized the need for a network and governance structure for Francophone expressions of our church by naming La Table des ministères en français.

Over the last few years, La Table has entered into covenants with half of the regional councils and offers Francophone ministry support in all its expressions across Canada. Its work carries three main goals: support of existing Francophone congregations and ministry personnel, development of new bilingual and Francophone ministries, and supporting the national church in its Francophone expression.

In order to ensure a long-term presence of such a body of the church, a recognition in *The Manual* of its status and mandate would be one way to manifest a commitment to this part of our church historically and into the future. We believe that the recognition of La Table is needed to support the vitality of the ministry and to recognize this particular space for Francophones and French Protestant ministry in Canada and in The United Church of Canada.

**3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

As a minority language within the church, a recognition of the role of Francophone ministry would be a significant way in which the United Church could demonstrate a commitment to equity. It would also render the General Council Executive's recognition more formal and less precarious into the future.

Half of all Francophone ministries within the United Church are seeing growth as a result of new migrant communities. Formalizing the voice of Francophone ministries would further the integration and mutual transformation we seek when we name ourselves an intercultural church.

*Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed “with” people, or “on behalf of” people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?*

This proposal was prepared by members of *La Table des ministères en français*’ governing council.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Nakonha:ka Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

Amend *The Manual* to recognize *La Table des ministères en français* as an official body of the church, with a mandate to serve the whole church in supporting existing francophone ministries, developing new ones, and assist the church in expressing itself in the French language.

As part of this recognition, *La Table des ministères en français* would also be given the authority to submit proposals directly to the General Council and would be recognized as a body that could enter into covenants with regional councils and congregations.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

2021-11-12-13\_020 MOTION (M. Grenon/S. Dansokho) That the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council forward to the General Council the Recognition of *La Table des ministères en français* proposal with consensus.

CARRIED

## NS02 COMMUNITY OF FAITH MEETING QUORUM

Origin: Northern Spirit Regional Council

### 1. What is the issue?

Section B.5.5 of *The Manual* mandates the minimum number of full members of a community of faith who must be present for an annual meeting or other meetings of community of faith.

In communities of faith it is common practice to call meetings only when a ministry personnel or supervisor can be present.

Ministry personnel can be directly impacted by decisions and discussions that take place during community of faith meetings.

The ministry personnel, pastoral charge supervisor, or regional council representation is required at meetings of the governing body but not at meetings of the community of faith (*The Manual, 2021, B.7.7.4.b*).

## 2. Why is this issue important?

If the community of faith meeting is called to consider changes to the terms of call or appointment or to end the pastoral relationship, the ministry personnel affected must be given the opportunity to be present and respond to the proposed change before a decision is made (*The Manual, 2021, Section I.3.1.6.d*).

One of the roles of ministry personnel at a meeting of the community of faith is to offer guidance on United Church policy and practice, ensuring that the meeting is conducted properly. Another role is being aware of the well-being of the pastoral charge, to represent the wider church and to offer guidance.

## 3. How might the General Council respond?

Since there is no wording similar to section B.7.7.4b in section B.5.5, mandating that a “ministry personnel” be present at meetings of the community of faith:

It is proposed by the Northern Spirit Regional Council that an addition be made to section B.5.5 of *The Manual* to read as follows:

A meeting of the community of faith may take place only if one of the following people is present:

- i. a member of the order of ministry who has been called or appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- ii. a designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- iii. the pastoral charge supervisor; or
- iv. another person appointed by the regional council to attend the meeting.

**Origin:** Northern Spirit Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission. This proposal was recommended to the Northern Spirit Regional Council by the Pastoral Relations Commission at its meeting on June 11, 2020.

**Regional Council Action:** Northern Spirit Regional Council agreed with the proposal and will pass it on to the 44th General Council for action.

## NS03 CRITERIA AND AUTHORITY FOR A REGIONAL COUNCIL TO END A PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

**Origin:** Northern Spirit Regional Council

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to refine the process of ending a pastoral relationship when it is deemed to be dysfunctional by the regional council, allowing a quick and



timely response that responds to the knowledge that continuing the relationship is foreseeably detrimental to the health and welfare of the community of faith and/or the ministry personnel.

## 2. Why is this issue important?

The regional council is responsible for creating pastoral relationships through the approval of calls and appointments. It is also responsible for approving changes in pastoral relations upon request from ministry personnel or communities of faith, or under section I.3.1.7 of *The Manual* (2021), which says:

### I.3.1.7 Change Initiated by Regional Council

The regional council is responsible for ending the pastoral relationship without a request by the ministry personnel or the community of faith only when notified by the Office of Vocation that the name of the ministry personnel has been placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List.

The regional council is responsible for the oversight of communities of faith, and in exercising that responsibility, there are times when the regional council becomes aware of a dysfunctional pastoral relationship which ought to be ended quickly to protect the health and well-being of the ministry personnel and/or the community of faith. There is no authority for the regional council to do this, however, in the pastoral relations policy of The United Church of Canada.

## 3. How might the regional council or General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the General Council might respond to this issue by:

- reconsidering the pastoral relations policy of The United Church of Canada to include criteria and authority allowing the regional council to end a pastoral relationship without undue delay when it is deemed to be dysfunctional by the regional council.

**Origin:** McDougall United Church (Edmonton). Passed by motion of Council, May 2, 2021. Supported by the Communities of Faith Support Committee of the Northern Spirit Regional Council.

**Regional Council Action:** Northern Spirit Regional Council agreed with the proposal and will pass it on to the 44th General Council for action.

**PM03 A TASK GROUP ON PENSION EQUITY FOR UNITED CHURCH PENSION PLAN MEMBERS****Origin: Pacific Mountain Region/Region 1****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to make equitable distribution of pension amounts amongst United Church of Canada Pension Plan members.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

Rates of pay and pensionable earnings calculations for ministry personnel and lay employees vary widely depending on job position, geographic location, and a pastoral charge's ability to pay. Leaving aside the salary grid basing pay (and thus pension) on years of service:

- Ministry personnel serving in isolated, Indigenous, rural pastoral charges, and/or charges that supply a manse are paid at different rates (usually lesser) than their urban counterparts for similar and often highly demanding service.
- Folk serving in innovative and non-traditional ministries are sometimes not able to participate in the pension plan (paying both employer and employee shares takes too large a part of their income).
- Some ministry personnel (often women) work part-time for most of their careers, providing good, faithful, and capable service, with little to any pension to sustain them in retirement.
- General Council (thus regional) staff are not allowed to pay into the pension plan at a rate equivalent to their earnings (some earnings don't count).
- Lay employees are paid much less than ministry personnel (for full-time equivalent work) and are, therefore, required to exist on much smaller pensions than those already considered less than adequate (based on the advice of the Pension Board) for ministry personnel.

These are a few of the circumstances giving rise to a varied and disparate pension amount for ministry personnel serving in similar capacities across the church. The greatest cause being the shift from determining pensionable earnings at annual salary plus 40% to annual salary plus Cost of Living allocation (formerly housing allowance) based on geographic location. The pension disparity is neither equitable nor just, and we know our church can and will find ways to bring redress to the situation.

- A minimum \$20,000 a year difference exists between Cost of Living category 1 and Cost of Living category 6 pay for ministry personnel, resulting in a smaller pension for the Cost of Living category 1 minister.
- A minister living in a manse has pensionable credits based on their base salary plus 40% (placing them in an area equivalent to a Cost of Living category 4 minister, about \$10,000 a year less than colleagues living beside them in a Cost of Living category 6 location, or more than colleagues living in adjacent, Cost of Living category 1 to Cost of Living category 3 communities).

### 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might instruct the General Council Executive to commission a Task Group to explore and make recommendations leading towards an equitable distribution of benefits (pension amount) amongst United Church of Canada Pension Plan members. Recommendations to come to the next General Council meeting (at minimum) for implementation and action.

## RC1502 SUPPORT FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL TAKING MATERNITY AND/OR PARENTAL LEAVE

Origin: Division of Ministry Resources Regional Council 15

### 1. What is the issue?

Ministry personnel taking maternity and/or parental leave are reporting negative and discriminatory experiences in the communities of faith they serve.

In Trisha Elliot's 2018 *Broadview* article "Pregnant in the Pulpit," numerous women in ministry in the United Church reported that, rather than being a joyful time, their pregnancy and leave became a time of stress and conflict as:

- Their leave was perceived as an unfair burden by the local community of faith.
- They were resented and harassed.
- The wisdom of having called them in the first place was questioned.
- They received insufficient or ill-informed support from other levels of the church.

Elliot's article had been inspired by discussion within a private Facebook group for United Church ministry personnel (BAM) in which additional women in ministry shared similar experiences from recent years.

A particularly contentious aspect of maternity/parental leave has been the mandatory top-up paid by the local community of faith, amounting to 40% of the minister's regular wages for up to 15 weeks of leave (*Pastoral Relations: Supporting the Pastoral Relationship*, 2020). These payments supplement the standard EI benefits for new parents of 55% of regular wages for up to 35 weeks for any parent, or 50 weeks for a parent who has given birth (maternity + parental benefits). This financial requirement contributes both directly and indirectly to increased stress on the pastoral relationship as:

- The minister becomes the source of an unexpected expense for the local community.
- The burden of the top-up leads to a reduced budget for coverage during the leave, often leaving the community of faith under-served and exacerbating resentment toward the minister.

This issue disproportionately impacts younger ministry personnel, and particularly young women in paid accountable ministry, who are more likely to be early in their ministry career and serving as solo ministers in communities of faith with fewer financial resources. Younger women in ministry are therefore at significant risk of experiencing discrimination in the workplace and discrimination in hiring by communities of faith that perceive them as a financial risk. At the same time, communities of faith struggling to sustain life and mission while under the increased financial pressure that attends maternity/parental leaves risk suffering damage to their life together, and of doing harm to the continued pastoral relationship.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

As a church that is committed to justice and equality, we cannot ignore the workplace hostility and discrimination faced by ministry personnel taking maternity/parental leave, nor the financial pressures on communities of faith that exacerbate this injustice and do damage to everyone involved. Failing to provide better support for ministry personnel taking maternity/parental leave is a failure to live up to our own values as a denomination, a failure to uphold the human rights of our ministry personnel, and will limit the full participation and retention of women in paid accountable ministry.

We believe the Spirit is urgently calling us to respond to this issue by:

1. Taking measures to better educate communities of faith about gender-based discrimination.
2. Creating a document outlining best practices for supporting the health of the pastoral relationship before, during, and after a maternity/parental leave.
3. More equitably sharing the cost of the maternity/parental leave top-up payments.

### ***Staff/Financial Implications***

1. A survey and preparation of best practices to guide a just and productive navigation of maternity/parental leaves will presumably require significant work by regional and denominational staff.
2. The financial implication of covering maternity/parental leaves using regional or denominational funds of course depends on the annual number of people taking leave, which is likely low based on the current demographics of our ministry personnel.

## **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

1. Survey ministry personnel who have taken maternity/parental leave about their experiences and how the church can better support this form of leave at all levels.
2. Develop a document outlining best practices before, during, and after a maternity/parental leave to be used by ministry personnel, the local community of faith, ministry personnel covering the leave in an appointment or pastoral charge supervisor, and regional councils.

3. Direct that funds for the maternity/parental leave top-up payments come from the national or regional level in order to share the cost across the wider family of the church, including those who will benefit from the minister's experience and service in later years. This lifts the burden from the local communities of faith with limited financial resources who are most likely to be served by younger ministry personnel, and would also help prevent discrimination in hiring by those who perceive calling a young woman to be a financial risk.

## **SW06 MINISTRY PERSONNEL SALARY EQUITY**

### **Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council - Pastoral Relations Commission**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

We believe that as followers of Jesus the Christ we are called to a way of justice and equity. Recognizing the current state of inequity of salaries of ministry personnel, particularly between personnel in the same community of faith and personnel in the same geographical area, we believe God is calling us as a denomination to create more equitable compensation policies for ministry personnel. Specifically to:

- immediately put into place measures that will assure the same percentage above minimum salary for those in team ministry in one community of faith
- make it part of the work of a community of faith to disclose the amount paid to previous ministry personnel—particularly % above minimum and/or extra benefits—when calling/appointing new ministry personnel
- create an updated resource for ministry personnel re: negotiation process and resources/tools for negotiation, as well as a process whereby ministry personnel are oriented/educated regarding negotiation (this could involve liaisons, Pastoral Relations Ministers, and/or Pastoral Relations Commission, etc.)

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

- the key underlying issue is pay/compensation disparity
- this includes disparity in compensation between large urban congregations and rural congregations; disparity between GCO salaries and pastoral charge salaries; compensation disparity in team ministry within one community of faith; salary inequity in pension resulting from salary inequity throughout careers; compensation disparity between newly called/appointed ministry personnel and (an) immediate predecessor(s)
- pay equity is a theological, ecclesiological, and a justice issue
- the key underlying issues are issues of compensation equity for all ministry personnel; the need to create a theology of compensation, rather than a business model of compensation; the question of whether our denomination subscribes to a model of equal pay for equal work, or a model that lifts up qualifications and achievements

- historically the question of salary equity has been an issue since the formation of the United Church in 1925, and the three major founding denominations brought with them differing traditions
- almost every General Council since has seen the issue arise in memorials or resolutions
- most recently in November of 2014, the General Council Executive approved a minimum comprehensive compensation model for ministry personnel not residing in a manse, to be implemented in July 2015; since then the church and ministry personnel have been learning how to live into this model, and the weaknesses of this model are now being exposed
- the principles informing this issue include: fairness, equity, justice
- the benefits of these actions support and contribute to the regional councils' mandate of joy, health, and excellence for ministry personnel
- while we are reluctant to “crystal-ball” the future without action on these issues, we respectfully suggest that if there were no action taken on this issue, there will be increased disparity in compensation packages in our church; the theology of compensation may be lost to the business model of the world; the need for increased equity in our pastoral relations system, as identified in the Final Report of the Equity Goal Research Project of the Shining Waters Pastoral Relations Commission, will not happen

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

- regarding welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church, this proposal offers some initial ways of assuring all ministry personnel are paid the same amount for the same work, regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- regarding committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#), this proposal offers initial ways of insuring that all ministry personnel are treated fairly during all pastoral relations processes, including salary and benefit negotiation
- regarding [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity, and developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an anti-racist denomination, this proposal offers simple steps that can be taken towards assuring that all ministry personnel are treated fairly and impartially ([commons.united-church.ca](#) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church of Canada Commitment to Inclusion)

*Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed “with” people, or “on behalf of” people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?*

- the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council was consulted in the development of this proposal
- the Final Report of the Equity Goal Research Project, done for the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council, was consulted. This report was developed with interviews of ministry personnel, search committees, and pastoral

relations liaisons. This report is the result of the commitment of the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Region to examine the region's pastoral relations policies and procedures through an equity lens. The commission was particularly interested to know how racist/sexist/ableist bias has impacted ministry personnel and the pastoral relationships in our communities of faith in Shining Waters Regional Council. See Appendix and [Equity Goal Research Project Final Report](#).

- a paper entitled "Paying the Pastor: A Critical Analysis of the Development of Salary Policy in the United Church of Canada," written by Paul Stott, was consulted
- ministry personnel working in team in a pastoral charge could benefit from this proposal
- while communities of faith will not be disadvantaged by this proposal, they could be "pushed" to examine more closely their assets and their theology of compensation

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

##### A. Study/discussion of the issue

- Study and develop a theology of compensation that would inform new compensation policies in the future

##### B. Action on the issue: General Council could

- immediately put into place measures that will assure the same percentage above minimum salary for those in team ministry in one community of faith
- make it part of the work of a community of faith to disclose the amount paid to previous ministry personnel—particularly % above minimum and/or extra benefits—when calling/appointing new ministry personnel;
- pastoral relations commissions be mandated by GC to include a process to inform and coach ministry personnel in negotiation of fair compensation
- create an updated and enhanced resource for ministry personnel re: negotiation process and resources/tools for negotiation, as well as a process whereby ministry personnel are oriented/educated regarding negotiation (this could involve liaisons, Pastoral Relations Ministers, and/or Pastoral Relations Commission, etc.)
- examine how compensation contributes to the United Church's equity work and strategies
- examine the Shining Waters Equity Goal research as a contribution to the church's work on this issue.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Donna Bowman-Woodall / Barbara Hendren that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-01 *Ministry Personnel Salary Equity* to General Council with concurrence

MOTION

CARRIED

## Appendix A

### QUOTES FROM EQUITY RESEARCH PROJECT

Many of these direct biases also correlate with systemic biases. For example, there are unwritten norms differentiating the negotiation process for an appointment versus a call. Sometimes this means not haggling over a few months' worth of terms, or Communities of Faith taking the opportunity to save some money while they are in search mode.

- "I had an assumption that because contracts were short, there was no negotiation process. They never opened the door and I don't think I ever knocked."
- "I am comfortable with the appointment, but if I was offered a call, I would negotiate the heck out of that."

What becomes problematic about this, is when it is held up against the statistics of who (gender, age, race, etc/) are offered appointments versus calls. (See final section for details.) —p. 28

Many participants would like a set of guidelines and best practices for negotiating terms, beyond what is available in the United Church's *Pastoral Relations: Search and Selection Handbook* (2000), so that these skills are not concentrated among certain privileged demographics. —p. 30

Pro-active regional support and intervention in the initial pastoral relationship, are crucial to many equity-seeking ministry personnel. These include sharing historical information the Regional Council has about a Community of Faith, such as past schisms and landmines, and the previous ministers' terms of call/appointment, particularly % over minimum, technical allowances over basic phone for internet costs, etc. The Regional Council could also encourage discussions with past ministers to understand community dynamics. —p. 31

### SW07 REVIEW OF NEW STRUCTURE

#### Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

As a church, we seek always to be faithful to God as revealed in Jesus Christ and guided by the Spirit. In 2018 we were obliged to streamline our structure to respond to a profound change from the context of 1925 or even that of a generation ago. In the new structure we sought to honour the intentions of those who had gone before while designing systems and processes that would enable us to support one another and give leadership in our and subsequent generations. It is common for organizations such as ours to institute a review after a major redesign.



How did we do? Is the new structure working as intended? Have the past five years revealed any gaps or weaknesses?

## 2. Why is this issue important?

In order to answer those questions and discover whether or not there are any improvements to be made or deficits to correct, we need to study the new structure and ask one another if and how it supporting ministry: local, regional and national. We acknowledge the forward-looking work done to create new systems. Now that we can look back at five years of experience with it we owe it to ourselves and those who come after to examine the new structure with a view to its faithfulness and efficacy. If we can see ways to modify our structures in light of any patterns of effectiveness or ineffectiveness, it is our responsibility to do so.

As Christians and communities of faith we are always reviewing the gap between our stated and operative theologies and spiritual principles with a view to having them more closely align. A review of our new structure would allow us to do the same for the United Church as a whole.

## 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

A review will reveal ways we have been more or less faithful to our many commitments to equity, so this proposal concerns all these principles:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision;
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](#) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion); and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

This proposal comes originally from Unifaith Unifor Community Chapter, an association of active and retired ministry personnel and family members from across the whole country with a broad experience of the life of the church and deep commitment to its prophetic presence in the nation and the world. It was developed both "with" people and "on behalf of" people.

The impact of this proposal will be to uphold the people and communities of faith of the United Church as they are consulted on their lived reality in the new structure. It seems to those who drafted it that it would advantage all of us and disadvantage no one.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The mover proposes that the General Council could:

*Conduct a review/study/discussion of the issue*

A review would likely include various kinds of information gathering such as questionnaires, polls, focus groups, and perhaps some longer interviews. This would begin by testing parameters for the review itself, such as testing the new structure in light of the equity lens listed above, and also the experience of those involved in the church's human resources systems and processes.

Information gathered and synthesized would be shared with the whole church to test accuracy and adequacy of the draft results. Review design would follow a participatory research model, in other words.

The review would involve consultation with those close to the design process of the new structure and access to relevant working papers from that process so that the stated intent of the current structure could be compared to its actual operation. Discussion at all levels of the church (community of faith, region, GC commissioners, and staff) surrounding the review and study will broaden awareness of our overall mission, and how our structure is intended to facilitate it. This will generate a greater sense of ownership among all members and adherents.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Brian McIntosh/Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-08 *Review of New Structure* to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION      CARRIED

### SW08 CARE OF THE CHURCH'S MARGINALIZED

Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Improve the church's policies and procedures regarding those on the Discontinued Service List.

- There are sections of *The Manual* that throughout history have undergone significant changes. This includes sections of *The Manual* referring to the Discontinued Service List (DSL).
- Individuals on the DSL are directly affected by the changes in *The Manual*, sometimes significantly.
- Currently, The United Church of Canada and its courts do not inform those on the DSL of those changes as they occur.
- Those on the DSL are marginalized and often do not receive this information formally or informally.

## 2. Why is this issue important?

The impact of current policies and procedures can be considerable.

- Changes to *The Manual* cause individuals on the DSL to violate the parameters of the DSL regulations unknowingly.
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the lives and volunteer work of those on the DSL.
- Changes to *The Manual* are applied inequitably to those on the DSL.
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the readmission process of individuals from the DSL to the Roll of Ministry.

## 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

- Individuals on the DSL encompass all aspects of the church's diversity. Ensuring that justice is enacted to those on the DSL will include justice to those of a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, gender identifications, classes, abilities, and challenges.
- People currently on the DSL have been consulted about this proposal. It was developed with them but is submitted on behalf of them as there is no mechanism for them to speak as a collective or participate in the courts of the church.

## 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that:

The General Council Office might contact those individuals currently on the DSL to inform them of applicable changes to *The Manual* subsequent to each individual's original placement on the DSL. Following each meeting of the General Council the General Council Office will contact each person on the DSL to inform them of any changes (or absence of changes) to sections in *The Manual* pertaining to those on the DSL.

## 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

MOTION by Barry Rieder/Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-05 Care of the Church's Marginalized to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION

CARRIED

## **GCE07 IMPLEMENTATION OF A CAPTIVE INSURANCE MODEL TO POTENTIALLY BENEFIT ALL UNITED CHURCH MINISTRIES**

**Origin: General Council Executive**

### **1. What is the issue?**

Over the last 3–4 years, insurance costs for congregations have increased by 50–100%, with further increases likely. Insurance costs for other church ministries, regional councils, and the denomination have also increased significantly, but not by the same magnitude. Insurance costs are an increasing cost pressure for all parts of the church and increasingly cited as a factor in church closure deliberations.

Insurance procurement decisions have always been the responsibility of local ministries. Insurance is typically purchased through an insurance broker and overseen by local trustees. The denomination has offered an affinity insurance program—currently labelled UCC Protect—for almost 30 years. Currently approximately half of all congregations participate in this program for property and comprehensive general liability insurance. This arrangement is supported by a national broker with provision for a local broker to be involved with commissions shared. Congregations also benefit from umbrella coverages for cyber risk and for Directors and Officers liability insurance, which are both paid for through the General Council Office budget.

The vision and call statements approved by General Council 43 in October 2021 identified a strategic focus on nurturing Common Good, defined as: Equity and Sustainability in Resources. The articulated goal is to “significantly increase denominational capacity and will to make decisions on properties and resources focused on the ministry of the whole church, enhancing equity, sustainability, right relations, and administrative efficiency and effectiveness.”

The single most substantive opportunity identified to date is in the area of better controlling insurance costs and related risk management. Implementation of a self-insurance program would save congregations well over \$1 million per year, with the potential to better control insurance costs in the future. This would require an investment of \$3 million in seed capital from the Property and Building Fund to implement a captive model for self-insuring. It would also entail taking on more risk in that significant adverse claims results would necessitate further investment. Feasibility studies confirm the viability of this approach.

Self-insurance is a well-established concept. In its simplest form, you are self insuring if you don't have insurance and simply choose to pay any claims within defined parameters that arise from your operations. In more sophisticated approaches, you in effect establish your own insurance company or pay into a pool based on claims experience. This is a very common risk management approach. It does however mean you are taking on more risk, and in our case the national corporation would be taking the risk, while much of the benefit flows to our participating congregations and ministries.

The United Church first commissioned a self-insurance study in 2007 and at the time took no action. It was deemed—correctly—that the national church was too disconnected from local

churches for there to be sufficient uptake. For several years now we have been communicating the potential savings from an “all in” program, and congregational interest in same has intensified with the rapid escalation of premiums experienced in recent years. The existing block of UCC Protect participants is more than enough to make a self-insurance program viable. It is expected that the rate reductions will be appealing to those currently insured elsewhere. A further feasibility study was commissioned in Q4 2021, and the report affirms not only the feasibility but also a compelling business case to proceed. The report has already been reviewed by subject matter experts and selected church treasurers, who have provided comments and advice that have helped refine a proposed implementation plan.

From an implementation perspective, existing policyholders would receive their renewal documentation as usual—but potentially on a different insurance company’s paper. Coverage provisions would be identical, except for the possibility of greater flexibility in dealing with situations where the existing scale of church would never be replaced. A key financial element is the substantial reduction of broker commissions, simplification and streamlining of administrative processes, and the elimination of local brokerage commission. In this instance, policyholders and non-policyholders have been calling for relief, so we would not expect significant concern or turnover. Indeed, there is a greater likelihood of program growth.

Proposed is the establishment of a captive insurance company with initial funding of \$3 million to support United Church denominational insurance needs around property and comprehensive general liability, added to the existing funding for umbrella pricing for cyber risk and Directors and Officers insurance programs. The goal would be to offer lower premiums and coverage flexibility for the property/liability coverage that is increasingly unavailable or highly priced by commercial insurers. Self-insurance is as well-established risk management strategy across many sectors, and there is a 30-year history of success in the US within the United Church of Christ, and many examples in Canada as well. Financial modelling by our consultant suggests that with future claims following historical patterns, we could offer rate reductions to all our ministries and build up reserves that would serve as protection from adverse results or even be flowed back to the church as dividends or donations. Given the potential volatility of claims, worst case or catastrophic claim events have been modelled, and indeed the risk in this regard is the single biggest factor in a decision to proceed or not. One of the reasons for commercial insurers jacking up premiums is anticipation of worsening claim experience due to climate change, aging buildings, and other factors.

A captive insurance company would pay a fronting fee to a Canadian licensed insurer for issuing policies on its “paper” supported by larger strong balance sheet. Based on modelling the most cost-effective approach, the proposed structure is for the captive insurance company to absorb 70% of the overall risk and have 30% reinsured. It would also purchase reinsurance for stop loss so that another insurer would pay any amount over \$2 million per loss (property/liability) and pay all amounts over \$8 million in total for a given year.

The captive insurance entity would need an independent board of directors to meet compliance obligations, and operations would largely be outsourced at the outset to minimize

execution risk. Captive insurance entities are most often domiciled in Barbados or Bermuda, where tax treatment is favourable and considerable infrastructure exists for this business.

If General Council gives approval and the financial projections remain favourable, implementation would begin with policies renewing December 1, 2022 (with pro-rated transfer of March/June/September 2022 renewals) and new entrant underwriting proposal.

- UCC Protect participants renewing December 2022 would receive a 15% premium reduction based on full replacement value.
- UCC Protect participants renewing earlier in 2022 would receive a 30% premium reduction as they would have been levied with a further 15% increase in 2022. Provision has been made to transfer those policies on a pro-rata basis.
- New entrants insured at full replacement value would receive at least a 15% reduction in premium subject to underwriting validation.
- Greater flexibility in coverage amounts will be made available in early 2023.
- It is important to note that claims administration and underwriting would still adhere to industry standards and best practices. Otherwise the reduced premium for all goal would be eroded and not sustainable.
- Future insurance premiums would be more directly linked to actual claims experience and actual inflation.
- Participants would still need to meet standard risk management and risk mitigation requirements.

Over time, many entities choose to bring certain elements of insurance administration back in house to further improve the financial return and potentially to strengthen reserves.

## **2. Why is this issue important?**

With all parts of the church confronting significant financial stress, this initiative has the potential to deliver tangible benefit to all our ministries as a demonstrable common good.

Implementing a captive insurance program would require an upfront investment of \$3 million in seed capital to the new captive entity, with the possibility of further investment should there be significant adverse claims experience. While the projected return on investment is significant and there is potential for the investment to be paid off, the initial focus needs to be on the financial strength of the captive insurance entity. Operating surplus needs to be built up in the captive entity in order to be able to readily absorb adverse claims experience down the road.

While this initiative could potentially have been implemented as a “regular course of business” decision, it is being brought to the General Council to amplify the common good theme and hopefully contribute to broad-based buy-in to common good initiatives, which promote sharing and/or collective action.

### 3. How might the 44th General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council Executive recommends

That the 44th General Council approve the establishment of a captive self-insurance program as set out in sections 1 and 2, and the Appendix of proposal GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model to Potentially Benefit all United Church Ministries; and authorize the General Secretary to implement the program.

### 4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:

Transmitted with Finance Advisory Committee recommendation for approval. The Committee flags the potential need to invest further capital in the event of extreme adverse claims experience in the first year or two of operating the new model. This risk has been included in the feasibility study. There is also a risk of higher sustained inflation, which would create further upward pressure on insurance premiums. However this would be the case irrespective of how insurance is managed.

## APPENDIX

### United Church of Canada

#### Feasibility Analysis

#### Summary Table of Captive Results for Different Scenarios

Projected Financials - Corporate and Congregational premium reductions				
Scenario	Expected		Catastrophic	
	Core	Growth	Core	Growth
Participation Rate				
Net Premium to the Captive In Year 1	\$3,104,624	\$4,298,94	\$3,104,624	\$4,298,943
Annualized Before Tax Economic Benefit/ Cost of Captive	\$1,041,321	\$1,528,573	\$(238,319)	\$424,945
Retained Earnings at the End of the 5 Years	\$3,260,604	\$4,942,522	\$(3,137,595)	\$(575,618)

Projected Financials - Congregational premium decreases only				
Scenario	Expected		Catastrophic	
	Core	Growth	Core	Growth
Participation Rate				
Net Premium to the Captive In Year 1	\$3,233,178	\$4,426,830	\$3,233,178	\$4,426,830
Annualized Before Tax Economic Benefit/ Cost of Captive	\$1,185,422	\$1,671,926	\$(94,218)	\$568,298

<b>Retained Earnings at the End of the 5 Years</b>	\$3,872,592	\$5,551,332	\$(2,525,607)	\$33,193
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In each scenario, there is an anticipated saving of over \$1 million per year for congregations

Immediate savings to congregations targeted at 15-30% savings

Current inflation factor 3%

**Self-Insurance - Business Case Considerations - Backgrounder**

Self-insurance is a well-established concept. In its simplest form, you are self insuring if you don't have insurance and simply choose to pay any claims within defined parameters that arise from your operations. In more sophisticated approaches, you in effect establish your own insurance company or pay into a pool-based on claims experience. This is a very common risk management approach. It does however mean you are taking on more risk and in our case the national corporation would be taking the risk, while most if not all benefit flows to our congregations.

The United Church first commissioned a self insurance study in 2007 and at the time took no action. It was deemed—correctly—that the national church was too disconnected from local churches for there to be sufficient uptake. For several years now we have been communicating the potential savings from an “all in” program and congregational interest in same has intensified with the rapid escalation of premiums experienced in recent years. The existing block of UCC Protect participants is more than enough to make a self-insurance program viable. A further study was commissioned in Q4 2021 and the report received, review and endorsed by the Finance Advisory Committee in Q1 2022. This work was commissioned from our existing broker—Hub International on a discounted fee basis. The report has also been reviewed by subject matter experts and selected church treasurers who have provided comments and advice included in this note.

From an implementation perspective, existing policyholders would receive their renewal documentation as usual—but potentially on a different insurance company's paper. Coverage provisions would be identical, except for the possibility of greater flexibility in dealing with situations where the existing scale of church would never be replaced. UCC Protect decisions are already made nationally and we have previously changed brokers and insurance companies as needed to help contain costs. For example, most recently:

- In 2010 we switched brokers.
- In 2016 we switched insurance companies in order to avoid premium increases and notified policyholders of this on their renewal.
- In 2017, we increased the self-insurance component to \$50,000 per loss.

In this instance, policyholders and non-policyholders have been calling for relief, so we would not expect significant concern or turnover. Indeed, there is a greater likelihood of program growth.



### **Base Case or Proposal**

Establishment of a captive insurance company with initial funding of \$3 million could support United Church denominational insurance needs around property and comprehensive general liability. This includes congregations, regional councils and the denominational council, but could potentially be expanded to include other ministries. The denomination already provides umbrella coverage for cyber risk and Directors and Officers insurance programs. The goal would be to offer similarly structured lower premiums and coverage flexibility for the property/liability coverage increasingly unavailable or highly priced by commercial insurers.

Self-insurance is as well-established risk management strategy across sectors and there is a 30-year history of success in the US where the United Church of Christ launched this initiative in the early 1990s and now has an entity that offers this coverage to other denominations as well. There are many examples in Canada as well. Financial modelling by our consultant suggests that with future claims following historical patterns, we could offer rate reductions to all our ministries and build up reserves that would serve as protection from adverse results or even be flowed back to the church as dividends or donations. Given the potential volatility of claims, worst case or catastrophic claim events have been modeled and indeed the risk in this regard is the single biggest factor in a decision to proceed or not. One of the reasons for insurance companies dramatically increasing premiums is anticipation of worsening claim experience due to climate change, aging buildings and other factors.

A captive insurance structure is typically based offshore and pays a fronting fee to a Canadian licensed insurer for issuing policies on its “paper” supported by larger strong balance sheet. Barbados and Bermuda are the two most established jurisdictions for this concept with well-established infrastructure. Based on modelling the most cost-effective approach, the proposed structure is for the captive insurance company to absorb 70% of the overall risk and have 30% reinsured. It would also purchase reinsurance for stop loss (all claims within \$2 million per loss, or overall retention totaling over \$8 million in a year paid by another insurer). The company would need a board of directors but operations would largely be outsourced.

### **Risk Management and Evaluation Criteria**

#### ***Reputational Risk***

##### **1. Is the offshore structure necessary?**

The off-shore structure is very common in Canada for both the for-profit and non-profit sectors for organizations that are national in scope. Captive insurance entities are most often domiciled in Barbados or Bermuda where tax treatment is favourable and considerable infrastructure exists for this business. In Canada, Non-Profits with Captives include:

- Canadian Blood Services – Captive Location: Bermuda and BC
- The Catholic Church/The Catholic Religious Self-Insurance Retention Program (CRSIRP) – Barbados
- Ontario Nurses Association – Barbados

**2. Is there evidence of success in the faith sector?**

In the US, this approach has been in place for the faith sector for decades ([insuranceboard.org](http://insuranceboard.org)). The United Church of Christ established its Insurance Board starting out when the conferences (regional judicatories) wanted to self-insure in an effort to control costs and secure coverage unique to churches (liability for ministers, D&O for trustees, old/historic buildings, etc.). It has since grown over the last few decades to become an independent insurer for UCC-USA, Disciples, Presbyterian, Reformed, and Evangelical Lutheran churches—although it identifies very strongly with the United Church of Christ, is headquartered at the United Church of Christ national office, and most of its board members are United Church of Christ. This is how a senior United Church of Christ leader described it: “The main takeaway is that, overall, going to self-insurance has been a very good experience for us. There were hiccups to be sure, but not unexpected in a complex field like insurance!”

**3. Is there potential adverse publicity arising from cutting out the local broker?**

Approximately 60% of existing UCC Protect policyholders have a local broker. There are undoubtedly strong local customer relationships, but church insurance is a specialty area and increasingly we hear complaints about broken telephone. A truly professional broker could and should recommend a program that delivers the same or better coverage at a lower price. While there may be concerned voices, we feel this approach can be easily defended and the number of people moving their account out or not transferring in for this reason will be modest.

**4. What is in it for the national broker? Why are they supporting this?**

Their job is to help identify the full range of risk management options. This arrangement changes the structure of their compensation and on aggregate reduces it substantially. The primary saving comes from elimination of the local broker fee (60% x 8% (1/2 of 16% total allocated to Hub/local broker) x full premium) and the national broker also sees reduce fees (7.5% x 70% x premium + 15% x 30% excess premium). Overall, based on the existing participation level, the brokerage remuneration is cut by 50% aligned with a streamlined more accountable service model.

**5. When claims adjudication disputes arise, is the national church at risk of being seen as the bad guy?**

Contentious claim and coverage disputes are not uncommon. It will be very important to communicate that claims adjudication **will be and must be** managed by professionals to industry standards and contract wordings.

**6. If there are multiple bad claim years necessitating re-capitalization can this be a story about having “bet the church”?**

Claims experience can be volatile and we should not enter into this without being prepared on a worst-case basis to recapitalize twice. However, adverse claims experience would cause any insurer within all structures to increase premiums, so the cost to congregations would increase in any case irrespective of insurer or insurance financing model.

**7. Does moving to self-insurance in any way change coverage for class action or potentially massive claims (e.g. sexual abuse claims re a predator minister, or further and different claims arising from indigenous history)?**

There would be no change to existing coverage maximums or limits. Any payable claim in excess of \$8 million captive aggregate exposure would be covered by excess layers in any case.

**8. Captive versus reciprocal**

**Why captive for The United Church of Canada?**

Many Canadian institutions (professional societies, schools, hospitals etc.) do self-insurance on a reciprocal basis. However, the captive structure is consistent with existing customer expectations and provides greater likelihood of financial stability.

**Reciprocal** - This is an alternative model to set up an owned insurer, where each participant would sign an agreement to participate for a minimum of 7 years with 2 years' prior notice of exit. Conceptually this facilitates a lower upfront capitalization amount (this approach was taken with various publicly-funded groups: e.g., Hospital Insurance Reciprocal of Ontario (HIRO), Canadian University Reciprocal Insurance Exchange (CURIE), Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange (OSBIE).

This has lower upfront costs but assumes participants are going to be around for annual top-up levies. Given the extent of church closures and amalgamations expected over the next decade, after-the-fact-collection becomes impractical and does not provide the requisite financial stability.

**Captive** – The United Church of Canada capitalizes an insurance captive as new entity with \$3 million to establish a financial foundation. Initial scenarios contemplated a 15% premium reduction for congregations and NONE for the corporate program. This was done to maximize insurance reserves available to withstand volatility. However, in order to deliver a tangible benefit to the denomination (as opposed to having all benefit flow to congregations with denomination taking all the risk), we have also modelled the numbers with the same premium savings for corporate programs. As expected, this weakens the numbers but does not change the fundamental economics.

Based on current UCC Protect insurance program participation and historical loss trends, along with cost savings referenced above, the captive premium in year 1 would be \$3.2 million, with estimated projected 5-yr. annualized retained earnings \$3.9 million and lowest cash balance cash balance of \$2.4 million. The financial picture improves further with broader congregation participation level. As a potential down-side scenario a selected worst-case example with \$8 million losses in year 1 would necessitate a recapitalization of \$3 million. (FYI - \$8 million is the proposed stop-loss trigger point capping captive payout for claims within \$2 million retention.) The captive premium is slated to represent 70% of the total premium of \$4 million.

Claims experience can be volatile and we should not enter into this without being prepared on a worst-case basis to recapitalize twice. However, adverse claims experience would cause any

insurer to increase premiums, so the cost to congregations would increase in any case irrespective of insurer or insurance financing model.

### ***Value and Purpose***

**1. Does this arrangement align with the recently approved vision and strategic plan of The United Church of Canada?**

A key element of the strategic plan is a focus on connection and common, which on the business side of things we interpret as delivering demonstrable value and being in it together.

**2. Is this insurance arrangement onside with church polity?**

Insurance is NOT a responsibility of the General Council or regional council. Polity is silent on shared service arrangements and speaks only to the local trustee responsibility to ensure “adequate insurance.” The church new funding model approved in 2019 did implement an unprecedented degree of sharing of resources (assessment and Mission & Service) across the country. The 2022 strategic plan affirms “common” good as a key strategic focus.

**3. What is the reason we are pursuing this now? What is in it for the broker?**

Recent insurance cost escalation and COVID impacts generally have sensitized congregations to the potential of procurement savings. Congregations already get D&O and cyber coverage on an umbrella basis. National broker compensation will be converted to an admin fee structure with reduced total compensation. The benefit to the broker is streamlined administration and potential program growth.

**4. Has this approach been successful elsewhere?**

Yes. As described elsewhere.

**5. Do the necessary partners have an existing relationship with The United Church of Canada? What has our experience been?**

There would be RFP process (led by Hub) for the fronting company and reinsurers to agree acceptable rates—or abort the idea. Insurers would need to demonstrate the requisite financial strength and commitment to the market. We have a longstanding relationship with Hub, which is the largest in the country.

**6. What is the partner organization’s reputation with the public and with our existing policyholders?**

Hub would score poorly on customer service over the last year as policy renewals have been delayed due to much tighter underwriting and the rapid escalation in insurance cost. Having said this, some of the delay has been caused by delays +/- or incomplete information supplied by the church/local broker. UCC Protect, in regard to product and price, benchmarks favourably to competing programs.

**7. Is there any reason we may not want to partner with any of the requisite stakeholders?**

No. We do need to get our head around the offshore structure and elimination of local broker. Any fronting company we choose will be well known.

**8. Is there alignment of values with the broker partner and a commitment to long term?**

Yes. Hub—and in particular John Chippindale—have reduced commissions and helped identify, implement, and communicate various cost mitigation efforts.

**9. Does this structure attract or detract from efforts to build ecumenical shared services?**

Attract. A number of denominations have already expressed interest. We would not—or at least not at first—seek to share actual claims experience. It would be possible though to share the fixed costs of the structure.

**10. What is the sizing of the current and future opportunity? What is the implication of ongoing consolidation of church properties to project feasibility?**

Self-insurance becomes feasible with regular premium volume of at least \$1–2 million per year. There is adequate scale to maintain this program for as long as needed.

***Feasibility***

**1. Can we assume insurance markets are relatively competitive in Canada?**

Yes—the macro insurer financial performance has improved by 15% over 2 years (combined ratio—claims + expenses as % of premium—reduced from 103% to 88% improving profits). In addition, reinsurers have been disintermediated by primary insurer consolidation, leading to buying less reinsurance, so reinsurers want to deal directly with captives to win back market share. In addition, risk quality focus has restricted primary insurer involvement with churches.

**2. If not, why should The United Church of Canada invest \$3 million in this venture?**

This approach aims to address achieving two key elements (stable increased participation and reduced overhead/frictional costs—while participating in potential underwriting profit and investment income.

**3. Why is there a business opportunity here? That is, have the congregations been lumped in (pooled) with more risky endeavours? Or is the claims experience (risk) similar to the broad spectrum in the insurance pool?**

Churches have a challenged reputation (funding, alignment/commitment, price focused without risk management). As per proposal, by participating in the risk and potential rewards, there will be a greater focus on risk management, which we expect will attract reinsurers to be involved.

**4. Or, is the only rationale a redistribution of money to subsidize the insurance premiums congregations have to pay? If yes, what would be the cost of simply funding the subsidy rather than setting up an insurance company?**

There is no upside, and a redistribution of money does not deliver the two key elements noted above. The benefit would only accrue to about half the congregations (those participating in UCC Protect), and the amount needed to deliver a 15% saving to just this segment would be \$1 million per year.

**5. Does The United Church of Canada have the capacity to establish and manage an insurance company?**

As outlined, consistent with other groups that have successfully taken this step, the United Church would outsource operations and focus on the two key elements to establish the captive, then grow into taking over more management/admin to further reduce overheads to gain maximum cost containment.

6. **Does The United Church of Canada have the staff and resources or can it reasonably acquire and manage the staff and resources required to:**
  - a. **Manage the processes to establish the company, board, and vendor relationships?**
  - b. **Manage insurance policy issuance, premium collection, claims administration, data management and analytics, and related financial and compliance reporting?**
  - c. **Manage all the agreements supporting operations?**
  - d. **Monitor industry developments to support underwriting and pricing updates?**

The key at the outset would be to outsource as much of this as possible. Mature programs typically replace outsourced activities over time to save costs and/or strengthen customer connection, but this would be considered some years down the road.

The third-party administrator (Hub) would handle all of (b) and most of (c) and (d). United Church staff time would be involved in (a).

### *Finance*

1. **What is the financial strength and viability of the key partners? Broker and participating insurers?**

Hub is the largest broker in Canada (fifth on global basis including United States) and has the necessary strong specialty expertise and administrative services to handle The United Church of Canada's needs coast-to-coast. The selected participating insurers will be A.M. Best A rated.

2. **How attractive and robust are the project's projected financials including expected return, profitability, growth and cashflow?**

We have commissioned two core scenarios. The first is on the basis of holding corporate costs level and targeting premium savings to congregations only. The second applies savings to corporate coverages as well.

A 15% annual premium saving on corporate premium of \$1.5 million is \$225,000 annually. The savings to congregations would exceed \$1 million per year.

This implies a notional annual ROI in excess of 30% on the \$3 million investment. It is important to note however that most of the benefit accrues to congregations and not the body putting up the money.

3. **Do the projections allow for surpluses to accrue and to be retained for The United Church of Canada's benefit?**

The initial modelling was aimed at delivering savings to congregations while holding denominational costs level. Including a denomination cost saving offers a direct benefit to GCO. The immediate focus is retaining reserves in the insurance company to avoid recapitalization

scenarios, but there is provision to flow monies back to the denomination in the form of dividends or even grants through a charitable structure.

**4. How much claim volatility can The United Church of Canada and participant ministries absorb?**

This is the million-dollar question. Claims experience can be volatile, and we should not enter into this without being prepared on a worst-case basis to recapitalize twice.

**5. Is success dependent on the number of congregations voluntarily participating, and how might they be incented to do so?**

Initial premium savings and existing policyholder base should be sufficient to achieve the requisite participation. A detailed communication plan would describe the transition process and the opportunity for new participants to join.

**6. Will elimination of local broker involvement impact participation rate?**

We believe the premium savings will be compelling for both existing UCC Protect policyholders and new participants

**7. Is there potential to share fixed costs with other denominations or faith groups?**

Yes. There is considerable interest in this from other denominations due to the price surge in traditional insurance markets.

**8. What is the potential to expand the program within the United Church?**

Based on the premium increases incurred by United churches we know of outside the program, we believe the potential is quite positive. Specifically, Newfoundland/Labrador already has an “all-in” program that we know has seen large premium increases. Similarly, there is a block of approximately 200 churches with another broker that again have seen large premium increases.

**9. What is the risk of not meeting the core target participation rate?**

This is difficult to quantify, but we expect robust participation because the program would deliver lower initial rates and the ability to offer more custom coverage. All customer feedback suggests strong appetite for both.

***Operations***

The key initially would be to outsource as much of this as possible. Mature programs typically replace outsourced activities over time to save costs and/or strengthen customer connection, but this would be considered some years down the road.

***Exit Strategies or Possibilities***

**1. What would be the financial impact of terminating this approach to insurance?**

In the event that the captive model was ultimately discontinued for any reason, the group insurance program would be allowed to expire and then congregations would go back to individually obtaining coverage in the open market. Captive premium surplus and profits would

be maintained until all work-in-progress claims are finalized awaiting claims reserves to get paid. Any remaining funds would be directed to the United Church.

## **2. What needs to be done to ensure long tail abuse-related insurance coverage for claims not reported yet is secured?**

The liability coverage is placed on an “occurrence” basis, meaning that claims that occurred within the policy period are covered. The abuse liability coverage is on a “claims-made” basis, meaning that claims reported during policy period are covered. If terminated:

- a. Insureds would be instructed to report any/all potential claim incidents to the captive prior to expiry date.
- b. Future insurance placed would confirm coverage applies for prior act claims not reported to captive.

## **NEW02 TO HAVE THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO RECOGNIZE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915**

**Origin: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us, as an intercultural church, to recognize and honour all cultures and identities, including those eradicated by genocides. We are called to inform and educate ourselves as the church about the atrocities of the past to ensure a better commitment to God’s creation and to prevent the perpetuating of evil.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

We have witnessed the cyclical repetition of genocides throughout history. History shows that the atrocities committed under the Nazi regime, and now the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have been informed by the Ottoman Empire’s tactics in the Armenian Genocide. These issues of violence and exile are also founded in ecclesiological history, as evidenced by the involvement of the Russian Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox churches.

### ***What is the history/background of this issue?***

[100 years after Armenian Genocide, UCC’s work lives on - United Church of Christ](#). As a descendant of an Armenian Genocide Survivor, I have heard first-hand the atrocities that my grandparents and my late father, as an infant, survived. My personal life has been affected by this genocide, and my culture informs me of these atrocities first-hand. My grandparents arrived in Lebanon as refugees, through the deserts of Turkey/Syria, displaced from their roots.

There are no ancestry records for my family, and many Armenian families, as Turkey burned all existing historical records and destroyed historical landmarks. I myself have experienced the loss of my own cultural and historical identity; have borne witness to the lasting psychological, social, and spiritual effects of trauma and displacement; and am personally informed by my



own family's loss of cultural identity and history. I have very few pictures or mementos of my family and am reliant on an increasingly displaced extended family for things as simple as family stories, recipes, or anniversaries.

One and a half million Armenians were murdered in the Armenian Genocide, and the rest were exiled from their country of origin. Many surviving families were then further displaced, leaving countries such as Lebanon and Syria, resulting in a cycle of exile that has meant further loss of culture and identity. Yet, despite this, Armenia exists in the hearts and souls of the people living as diaspora. Armenia itself is the oldest Christian culture; older than Constantine, and has maintained its history and identity since the genocide.

- **What are the principles informing this issue?**  
That all people are deserving of identity and respect as God's good creation.
- **What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?**  
That an entire culture would be further marginalized.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. Describe in broad terms the ways in which this proposal engages with some of these principles:

April 24, 1915: Armenian Genocide Commemoration Date

The year 2015 marked the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and the Canadian Parliament passed Motion M-587 and declared the month of April as Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month, and marked April 24 of each year as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day.<sup>1</sup>

In 1984, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal ruled that the Armenian genocide is "an 'international crime' for which the Turkish state must assume responsibility," and that the United Nations and each of its members "have the right to demand this recognition and to assist the Armenian people to that end."<sup>2</sup>

[United Nations reports about the Armenian Genocide](#)<sup>3</sup>

- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#)
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](#) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church of Canada Commitment to Inclusion)

1. Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee, "[April is now Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month: Motion M-587 unanimously adopted.](#)" Cision, April 24, 2015.

2. "[Armenian genocide recognition.](#)" Wikipedia, accessed March 19, 2022.

3. Armenian National Committee of Canada, February 23, 2015.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

As our Sisters and Brothers at the United Church of Christ have recognized the Armenian Genocide, **the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:**

Name a possible response that the General Council might consider:

- A. Recognition of April as Genocide Recognition and Prevention month and April 24 specifically as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, and as such, provide educational materials to congregations about genocide prevention and worship materials to specifically recognize Armenian Genocide Memorial Day. As part of this strategy, provide peace education to congregations and regional councils, and opportunities to participate in ecumenical peace initiatives. As well, Mission & Service support during April could be directed towards initiatives dedicated to the eradication of genocide.
- B. Action on the issue, which could include
  - General Council directing that a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters
  - General Council adopting a policy position/strategy
  - General Council encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue

Note to 4.A: The General Council could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

Note to 4.B: Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome.

### NEW03 SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION PROCESS FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

**Origin: Commissioners**

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to live into our intercultural, antiracist, anticolonial, and invitational ministry. Our admissions process has allowed us to benefit from the skills and ministry of excellent ministry personnel from multiple different denominations from around the world. We need to do our part in assisting them with their formal visa, immigration, and citizenship as part of our commitment to them.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

Ministry personnel who arrive in Canada to serve our communities of faith already face many challenges: cultural, linguistic, racism, isolation from family, amongst others. Handling the bureaucracy and navigating the visa and immigration process is a significant and stressful undertaking that requires the assistance of professionals in this field of work. Consultants can be costly, only adding to the stress of having one's visa application denied and to be required to uproot one's life again.

**3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

We say that we value the contributions of ministry personnel that come from outside Canada to serve our church, but without supporting them in their transition to this country, we leave them vulnerable and scrambling. Being a truly intercultural, antiracist, and anticolonial church means valuing our ministry personnel by also giving them the support they need to navigate the complex system of work visas and immigration processes.

**4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Council would provide direct legal professional support to ministry personnel within and beyond their admissions process, to complete work visa requests as well as accompanying them in their immigration and citizenship processes.

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

N/A

**Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Linda Buchanan**

**Marc Grenon, Marie Claude Manga, Cathy Hamilton,  
Akoussah Demanya Kofi, Norman Robert, Christine Marie Gladu,  
Morgan Pierre Point, Florence Bukam, Isaac Kamta, Denis Ashby**

## STRENGTHEN INVITATION

### CW02 INITIATING DIALOGUE ON CHURCH UNION

Origin: Chinook Winds Region/Region 3

#### 1. What is the issue?

“...that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” —John 17:21

We believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us to consider how new expressions of Christian unity might serve the gospel in the decades ahead. As United Church theologian Don Schweitzer has written: “The Holy Spirit gives Christians the freedom to adapt Jesus’ teaching and reformulate the church’s understanding as they encounter new situations. Faithfulness to the New Testament witness to this freedom sometimes requires one to move beyond what Christian faith meant then...this can include the church changing its mind in a radical way, saying yes to something to which it formerly said no.”

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

Though our church has previously pursued a similar course of action in the past, we believe a new generation within our church is being called to pursue full organic church union with other theologically similar denominations. The demographic realities of our declining membership, financial resources, and reduced numbers of clergy would support this pursuit, especially when we consider what these demographic trends will look like in our congregations in another 10 years.

However, beyond money and attendance, we should pursue this course of action because greater Christian unity is the desire of Christ. Now, at this point in each of our churches’ history within Canada, we can perhaps do more together than we can apart. Issues of theology and biblical interpretation have created difference between our denominations since the Protestant Reformation, but so has ethnic nationalism. To serve the people of Canada today, we may now need a further united expression of mainline Protestantism for the 21st century. The preamble to *The Manual* contains an excerpt from the Declaration of Faith (1935, reaffirmed in 1950), which reads, in part, “In a renewed conviction of the worth of inclusive Christian fellowship, The United Church of Canada enters its second decade, prepared, as the opportunity may offer and as God may direct, to seek with other Christian communions’ further development of its ideals, whether by increased co-operation, organic union, or otherwise, and so fulfill its purpose of being not merely a united, but a uniting Church.” Perhaps the Holy Spirit is prompting us towards just such an opportunity to be uniting, on the eve of our church’s second century.

Though issues of human sexuality have been sources of division between us in recent decades, we are now seeing increasing ecumenical agreement between mainline Protestants, and likely will see even more so in a further 10 years. We acknowledge, however, the challenge these issues may place on this pursuit.

### 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the 44th General Council consider:

finding ways to draw upon the wisdom of our global ecumenical partner denominations such as the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the Church of South India, the Church of North India, the Church of Pakistan, and the United Church of Christ in Japan, who have existed in church union with Anglicans, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, and Presbyterians for nearly the same length as our own United Church union, to continue our own pursuit of church union in Canada. This is to be done as part of a multi-lateral ecumenical dialogue of Canadian mainline Protestant churches to prayerfully discuss the possibility of organic church union, but with openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, who might prompt us towards other forms of greater partnership.

## GCE05 LIVING INTO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

### Origin: Executive of the General Council

#### 1. What is the issue?

Plans are an assertion of hope, not blithe optimism, but genuine tangible hope for a future unseen. This strategic plan points towards a bold, hopeful, sustainable future for The United Church of Canada. This effort is not for the sake of the institution nor only the needs of the communities of faith that make up our legacy and our present. It is because we believe that The United Church of Canada is called to witness in love and justice to the liberating healing Christ risen in this place and time. The plan “at such a time such as this,” (Esther 4:14) is our best effort to disrupt the narratives of decline and despair. Discerning a strong purpose, offering a clear vision, and proposing five interconnected strategic objectives, the plan strives to create the conditions for missional growth, slowing if not stopping the slide in participation, impact, and finances. The status quo is not an option.

The Executive of the General Council has approved a strategic plan for the work of the General Council office and the church as a whole. The plan was developed out of a consultative process with the church. Over 1,000 persons participated. The process gave rise to the [Mission \(Call\) and Vision Statements](#) which were approved at the annual meeting of General Council 43 held October 23, 2021; as well as five strategic objectives (see report at [commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > Governance > General Council Executive > GC43 Executive (2018-2022) > Meeting Documents 2021-09-25 > 3. Strategic Planning Report to GCE), which will be operationalized by the General Secretary.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

A vital vibrant future for the United Church relies on the health of each part—national, regional, and communities of faith, including in and with the Indigenous Church. In a healthy church, the national supports the regions who support communities of faith as the primary locus of

ministry. In approaching implementation of this plan, attention will be given to the roles of each and the positive, supportive interconnections.

“God is not finished with The United Church of Canada.” Can we say this with assurance despite persistent narratives of decline and our deeply compromised history? Do we seek the continued unfolding, even the flourishing, of a uniting Jesus movement on these lands even as we welcome the hastening of Christendom’s demise? Will we create the conditions for growth? The unfinished story of The United Church of Canada centres on the proclamation of “Jesus, crucified and risen” (A New Creed, 1968), prophetic, contextual, transformative. If personally and communally we experience the good news of God’s grace as liberation and healing, as life-giving invitation to Beloved Community, then instincts to share our story with seekers are more than appropriate. And yet congregations and ministries across the United Church, convicted by Christ’s transformation, report lacking the confidence to share faith and community with their neighbourhoods. Failure to consistently find words and strategies for that invitation may be compromising our capacity to grow. While broader North American trends of secularization have felt their impact, opportunities for outreach remain, for example to migrant communities, progressive spiritual but not religious individuals, and younger Christians no longer comfortable in conservative Christian contexts. A vibrant future for the United Church requires developing our collective confidence in deepening invitation and sharing faith, towards making new disciples of Jesus. As we strengthen our voice in invitation, so too we might amplify our voice of influence, more effectively speaking into the public square the just, inclusive values and commitments deeply needed across the country and world. A tentativeness in proclamation is warranted given an evangelism, both globally and in what is now Canada, that was inextricably linked to colonization and genocide. While we recognize important exceptions, particularly related to Indigenous leadership, “good news” was fused with imperial conquest and ethnic superiority, as displayed in the horrors of residential schools. Through our apologies, we have pledged neither to ignore nor evade this complicity in spiritual violence but to take responsibility. In global and inter-faith relationships, we also reckon with a damaging trajectory of conversion over invitation. Evidence of capacity to live the change reflected by our stated commitments is essential. There is no place for paternalism. An ethical future for the United Church requires true humility in our continued invitation and genuine integrity in our continued influence.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

This proposal came out of consultations help across the church. Although no one particular group was consulted, this proposal will allow for opportunities to engage with a broad section of peoples on the margins of the church.

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The Executive of the General Council recommends to the 44th General Council:

that it give permission for regional councils and communities of faith to experiment with new ministry initiatives, provided such initiatives are within the bounds of the authority of the regional council and community of faith as set out in the Basis of Union, and on

terms agreed to by the regional council and the community of faith. Such permission will remain in effect until the convening of the 45th General Council at which time the General Secretary will report the results of the experimentation for information and further action as appropriate.

## **GS11 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA AND THE WESLEYAN METHODIST SYNOD OF BERMUDA**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

In 1930, the newly created United Church of Canada entered into a Union agreement with the Wesleyan Methodist Synod of Bermuda. The agreement enabled the Synod to function as a presbytery of the Maritime Conference with all the privileges of a Synod. The Synod had the responsibility for the management of its own local affairs and to function under the rules in the Methodist Manual/Act. Congregations of the Synod had dual affiliation with the Synod and The United Church of Canada. The congregations were not “formally” United Church of Canada congregations.

With the restructuring of The United Church of Canada in 2018 and the elimination of presbyteries, there was a need to find a framework for the continuing relationship between the United Church and the Bermuda Synod. For over two years, a task group has been working to develop a framework for the ongoing relationship. The gift of the work of the task group was its ability to revisit the relationship and to identify ways in which the relationship could be strengthened. The task group found some resonance in the Associate Relationship Policy (GCE13 – PC PMM 18, 2012),<sup>1</sup> which was approved in 2012 as a framework for the relationship. The task group explored a number of scenarios of how the relationship could be lived out. Both the Synod and Regional Council 15 have given consent to the terms of the appended Memorandum of Understanding. The relationship will be between the Synod, the regional council, and the General Council. The General Council is required to give its consent to the United Church entering into the agreement.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

We have a 90-year Union agreement that needed to be updated to reflect the current reality of the church. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding allows both the Synod and The United Church of Canada to live into a relationship that honours each other’s distinctive identity and need for accountability, as well as support the authentic ministry.

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1. *Record of Proceedings of the 41st General Council 2012*, [commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > Governance > General Council > 41st General Council > GC41-2012 Record of Proceedings, p. 362.

**3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Since the Associate Relationship Policy was developed with a commitment to engage with migrant communities in Canada, it supports the church's commitment to becoming an intercultural and anti-racist denomination.

**4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Secretary proposes that the 44th General Council 2022 approve The United Church of Canada entering into a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Bermuda Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church in the form attached. \*

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

General Secretary established a Task Group in 2019 to work on a process and a framework for the ongoing relationship between the Synod and the United Church.

The Task Group members were:

Wesleyan Methodist Bermuda Synod:

Adrian Hartnett-Beasley

Herbert Siggins

Jacki Zull

The United Church of Canada:

Janet Sollows

Faith March-MacCuish

Michael Blair



**THE SYNOD OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH  
OF BERMUDA**

10<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Rev. Michael Blair  
General Secretary  
The United Church of Canada  
Suite 200  
3250 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M4L 6T1  
Canada

Mrs. Jane MacDonald  
President  
Regional Council 15  
The United Church of Canada  
21 Wright Street  
Sackville, New Brunswick E4L  
4P8  
Canada

**Memorandum of Understanding Concerning A New  
Associate Relationship Between The United Church of  
Church of Canada And The Synod of The Wesleyan  
Methodist Church In Bermuda**

Mr. General Secretary and Madam President,

I write to you on behalf of Bermuda Synod in my capacity as Acting Secretary to advise that Bermuda Synod has duly approved the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. A copy of the said document is enclosed herewith for your information and for your respective counter-signatures.

Once each of you has signed the document, I would be grateful if a copy of the signed document could be returned to me at the following address:

Mr. Leopold N. Mills 11  
Acting Secretary  
Bermuda Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church  
Post Office Box HM 346  
Hamilton HMBX  
Bermuda

Yours sincerely,



Encls: UCC/Synod MOU

Rev. Faith March-McCuish  
Executive Minister  
Regional Council 15  
21 Wright Street  
Sackville, New Brunswick E4L 4P8  
Canada

**Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”)  
for Associate Relationship  
between  
The United Church of Canada (the “United Church”)  
and  
The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda (the “WMCB”)**

We, the United Church and the WMCB recognize that we share with the global church a mutual responsibility to participate in God’s Mission in the world in local contexts.

We, WMCB recognize our Christian mandate to provide for the “exercise of the duties of ministry” of the WMCB namely the “promotion of public worship and the teaching of Christian knowledge (P.17 Wesleyan Methodist Manual; Resolution of Agreement).

We, WMCB, having been in an agreement in the form of an arrangement of union with the United Church since Nov 6 1930 in furtherance of the mandate expressed immediately preceding, in accordance with section 13(1) of the Wesleyan Methodist Church Act 1930, recognise the need to restructure the agreement.

We, WMCB recognize our Christian mandate to acknowledge our commitment, as Christians, to be ‘not only hearers, but doers’- to live out our faith through loving and inclusive relationships which promote racial and social justice in our communities and the world. We believe that this lifestyle can improve the quality of life generally through ‘faith in action,’ and lead to personal spiritual growth as we seek to be messengers of God’s love and to proclaim the Gospel.

We, the United Church believe that the church is about God’s mission in the world, a mission which encompasses healing and justice for all creation, which is lived out through relationships with others, such relationships undertaken for common action to seek after justice, wholeness and love for the whole creation.

Accordingly, this MOU between the United Church and WMCB has been prepared to set out an associate relationship between the two Christian denominations in order to establish a framework that allows each denomination to live out its Christian mandate in a collaborative and mutually beneficial way and to be effective on 1 January 2022.

**1 – ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP:**

In consideration of the mutual promises made in this MOU and for other valuable consideration received, the United Church, through its General Secretary, General Council and Region 15, and WMCB, through The Synod of the WMCB (“Bermuda Synod”) agrees to enter into an associate relationship through which the WMCB and the UCC shall share spiritual and cultural ties and look to build international ties that support

and nurture God’s Mission, while recognising the rich history of their past relationship and for the WMCB to benefit from the established structure of the UCC while maintaining and promoting its own diverse history and experience “Associate Relationship”.

That WMCB and the United Church understand the relationship entered into to be mutual and reciprocal but nothing herein, except as specifically agreed otherwise, shall interfere with each denomination’s ability to exercise the rights and powers conferred upon such denomination by their respective statutory and regulatory governance structures. The WMCB and the United Church each further understand that the Bermuda Synod, each congregation bound by the Wesleyan Methodist Manual (each a “WMCB Congregation”) and each member of the WMCB (“WMCB Members”) shall be entitled to the management of the local affairs of the WMCB and to continue the organisation and practice currently enjoyed by the WMCB.

The WMCB and the United Church each agree that while the denominations will have created an Associate Relationship by entering into this MOU, each individual WMCB Congregation may opt to take part in the substantive elements of this relationship outlined in this MOU, but may from time to time opt not to take part and that Bermuda Synod shall communicate this by written notice to the United Church; for the avoidance of doubt where a WMCB Congregation does not take part, there will be no Annual Assessment.

The WMCB and the United Church each warrant and represent to the other that nothing in their respective statutory and regulatory governance structures, and nothing in the Wesleyan Methodist Manual, nor The Wesleyan Methodist Church (Consolidation and Amendment) Act, 1930 in the case of WMCB, would prevent them from entering into this MOU and from fulfilling all of its obligations under them. The WMCB agrees not to amend the Wesleyan Methodist Manual or The Wesleyan Methodist Church (Consolidation and Amendment) Act, 1930 in any way that would prevent the WMCB from fulfilling all of its obligations under this MOU.

## **2 – THE CALL:**

We believe the church is about God’s mission in the world, one of healing and justice for all creation, and that this work is surely to be lived-out and realized with others. In many varied and rich ways, the work of the church, including The United Church of Canada, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda is accomplished through working with others, including by relationships that we know as partnerships.

We believe that the Church’s passion to be involved in the transformation of the world is grounded in its relationship to God in Jesus Christ. We believe that God calls the Church: to do separately only what it cannot do with others; to care for itself in order to care for others; to set basic human needs above institutional enrichment; to give and not to count

the cost (from: Mending the World – 32<sup>nd</sup> General Council of The United Church of Canada)

We believe that The United Church of Canada and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda are called to “be God’s church” in the world, singing of God’s love and care for all creation and proclaiming the Gospel. And so we covenant to be together in mission and ministry.

### 3 – TERMS OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:

#### A. The United Church, through the General Secretary, General Council, Regional Council 15 (and any successors) and the Office of Vocation agrees to:

1. Allow ministry personnel of the UCC to be available through its Pastoral Relations Process for appointment to Bermuda Synod for a WMCB Congregation: to use all best efforts to ensure that there are no impediments to such ministry personnel to be appointed, to ensure parity with other ministry personnel appointment in their benefits and to work in good faith with WMCB in their similar efforts;
2. Make the Candidacy Pathway, Preparation for Ministry Leadership available to members of the WMCB (UCC 2019 Manual H.2, Candidacy Pathways)
3. Permit WMCB Members to be eligible for Nomination as Commissioners to General Council, through the Regional Council Nomination Process.
4. Make available to each WMCB Congregation access to certain grants, including but not limited to Technology Grants, Manse Modernization Grants, Church Modernization Grants, Life Long Learning Grants, New Ministry Grants, Revitalization Grants.

#### B. And, further, the United Church and Region 15 agree to:

1. permit the Bermuda Synod representation (up to 6 persons in total, being 2 for each WMCB Congregation taking part in this MOU) and voting at Region 15 Regional Council annual and other meetings pursuant to the current terms of the UCC 2019 Manual and the UCC Regional Council 15 Governance Manual (or any new iteration thereof), save and except the right to participate in voting on remits pursuant to section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union (2019 edition) as may be amended from time to time, all under the authority of section 28(b) of The United Church of Canada Act (Statutes of Canada 1924, 14-15 George V. Chapter 100).

2. permit members of the WMCB Congregations to be eligible for election in leadership of Regional Council 15 through its Committees, Divisions and Regional Executive.
3. where available to UCC communities of faith, provide similar education and training opportunities to lay leadership and other positions within the Bermuda Synod or at WMCB Congregations.
4. make available to each WMCB Congregation access to certain grants, including but not limited to Technology Grants, Manse Modernization Grants, Church Modernization Grants, Life Long Learning Grants, New Ministry Grants, Revitalization Grants.

**C. WMCB, agrees to the following:**

1. Where UCC ministry personnel are appointed by Bermuda Synod to a WMCB Congregation, Bermuda Synod and the WMCB Congregation agree to comply, in respect of the appointment, with:
  - a. all relevant provisions of the UCC 2019 Manual (C.2.8 Pastoral Relations, and I Pastoral Relations), and the UCC Region 15 Governance Handbook, as it relates to Pastoral Relations policies and procedures.
  - b. all relevant provisions of the UCC 2019 Manual and instruction from the United Church, Office of Vocation as it relates to the Board of Vocation oversight and disciplinary of Ministry Personnel (UCC 2019 Manual, E.2.5)

For the avoidance of doubt, Bermuda Synod shall still be entitled to undertake its own disciplinary procedures pursuant to the Wesleyan Methodist Manual.
2. Where ministry personnel are appointed by Bermuda Synod to a WMCB Congregation from denominations that have i) Full Communion Agreements; or ii) formal agreements of Mutual Recognition of Ministries relationships, with the UCC, Bermuda Synod and the respective WMCB Congregation agree to comply, in respect of the appointment, with Mandatory Training as proscribed by the Office of Vocation of the UCC for Ministry Personnel.
3. Where non-United Church ministry personnel are appointed by Bermuda Synod to a WMCB Congregation, the Bermuda Synod or WMCB Congregation agrees to be responsible for all oversight and discipline and the UCC disclaims any responsibility over the disciplinary process relating to said ministry personnel.
4. Permit the Executive Minister of Region 15 or a regionally appointed delegate to attend Bermuda Synod meetings, in a non-voting participatory role.

**D. The Parties agree to the following:**

1. Recognising that this MOU is intended to build and grow the relationship between the parties, all parties agree to use their best endeavours to abide by the spirit as well as the letter of the MOU, including but not limited to working in good faith to rectify any issues that may arise from time to time as a result of constitutional changes to one party's denomination, amendments to governing or other documentation and to affording another party a reasonable period to rectify any resultant non-compliance with the MOU.
2. Each of the United Church and the WMCB are separate and distinct denominations and each recognises and respects that the other is subject to their own laws, regulations and rules and unless specifically agreed to the contrary herein, each is required to comply with its own laws, regulations and rules and each shall be in the best position to determine what that means for its own denomination.

**4 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The UCC and Bermuda Synod and the WMCB Congregations agree to the following roles and responsibilities:

1. The Executive Minister of Regional Council 15 (the "Executive Minister") will ensure that Bermuda Synod is informed about the theology and polity of the UCC.
2. Bermuda Synod will keep the Executive Minister informed about the theology and polity of the WMCB.
3. an Annual Assessment as outlined in Exhibit A to this MOU shall be undertaken in relation to each WMCB that avails itself of any of the benefits of this MOU; the resultant amount owing under each such Annual Assessment shall be paid directly by the relevant WMCB, or may be paid in the aggregate by Bermuda Synod.
4. The UCC, through the Executive Minister or a regionally appointed delegate, shall meet with the Bermuda Synod at least annually. This meeting shall be either in person or virtual, as agreed upon by the parties in advance. Where such representation is in-person, UCC and WMCB shall be responsible for a 66% - 34% split on all agreed cost, including airfare accommodation and other expenses.
5. When the same are available to UCC communities of faith, UCC and Region 15 shall use best efforts to include Bermuda Synod and the WMCB Congregations when resources, planning, education opportunities etc. become available, including but not limited to resources and programmes under the purview of programme staff.

## 5 – AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION

1. This MOU will be evaluated, at least every 10 years by the judicatories of each of the parties (or at any time upon request by either party) to ensure that both parties derive optimum benefits from the relationship. Amendments may be made if mutually agreed upon as a result of such evaluation and will be effective only if signed by an authorized representative of each party.
2. Each of the parties shall have the unilateral right to end this MOU upon 2-years' advance written notice.

## 6 – MISCELLANEOUS

1. **Assignment.** This MOU may not be assigned by either party. All rights and obligations of the parties under this MOU shall ensure to the benefit of and bind their respective successors.
2. **Entire Agreement.** This MOU is the entire agreement between the United Church and WMCB with respect to this subject matter.
3. **Notice.** All notices required or permitted under this MOU shall be given personally or by prepaid registered mail (assured delivery) or prepaid courier with receipt requested, as follows:

UCC:

The United Church of Canada  
Suite 200  
3250 Bloor St. West  
Toronto ON  
Canada  
M4L 6T1  
Attention: General Secretary, General Counsel

WMCB:  
Bermuda Synod  
c/o Wesley Methodist Church  
41 Church Street  
Hamilton HM12  
Bermuda  
Attention: Synod Secretary

or to such other address as a party may specify by notice to the other party given in the manner provided in this section.



A notice may be delivered by PDF email or other electronic means and if such notice requires a signature, does so show a reproduction of the signature, and such shall be considered complete delivery and shall be deemed to be a signed original notice.

All such notices shall be deemed given and received on the actual date of receipt.

4. **Counterparts.** This MOU may be executed in counterparts and electronically, each of which when so executed shall be deemed to be an original, and such counterparts together shall constitute one and the same agreement, which shall be sufficiently evidenced by any such original counterpart. A copy of a signed counterpart may be delivered by PDF email or other electronic means which shows a reproduction of the signature, and such shall be considered complete delivery and shall be deemed to be a signed original.
5. **Governing Law.** This Agreement is governed by and will be interpreted according to the laws of the Province of Ontario and the applicable laws of Canada.

SIGNATURE PAGE

**The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Peter Hardy  
Title: Acting Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Leopold Mills II  
Title: Acting Secretary

**The United Church of Canada**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:  
Title:

**Regional Council 15**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:  
Title:

**EXHIBIT A**Annual Assessment

The assessment is as follows:

Assessment Base:

Total revenue less outward revenues - Line 32D

Total revenue minus line:

- 36 M&S raised congregation line
- 37 M&S raised UCW line
- 38 Other church appeals line
- 39 Other outreach, bequests, and asset sales

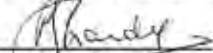
Net revenue for assessment calculation x 0.028


$(32D - (36+37+38+39) \times 0.028 = \text{Assessment}$

The Parties hereby agree to review this Annual Assessment in good faith every two years and any increase to such Annual Assessment relating to a WMCB Congregation may be agreed by such WMCB Congregation and shall not be considered an amendment to the MOU and shall not require the approval of the WMCB.

SIGNATURE PAGE

**The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda**

  
Name: Peter Hardy  
Title: Acting Chairman

  
Name: Leopold Mills II  
Title: Acting Secretary

7th January 2022

**The United Church of Canada**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:  
Title:

**Regional Council 15**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:  
Title:

## **N:ka02 MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED CHURCH THROUGH NON-CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

**Origin: Nakonha:ka Regional Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- be flexible, innovative, and inclusive when it comes to welcoming people into the church family.
- live out the intention of enabling diverse expressions of the church beyond the congregational model, as was the intention of GC43 when it created a category of ministry for communities of faith that are not congregations.
- find new ways of reaching people who are seeking to explore and develop their faith, deepen their spirituality.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Throughout our gospels, when Pharisees challenge Jesus when he appears to fail at following the strict interpretation of the law, Jesus offers a new way of understanding the issue by highlighting the underlying purpose of the rule rather than the letter of the law.

Membership in The United Church of Canada is an important way in which people express their belonging to Christ's way. In order to become a full member of The United Church of Canada, one must do so through a congregation.

At GC43, we made the decision to broaden our understanding of ministry so that we were not limited to the traditional congregational model. The concept of "communities of faith" was introduced in our *Manual* to provide flexibility and innovation. However, full membership in The United Church of Canada can only be conferred by congregations.

Membership in a community of faith that is not a congregation does not provide membership in the broader church. This creates limitations for those who come to the church through new forms of ministry. They cannot be delegates to regional or General Council, become Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, or discern calls to ministry if they have not become members in a traditional congregational setting. Without the ability to create full members of the United Church, a community of faith will have trouble to call a minister or form a church council.

Growth of the church's reach is vital to our future. That growth will come through innovative and new forms of ministry that may or may not take the shape of a congregation. Where a new ministry initiative expresses an interest in creating and shaping new members of the church, they should be encouraged to do so.

All communities of faith are required to have covenants with their regional councils. If a community of faith that is not a congregation wishes to be empowered to recognize new, full members into the denomination, such authorities should be permitted by *The Manual*.

While we are certain that all communities of faith will want to welcome and shape new disciples of Christ, only some will want the authority to create full members of The United Church of Canada. Therefore, since all communities of faith are required to have covenants with their regional councils, the delegation of such authorities should be outlined in such covenants for the communities of faith where this is understood to be part of its ministry. Such covenants should also stipulate how the community of faith will meet the needs of a historic roll/membership list.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

In recent years, a number of new francophone ministry projects have emerged in Toronto, Montréal, Sherbooke, Québec City, Winnipeg, and online. Half of these new ministries can point to African migrant roots as the source of their growth and development.

As these communities have evolved, their attachment to the United Church has also grown. Many of these cultural communities find the distinction of participant, adherent, and full member baffling and feel a sense of exclusion if their community of faith cannot provide them with a full connection to the denomination.

*Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed "with" people, or "on behalf of" people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?*

This proposal comes out of the direct experience of two new communities of faith who have struggled with this issue: the Ministère protestant francophone de Toronto and Église Sainte-Claire (an online ministry).

### **4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The Nakonha:ka Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

*Amend *The Manual* to provide communities of faith that are not congregations the ability to welcome new full members to The United Church of Canada by baptism, confirmation, or profession of faith.*

### **5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

2021-11-12-13\_019 MOTION (M. Grenon/S. Dansokho) That the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council forward to the General Council the Membership in United Church through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith proposal with consensus.

CARRIED

## **TICIF01 MEMBERSHIP**

### **Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

The United Church of Canada has been wrestling with issues concerning its concept of membership for many years, including three unsuccessful remits from the 1980s to the early 2000s on church membership. Among the explicit motivations for a possible revision of the denomination's understanding of membership has been a gap concerning membership and governance between our polity and the practice of a number of communities of faith.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee presented reports on membership, and possible models of membership, to the 42nd (2015) and 43rd (2018) General Councils. Despite an explicit plea from the Committee to the 43rd General Council to make a choice between two different approaches to the concept of membership, the 43rd General Council did not make such a choice but directed the Committee to do further study on the matter.

The Committee now invites the church to move away from discussions and proposals on church membership that seem driven primarily by efforts to provide technical fixes to polity issues and to engage in a discussion around discipleship. From such a discussion, and a renewed understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in our time, the Committee believes an understanding of church membership for our time could arise.

#### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Much of our polity concerning church membership, and some of our understandings of such membership, reflect an earlier period when most people in Canada and Bermuda were involved in a faith community and when the wider culture encouraged such involvement. Our current cultural situation is dramatically different. Our denomination's governance structures do require a concept of church membership. However, this concept needs to take account of the realities of our contemporary culture in which, among other things, the intentional practice of a faith tradition is counter-cultural and increasingly costly.

#### **3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

The General Council might:

- a. ask the Committee on Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith, or some other body in the United Church, to lead the church in a study on discipleship. Such a study would wrestle with questions such as: "What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?" "Are we, as individuals, prepared to pay the cost of being a disciple?" From such a study, a renewed understanding of church membership might arise;
- b. take no action on the report.

**4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Previous proposals and actions:

GC 42: Proposal TICIF 3a; Action: GC42 2015-071

GC 43: Proposal TICIF 01/GCE17; Action: GC43 2018-54



## NON-PRIORITIZED

### GS12 PROCEDURAL MOTIONS, JUNE 17, 2022

**Origin:** General Secretary

#### **New Business**

That the 44th General Council add to its agenda the following proposals:

- GS13 Consent Proposal, June 2022
- GS14 Challenging Anti-Semitism in The United Church of Canada
- AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations
- NOM01 Appointments to GCE
- NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees

#### **Reports**

That the 44th General Council 2022 receive for information the following reports:

- Audit Committee Report
- Nominations
- UPRC
- Regional council reports

### GS13 PLENARY CONSENT, JUNE 2022

**Origin:** General Secretary, General Council

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that:

The 44th General Council (2022) approve the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals:

- AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations
- NOM02 Appointments to General Council Committees

### AUD 01 AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Origin:** Audit Committee

#### **1. What is the issue?**

This is an annual task to meet compliance and reporting requirements.

## 2. Why is this important?

Among the duties of the Audit Committee of the General Council is to review the annual financial statements and the reports from the auditors, as well as recommending approval of the financial statements to the appropriate governance bodies.

The Audit Committee met on June 3, 2022 and

- received the report from PricewaterhouseCoopers (“PWC”), the Church’s external auditors,
- considered the audited financial statements prepared by management, and
- recommended the financial statements for final approval by the Sub-Executive of the General Council.

Since 2017, as a streamlining measure, PWC conducts a program audit of KAIROS to meet compliance and funder requirements, and KAIROS results are consolidated in the one statement as are other United Church programs. On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Sub Executive of the General Council approved the statements of the National Accounts of the United Church of Canada, which included KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives on June 9, 2022.

The Audit Committee recommends that the 44th General Council:

- 1) receive the [report of the Audit Committee](#);
- 2) receive the [2021 audited financial statements of the National Accounts of The United Church of Canada](#) which include KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives; and
- 3) approve the appointment of KPMG as the Auditors for the National Accounts of The United Church of Canada fund for the 2022 year.

**June 10, 2022**

### CFO Financial Statement Notes

KAIROS has been awarded a number of federal government grants in recent years, with revenue almost doubling in 2021 and a resultant increase in total revenues of \$3.4 million. KAIROS also represents over \$8 million of our investment balance. These monies are not available for United Church operations.

One significant change on the financial statements is in how we show the United Property Resource Corporation. PwC has acknowledged that they erred in 2020 in agreeing a pure investment presentation. UPRC is now shown on an equity accounting basis with a \$1.6 million “loss” recorded in 2021 for the first two years (no re-statement). There is also considerably more disclosure in Notes 5 and 12. Early year losses are normal for a start-up and well within expectations. This investment is expected to achieve solid financial returns beginning in 2024-2025.

The 2020 and 2021 overall financial results have certainly provided improved capacity to absorb current and future volatility and uncertainty. This allowed us to allocate \$3 million to respond to residential school unmarked graves in 2021 with a first disbursement recently agreed. A \$10 million line of credit is also in place (2020) to provide for adverse contingencies.

## **GS14 CHALLENGING ANTISEMITISM IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

### **1. What is the issue?**

Antisemitism is an ongoing reality in Canada and around the world. In addition, hate crimes have been on the rise. In Canada, [hate crimes targeting Jewish populations](#) are among the most common types of hate crimes reported by police (13%). The United Church has a responsibility to examine its own complicity in antisemitism and to educate about, and counter, antisemitism within the church and in the world.

We believe God: Creator/Christ/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Raise awareness about how antisemitism manifests itself in The United Church of Canada. This might include education; increasing awareness of theologies and scripture interpretations that contribute to antisemitism; advocacy; and working towards changing antisemitic church practices.

### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Christianity has a long history of antisemitism, based to a large extent on some interpretations of particular scripture passages. Some examples of antisemitism are the beliefs that: the New Testament replaces the Old Testament; Jesus came to abolish the laws of Judaism; Judaism is legalistic, but Christianity is about grace.

These examples of antisemitism are among the ones that manifest themselves in The United Church of Canada. Our key document and statement regarding Jewish-Christian relations in the United Church, *Bearing Faithful Witness*, was adopted by General Council in 2003. The statement acknowledges a history of antisemitism within Christianity as a whole and within the United Church and names antisemitism and anti-Judaism as affronts to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition, the statement calls for all members of the United Church “to be vigilant in resisting antisemitism and anti-Judaism in church and society” and affirms “that the State of Israel has the right to exist in peace and security.” The church needs to continue to learn and challenge ourselves to identify and act against antisemitism in biblical interpretation, worship, study groups, Sunday school, our work for justice, and in all aspects of shared life together. We are reminded in *Bearing Faithful Witness* that “the God whom we know in Jesus Christ is the One who called Sarah and Abraham, gave the Torah to Moses, and put passion for justice in the hearts of the prophets. We believe, above all, in the faithfulness of God.”

As *Bearing Faithful Witness* notes, in a glossary entry in the report on Antisemitism and the State of Israel:

Because of the powerful bond on many levels between the State of Israel and the larger Jewish world, and because of the sensitivities engendered by the Holocaust, severe criticism of the Jewish state is often regarded by pro-Israel Jews and Christians as a mask for antisemitism. Those who make this claim are not always wrong. For one thing, anti-Zionist language has served to disguise antisemitism since the publication of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* at the end of the 19th century.

The problem is to distinguish legitimate criticism from illegitimate assaults driven by a concealed prejudice. Certain signs indicate the difference. Criticisms of Israel that dwell on its Jewish identity rather than the exigencies of power as the cause of its real or imagined misdeeds are highly suspect. Any attempt to demonize Israel as intrinsically evil and thus a nation unlike other nations (although all nations are guilty of evil deeds) betrays its true nature.... Legitimate criticism, on the other hand, concerns itself with specific policies and actions on the part of Israeli leaders and governments, as well as the enduring problems and tensions of Israeli society. Legitimate criticism is always able to distinguish between a regime and a people, between what is transient and what is enduring in the history of a particular country. (p. 11–12, *Bearing Faithful Witness*, 2003).

*Bearing Faithful Witness* is now 20 years old and while it remains relevant and a useful resource, engaging in a new education and action program, with concerted animation throughout the church, would be timely.

### **3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. This proposal engages with some of these principles:

- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion); and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

This proposal is connected to the above two principles. As antisemitism is based on religious and ethno-cultural identity, countering antisemitism is part of becoming an anti-racist denomination. This proposal can also help us live into our church's commitments to becoming an intercultural church as we continue to live into the complex, nuanced, and complicated reality of seeking justice. A commitment to addressing antisemitism needs to be held alongside the church's commitment to seeking just peace in Palestine and Israel.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Secretary proposes that the General Council could:

- Direct the General Secretary to:
  - develop an education program about antisemitism for the United Church;
  - ensure that such a program include actions for advocacy within the United Church and in Canada; and
  - ensure that adequate staff time and resources are made available to animate this education and advocacy program throughout the church.
- Encourage communities of faith (including but not limited to congregations, camps, and networks), to engage with this education and advocacy program.

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).

- [Commitment to becoming an anti-racist church](#)
- Opposing discrimination ([commons.united-church.ca](https://commons.united-church.ca) > What We Believe and Why > Intercultural Ministries > United Church Commitment to Inclusion)
- [Bearing Faithful Witness](#)

### NOM01 APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE (v2)

Origin: Nominations Committee

#### 1. What is the issue?

We believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to use our God-given gifts. Our gifts differ, but all are needed. The practices of Christian spiritual formation call on us to practice individual and group discernment in selecting and affirming leaders for the church.

The structure of the United Church calls for an Executive to be appointed by the General Council.

#### 2. Why is this issue important?

The Executive of the General Council is the decision-making body for the United Church between meetings of the General Council, living into covenantal relationship and mutually accountable with the General Council, regional councils, and communities of faith.

#### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

In its discernment, the Nominations Committee considers diversity with regards to geography, gender identity and ministry stream, as well as the myriad ways that our lives, cultures and

lived experiences make each of us unique. In addition, the committee upholds the church's commitments to the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; those who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQIA, Indigenous, racialized, Francophone or who are active in French ministries; those who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from marginalized communities not named here.

Within this proposed membership are present leaders who hold each of the named equity-identity commitments.

#### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Nominations Committee of the General Council recommends

That the 44th General Council appoint the following members to serve as the Executive of the General Council from the rise of the 44th General Council with terms as noted.

##### Positions by office

- To be elected, *Moderator*
- Richard Bott, *Immediate Past Moderator*
- Michael Blair, *General Secretary*

##### Members to be appointed until the 46th General Council, 2028

1. Michael Caveney
2. M Chorney
3. Catherine Glover
4. Wilson Gonese
5. Marlene Lightning
- ~~6. Alan Lai [Withdrawn]\*~~
7. Kathleen (Kit) Loewen
8. Thea Sheridan-Jonah

\**Vacancy to be filled*

##### Members previously appointed until the 45th General Council, 2025 (for information)

1. Teresa Burnett-Cole, *National Indigenous Council*
2. Mitchell Anderson
3. Kathy Brett
4. Samuel Dansokho
5. Paul Douglas Walfall
6. Jane McDonald
7. Arlyce Schiebout

#### 5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Nominations Committee of the General Council considered 18 nominations for the 8 positions on the General Council Executive. We offer gratitude to all who were willing to take

on this important leadership role. We are blessed by an abundance of excellent, dedicated leadership in this church.

The membership of the General Council Executive aims to reflect the broad diversity of the United Church, with particular attention to its equity commitments and the presence of both lay people and ministry personnel from across the geography of the church. The following areas of knowledge and expertise were identified as well-suited to the work of the Executive: finance, pension, human resources, governance, global or ecumenical experience, different forms of ministry, participation in the francophone church, and theological leadership. A need for additional lay members to join the Executive had also been noted, along with a request for younger leadership.

The Nominations Committee brought to its discernment a commitment to lift up those who have the ability to serve on behalf of the full church, those who have been historically marginalized and those who would provide a complement and balance to the skills and gifts of each other. Throughout their discernment, the Nominations Committee held itself open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

No group of 18 people could ever completely reflect the full diversity of the United Church. It will be the responsibility of the Executive to recognize who is not at the table and actively seek them out in understanding issues and the impact of decisions.

Collectively these 17 people—to be joined by the next Moderator—bring experiences from across the geography of the church, both rural and urban, currently reside in 12 of the 16 Regional Councils along with dual-membership in the Indigenous Church (but with experiences living and serving beyond these 12), speak multiple languages and have lived and worked in several countries. Within this group are present the noted areas of knowledge and expertise, along with the lived experiences of each of the seven equity identities to which the United Church has made a commitment for full participation (people who identify as disabled, racialized, Indigenous, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+, francophones and those active in French ministries, people with primary languages other than English or French, and young adults.) More than any of this, each of those currently serving and those recommended bring the wisdom to listen to and guide the church and a deep and abiding commitment to this United Church of ours.

With gratitude to each of them—and to all who were willing to take on this role—the Nominations Committee enthusiastically recommend these eight members for appointment to the General Council Executive.

### **Short Profiles on Each of the Eight Recommended Members**

**Michael Caveney** - Michael is Lead Minister of Kamloops United Church where he is passionate about social justice ministry and is involved in the local community in food equity, environmental, refugee, pride and reconciliation programs. A native of Toronto, he has ministered in rural, suburban, and inner-city contexts in Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia. Michael is an Ordained Minister.

**M Chorney** - M (she/they) is a 31-year-old Policy Analyst with the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat. In their spare time, they have an extensive background in organizing and planning youth events for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario (Prairie to Pine) Youth for The United Church of Canada; are a member of the Equity and Diversity Committee, and a member of the Prairie to Pine Regional Executive. M is a lay person.

**Catherine Glover** - A profound love of The United Church of Canada and a deep passion for social outreach, right relations, and climate justice, Catherine brings years of dedicated leadership experience both in the health care sector and in the church and the wider community. Her wisdom, her ability to look at issues from a wide lens, along with strong skills in consensus building, will be a great blessing to the work and witness of United Church Executive.

**Wilson Gonese** - In his own words Wilson says he is a humble servant of God who is called to serve always discerning wherever God leads. Wilson brings experience of the church from the perspective of global partners, coming to the United Church originally from Zimbabwe. He has served in congregational ministry as an Ordained Minister in Newfoundland, and currently is serving as a chaplain in the Royal Canadian Navy.

**Marlene Lightning** - Marlene is a leading Elder at the community of Maskwacis in Alberta. She is a long-time servant and member of the United Church in her community and continues to serve as its community of faith chair. She is a great-grandmother, a grandmother, a knowledge keeper, wisdom holder, cultural practitioner, and mentor to many. Marlene is a lay person who previously served on the General Council Executive.

**[Withdrawn] Alan Lai** - Alan brings worldviews that have been informed not only by his ordered service in The United Church of Canada, but also in the Lutheran church. He has guided the formation of ministry personnel with his teaching at both Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Vancouver School of Theology. He is currently the chairperson of the Association of Chinese United Churches, and was part of the United Church's 2015 delegation to China. **[Withdrawn - Alan has recently accepted the role as Principal at the Centre for Christian Studies]**

**Kathleen (Kit) Loewen** - Kit identifies as a settler in/on Treaty 6 territory and Métis homelands. She is an advocate for healthy, just, and affirming communities and communities of faith. Kit's professional experiences include teacher, senior administrator of a large non-profit organization, and consultant. Kit is a lay person who is currently serving as a member-at-large on the Pension Board. Kit names that she brings a lot of questions.

**Thea Sheridan-Jonah** - Thea Sheridan-Jonah is a 19-year-old from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council who just finished her first year of university at UBC, is currently working as the Youth Forum Coordinator, a member of the Pacific Mountain regional executive, and worked as the Youth Social Justice Animator Intern for the General Council Office summer of 2021. Thea is passionate about justice and striving for the pillars of climate, Indigenous, gender justice, anti-racism, and more, and would use her passion and experience as a young person to inform her work on the Executive.



## NOM02 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

**Origin:** Nominations Committee

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to use our God-given gifts. Our gifts differ, but all are needed. The practices of Christian spiritual formation call on us to practise individual and group discernment in selecting and affirming leaders for the church.

The General Council needs to appoint and authorize members to serve on those committees that are directly accountable to the General Council.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

The work of the General Council is dependent on various committees serving on its behalf. The church is enriched by the participation of its members, sharing together their many and diverse gifts.

### 3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

In its discernment, the Nominations Committee considers diversity with regards to geography, gender identity, and ministry stream, as well as the myriad ways that our lives, cultures, and lived experiences make each of us unique. In addition, the committee upholds the church's commitments to the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; those who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+, Indigenous, racialized, or francophone; people active in French ministries; those who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from marginalized communities not named here.

Within these recommended appointments are present leaders from across the United Church's diversity and inclusive of all of the named equity-identity commitments.

### 4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Nominations Committee of the General Council recommends

That the General Council appoint the following members to serve from the rise of the 44th General Council until the 45th General Council, 2025.

#### **Audit Committee (45th General Council, 2025)**

- Robin Pilkey – Lay Person, Shining Waters, *third term, chairperson*
- Randall Hobbs – Lay Person, First Dawn Eastern Edge, *second term*
- Steven Lowden – Lay Person, Horseshoe Falls, *second term*
- Andy Spears – Lay Person, Shining Waters, *second term*

#### **Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (45th General Council, 2025)**

- Alison Etter – Ordained Minister, Regional Council 15, *second term, chairperson*
- Hyuk Cho – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
- Frances Kitson – Candidate, Living Skies

- Andrew Mills – Lay Person, Shining Waters
- Lilian Patey – Ordained Minister, Antler River Watershed
- Ariel Siagan – Ordained Minister, Shining Waters
- Miriam Spies – Ordained Minister, Horseshoe Falls
- Noel Suministrado – Ordained Minister, Prairie to Pine
- Michelle Voss Roberts – Ordained Minister, Shining Waters
- Deborah Elliott – Lay Person, East Central Ontario, second term
- Isaac Kamta – Ordained Minister, Shining Waters, second term
- Lloyd Nyarota – Ordained Minister, Northern Spirit, second term
- Andrew O'Neill – Ordained Minister, Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, second term
- Michelle Owens – Diaconal Minister, Antler River Watershed, second term

### **Judicial Committee**

Appointments until the 47th General Council, 2031

- Lynn Maki – Ordained Minister, Northern Spirit
- George Thurlow – Lay Person, Living Skies
- Chikwa Zahinda – Lay Person, Eastern Ontario Outaouais

Appointments until the 46th General Council, 2028

*(previously appointed, for information)*

- Leslyn Gombakomba – Lay Person, Horseshoe Falls
- Stuart Whitley – Lay Person, Pacific Mountain
- Diana Ginn – Lay Person, Regional Council 15

Appointments until the 45th General Council, 2025

- Sandra Brooks – Lay Person, National Indigenous Council, *as recommended by the National Indigenous Council =*
- James Blanchard – Lay Person, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, *three-year extension of previous appointment*
- David Crawford Smith – Lay Person, Shining Waters *(previously appointed, for information)*

To be appointed as chairperson of the Judicial Committee

- Diana Ginn – Lay Person, Regional Council 15, chairperson

### **Board of Vocation (44th General Council, 2025)**

- Norman Seli – Ordained Minister, Shining Waters, *second term, chairperson*
- Patricia Baker – Diaconal Minister, Prairie to Pine, *second term*
- Jean Bethune – Ordained Minister, Horseshoe Falls, *second term*
- Mark Green – Diaconal Minister, Pacific Mountain, *second term*
- Andrew Lairenge – Ordained Minister, Nakonha:ka, *second term*

- Natasha Pearen – Ordained Minister, Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, *second term*
- Judy Zarubick – Designated Lay Minister, Western Ontario Waterways, *second term*
- Grace EunKyung Lee – Ordained Minister, Antler River Watershed, *first full term*
- Alwin Maben – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain, *first full term*
- Kwang Beom Cho – Ordained Minister, Prairie to Pine
- Michelle Slater – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
- Murray Speer – Ordained Minister, Chinook Winds
- To be determined - National Indigenous Council
- Eileen Antone – Lay Person, Antler River Watershed and Indigenous Church, *second term – as reappointed by the National Indigenous Council (for information)*

#### **Nominations Committee (44th General Council, 2025)**

*Recommended by an ad-hoc Nominations Committee made up of the Moderator, six Regional Council Presidents and the Chair of the National Indigenous Council.*

- Lynella Reid-James – Lay Person, Shining Waters, second term, chairperson
- Katherine Brittain – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
- ~~Cathie Cunningham – Lay Person, National Indigenous Council, second term~~
- Jessica Stevenson – Lay Person, Shining Waters
- YongSeok Baek – Ordained Minister, Horseshoe Falls, second term
- Pat Tooley – Lay Person, Horseshoe Falls, second term
- Cathie Cunningham – Indigenous Church, second term, as recommended by the National Indigenous Council
- To be determined – General Council Executive
- To be determined – General Council Executive

*One additional vacancy still to be filled.*

#### **Anti-Racism Common Table (August 2022–2025) (For Information)**

*Appointed by the General Council Executive and the National Indigenous Council. Offered for information and accountability on work mandated by the General Council.*

- Catherine Inglis – Lay Person, Shining Waters, *co-chair*
- Alcris Limongi – Ordained Minister, Eastern Ontario Outaouais, *second term*
- Ellie Hummel – Ordained Minister, Fundy-St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, *second term*
- Ibi Chaun – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
- Amy Haynes – Candidate for Ordained Ministry, Chinook Winds
- Hannah Kim-Cragg – Lay Person, Shining Waters
- Melanie Ihmels – Candidate for Diaconal Ministry, Pacific Mountain
- Daniel Hauge – Lay Person, Shining Waters
- Tony Snow – Candidate for Ordained Ministry, Chinook Winds, second term
- Russel Burns – Lay Person, Indigenous Church
- To be determined – National Indigenous Council

- To be determined – National Indigenous Council

**5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

See the Nominations Accountability Report for further information on the committee's work and processes this term as well as the equity and diversity commitments of the Nominations Committee.

## Reports

### MODERATOR'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

In the gospel of Matthew, after Jesus asks the question, “But who do you say I am,” Simon, son of Jonah, replies, “You are the Messiah.” After exclaiming that this was Divine revelation, Jesus says to him, “From now on, you’re going to be called the Rock, and on this rock I will build my church.” There is something here that brings me a lot of joy. For me, Simon the Rock—is a person of huge humanity. He seems to be willing to ask the questions, even if it’s going to make him sound ignorant. He’s a cheerleader. He’s loyal and willing to both support and challenge Jesus, even after Jesus has pushed back at him. And, ultimately, Peter wasn’t able to go as far with Jesus as he truly believed he would.

Well, penultimately, really. Because the epistles go on to tell us that Peter recommitted himself to the risen Christ, and then continued to tell Jesus’ story, and invite people on to Jesus’ Way, for the rest of his life.

It was upon this, most humanly human of human beings, with all his greatness and all his faults, that Jesus exclaims will be the foundation of the “gathering of those called” (as Matthew’s gospel put it, using the word “ecclesia”)—the church.

What I have experienced over the past four years as Moderator has made it clear to me that we, The United Church of Canada, are truly inheritors of Peter’s legacies—both in our very human humanness, and in our hard work to be foundation for this part of Christ’s church.

If I were to characterize what this has meant in this triennium+1, I think it would best be described as creativity in the midst of chaos!

The 43rd General Council approved the remits that allowed the denomination to move to its current council structure. In the months that followed, this meant changes not only for General Council and regional council staff, but also for everyone who was involved in the governing processes of the denomination. Ministry personnel in communities of faith, folks involved in the workings of regional councils, and those involved in General Council committees found the work, and how we were going to do it, changed. A good amount of my ministry in the first two years was travel associated with connecting with newly formed regional councils, celebrating with them the new possibilities that this format might offer us.

Transition was definitely true for the General Council Executive, which moved from being a body of over 60 people to a group of 18. These 18 people worked to get to know one another in ways that allowed for honest and open communication as we navigated the work before us. As you will see from the General Council Executive’s Accountability Report, there have been parts we have been able to navigate, and others that the next iteration of the Executive will need to work on. I am deeply thankful for the wisdom and energy each member of the GCE brought to our ministry.

Another part of the church that has been deeply affected by the structural changes of the denomination is the Indigenous Church. In the summer of 2019 the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering brought together the National Indigenous Council and the National Indigenous Elders Council. Since that time, the National Indigenous Council has been growing its understanding of how to best help Indigenous communities across the land grow in their ministries and life together. While the 43rd General Council accepted the Indigenous Caretakers' Calls to the Church and the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as foundational to the relationship between the settler/newcomer and Indigenous parts of the church, how we live that out together continues to be a work in progress. I am deeply thankful for the members of the National Indigenous Council who have put so much energy into helping this holy work to grow. I have also been extremely fortunate to have experienced the wisdom and spiritual guidance offered by the Elders of the National Indigenous Elders Council—and am deeply thankful for each of the Elders. Not only have they been willing to share with me when I have come to them with concerns and questions as the Moderator, they have also given guidance as the Elders present at the gatherings of the General Council Executive, at recalled gatherings of the 43rd General Council, and here at the 44th General Council. The United Church of Canada, as a whole, continues to need to work on the relationships between the Indigenous Church and the settler/newcomer church. As importantly, the settler/newcomer part of The United Church of Canada has a great deal of additional work to do, not only on journeying in a good way in the work of reconciliation, but also on understanding what reparation must look like in our context.

During the first two years of the triennium, I was invited to take time to explore our denomination's desire to continue to become an intercultural church and a church committing itself to recognize and root out its systemic and ongoing racism. The opportunity to meet with The United Church of Canada's Black Clergy Network, with a group that was the precursor to the Korean Ministries Network, with groups in two regions who have been working on building intercultural communities of faith for years both made me thankful for the willingness of racialized ministry personnel and lay people to engage with the rest of the denomination, but also the depth of the work that the church continues to need to do to respond to racism and racial discrimination both inside the church and in the wider world.

During this term, I have had the chance to connect with a number of our partners in ministry. Both individual and group meetings with our siblings in leadership in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as well as with our ecumenical partners through the Canadian Council of Churches, has led me to understand that there is a desire to be the body of Christ, together. While we don't search for organic union, as we have in earlier times in our history, communities of faith, area gatherings of ministries, and denominational leaders are constantly searching for ways of working with each other in those areas in which we can work together—as well as trying to understand each other in those areas in which we differ.

The opportunity was given to me to see how we are living into our worldwide partnerships. Travelling to meet our global partners in the Philippines, I had the chance to understand how

important those relationships are, in both directions. In the summer of 2019, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA and Canada agreed to enter into full communion partnership with us. With their leadership, and with the leadership of another of our full communion partners—the United Church of Christ (USA)—I travelled to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India. This time together offered me the chance to see how similar our understandings are around relationships with global partners. I look forward to experiencing where all of these partnerships will help us to grow in the coming years.

The first two years of this ministry gave the opportunity to connect with many groups: with youth gatherings, with ministry personnel groups in study and retreat, with the United Church chaplains who serve with the Canadian Armed Forces, with students and faculty at a number of the theological schools connected to The United Church of Canada, with individual communities of faith and groups of communities of faith. During these times together, I had the chance to listen to people's fears and joys about their ministries, and the wonderings they had about what the future might hold. In many of these conversations, we had the chance to explore something that I brought with me to this role—one way to explore discipleship in a U.N.I.T.E.D. context: *Uplifted* by God's love, *Nourished* through worship, *Inspired* through scripture, *Transformed* through prayer, *Empowered* through spiritual friendships, *Developed* through service. These conversations gave me a glimpse into how ministry is being lived in and through The United Church of Canada.

Through this time, I worked to connect with the church through social media (ModeratorRichardBott on facebook and richardbott on Instagram), and with videos in both English and French on The United Church of Canada's YouTube channel. The gifts of so many of the General Council staff, especially those in Worship, Communications, Ministries in French, and the Office of the Moderator and General Secretary were a godsend for this work.

And then—the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality around the world. As we all know, it hit in ways that made it impossible for communities of faith to be able to come together in ways that were safe. As researchers and scientists learned more about the virus, culminating in both vaccines and therapeutics against it, public health officials offered guidance that United Church communities of faith followed closely. Even as I write this report, this pandemic continues to be a force in the world, with a wave of the Omicron variant increasing case numbers to the point that there are concerns about hospitals' ability to respond. The United Church of Canada has worked to listen to the science and continues to support vaccine justice, to work against the hoarding of vaccines by financial wealthy countries, and to ensure that people everywhere have access to vaccines.

Like many clergy, I found myself turning my home into an online studio. At the beginning of the pandemic, I worked to make myself as accessible as possible to ministry colleagues in communities of faith, with increased connection on social media, with daily prayer gatherings on Zoom, and with weekly offerings of online worship services for the first eight weeks of the initial lockdown of the pandemic. My hope was to be able to use the resources at my disposal to create space for ministry colleagues and communities of faith until they had what they

needed to be able to continue their ministries in their communities. I have been in awe of how communities of faith—congregations, camps, community ministries—have found ways to faithfully live out Christ’s call to love God, and their neighbour as themselves, in the midst of all of this. Communities of faith banded together, sharing the resources they had with one another. Ministry personnel reached out to one another and found support with and in one another. People have met for worship online, in the front yard of the church building, in the bush, in the snow, back in the building, then by telephone. It has been a time of constant shifting of what we can and can’t do, and where and how we can and can’t do it.

The church has responded magnificently. Not only in individual communities of faith but also in our corporate expressions. Joining with siblings in other denominations and friends in the public sphere, there’s a network working on a universal guaranteed income. At the call of our global partners in Korea, another network is working on supporting a specific initiative for peace in the Korean Peninsula. These are just two of the many initiatives that have continued to build momentum during this time.

But the pandemic has also caused great pain, not only in deaths of beloved community members, but also in the physical distancing that has often caused disconnection and increased stress and struggles with individual and corporate mental health. It has also forced us to recognize that the world we live in is worlds away from the one we lived in two years ago, let alone five or twenty-five years ago. How we live out our ministries now, and how we plan for the shape of ministry two, five, or twenty-five years from now, needs to be at the forefront of our thoughts.

It is my hope that the work that the General Council Executive did, at the request of the 43rd General Council, and with the guidance of General Secretary Michael Blair, to help the church articulate its understanding of its call and vision will help us in our exploration and in our actions. We had the chance to listen to so many people in, and connected to, the denomination in Moderator Town Hall gatherings, and circles with different parts of the Indigenous Church; with focus groups of people in various ministries and interests, and with ecumenical partners. All of that work culminated in the 43rd General Council, at its annual meeting in 2021, approving this understanding:

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

Deep Spirituality: Bold Discipleship: Daring Justice

Not only will this guide the General Secretary in the shaping of General Council staff ministries, this is also part of the lens through which *this* General Council is exploring its work. I’ve heard ministry personnel and members of communities of faith excited by these words, ready to explore what they mean in their own contexts. There is definitely excitement about the possibilities they open us to.



As we get ready to come to the 100th Anniversary of church union that brought The United Church of Canada into being, I believe there is a great deal of hope and joy and wonder in the fact that, for all our human humanness, Christ continues to build on, and in, and with us.

I would close this report with an overwhelming sense of gratitude for each and every person that I have come into contact with over this triennium. There are some who have been with me day in and day out, people without whom I would have been completely lost. Some have moved on from their ministries with the General Council Office, in retirement or to other places in their vocations. Others will continue to support the work of the church and the work of the new Moderator. I will be forever thankful that they, people across this church, as well as siblings in other denominational communities have held me in tangible prayer, love, and action.

As Paul wrote to the disciples in Philippi:

Rejoice in Christ always—again, I say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone. Christ is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen...

Richard Bott  
Moderator

## ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Origin: General Secretary

### Executive Summary

My accountability report for General Council covers the timeframe from the rise of the 43rd General Council in 2018 to the end of 2021. I have been in the role of General Secretary since the retirement of Nora Sanders in November 2020. If you wish to review her accountability reports they can be found as part of the materials available for [General Council Executive meetings](#) from 2018 to 2020. The General Secretary's role is to oversee the work mandated by the General Council through the General Council Office while supporting the regional councils as well.

During this quadrennium, the church continued to focus on reconciliation and right relations with the Indigenous Church as it undertook its formation and approach to governance. Since the confirmation of children's graves on the sites of several former residential schools, the church's Bringing the Children Home initiative is reaching out to the communities affected and offering financial and archival support to communities to identify children who may be buried on former school sites.

The General Council Office was downsized in 2020 to account for a changing financial picture. This was followed by a major structural review and strategic plan. The strategic plan was approved in 2021, by the General Council Executive, and will be implemented in 2022.

The creation of the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) was one of the most significant developments over the quadrennium. UPRC stems from over a decade of work by various church bodies to try to offer a comprehensive and socially relevant approach to redeveloping church property across the country. UPRC is working in close collaboration with communities of faith, regional councils, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and municipalities to support more affordable housing.

And overhanging all the work is the pandemic that has altered the lives of everyone and spurred the church technologically, including moving the 44th General Council to become a completely online event: the first in the church's history. It turned the triennium into a quadrennium.

Our work is steering towards 2025, the church's centenary, embodying deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice.

### Transition

This is my first report to you as General Secretary, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be serving you in this capacity. It has been an interesting season to step into this role as the General Secretary. The COVID-19 pandemic has disoriented and discombobulated us. All the familiar things have changed. We have become accustomed to terms such as pivoting, Zooming, hybrid, virtual, "You are muted," "Can you see me?" "How do I share my screen?"

It has been difficult in some significant ways and it seems relentless. COVID-19 has been a season of unveiling the inequities—not just globally but also within our context here in Canada. We have come to see the impact of the sin and violence of racism and racial inequities, as well as the violence of the colonial enterprise on Indigenous communities. We no longer know what is “normal.”

Admitting the difficulties and uncertainties, we have discovered that we do have the capacity to adapt and to embrace change and be creative. This meeting is an example of the change and adaptation. Trust we will be able to engage knowing that as we affirm, “We are not alone, God is with us!”

In this report I will be drawing from the Sankofa tradition. The Sankofa bird has become associated with the journey of people of African descent. It comes from the Akan tradition, with the bird moving forward but its head looking backward, with the idea that our forward movement is shaped by the gifts of the past.

This report is in two parts. First, a look back on some of the work that we have been involved in. It will be an accounting of sorts for the ministry of the denomination. You can find accountability reports for the quadrennium in the [United Church Commons](#). The second part will offer some perspective for the future as we continue to live into the call to become the Beloved Community.

During the quadrennium, we have been living into the new structure of the church. The regional councils have been working through the transition with courage and grace. Although COVID-19 provided some challenges, for the most part all the regions have found their footing. In 2024, we will be engaging a thorough review of the new structure. (*Regional Council Reports will be available in June of 2022.*)

The Office of Vocation, led by Jenney Stephens, has been working well. The Board of Vocation, chaired by Norm Seli, has worked diligently to develop an effective system to support the work (see the [report of the Board of Vocation](#) as part of these meeting materials).

During this quadrennium, we also experienced change in the role of the General Secretary. We offer our deep appreciation to Nora Sanders for her faithful and courageous leadership. At the annual meeting of General Council 43, held in October of 2020, we were able to celebrate Nora’s ministry. Because of COVID-19 and the postponement of General Council 44, the Moderator and Executive members were asked to serve an additional year. It has made for a full and challenging time for the Executive. We are grateful for the leadership and ministry of our Moderator the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott.

We have continued to journey with the Indigenous Church in understanding the implication of the Caretakers’ [Calls to the Church](#) (see report available for download at the bottom of the linked webpage). The commitment to [becoming an anti-racist church](#) continues to deepen under the leadership of Adele Halliday and the Anti-Racism Common Table (see report on the [Commons](#)).

There have been some challenging issues related to pension and benefits. Decisions have been made and will continue to be required to enable us to build a sustainable system.

### **Caretakers' Calls to the Church**

The [Calls to the Church](#) presented to the church by the Aboriginal Ministries Council and accepted by the 43rd General Council in 2018 continue to underpin the church's work of reconciliation. With the organizational changes that followed from the 42nd General Council remits, the Indigenous Church was set free of the earlier structures to choose its own path alongside and within The United Church of Canada.

The National Indigenous Organization was approved in 2019 as the body that represents the interests of Indigenous communities of faith, holding up new models for ministry. The National Indigenous Organization was given the same powers and responsibilities as a regional council within The United Church of Canada. The National Indigenous Council, the executive of the National Indigenous Organization, the General Council Executive, as the executive of the denominational council, and the General Secretary have been working to further clarify the relationship between the Executive and the Council. That work is ongoing as we seek to live with integrity into our commitments and work at the process of decolonization.

### **Bringing the Children Home**

For many Canadians, reports of unmarked and undocumented burial sites on the grounds of former residential schools in the spring of 2021 came as a shock. For Indigenous people, it was no surprise. Residential school survivors and their families had known and spoken of these burial sites since before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was underway. It was clear that settler Canadians were not aware of this trauma, and the United Church's first response was to acknowledge this and to take an approach of mourning and respect.

The church also responded with the [Bringing the Children Home](#) initiative as part of its ongoing commitment to reparation and to our duty of care called for in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Calls to Action 73–76](#) (download at bottom of linked webpage).

This initiative has three main components:

- Should they wish it, making funds available to Indigenous communities to support the work of identifying unmarked graves, knowledge gathering, commemoration, and ceremony to honour the children who did not return home from these residential institutions.
- Should they wish it, direct provision of all United Church archival records related to residential institutions to these communities.
- Archival and oral history work to create a document index and narrative of all the information we have related to students' deaths and burial sites.

The General Council Executive on July 20, 2021, approved an initial \$3 million to fund this work. The United Church of Canada Foundation is supporting the archival portion of the initiative that will continue as long as it is needed and requested by Indigenous communities.

The Moderator and I, with support from staff in the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Unit, are currently in a process of dialogue with affected communities to determine how this initiative will move forward.

### **COVID-19**

The quadrennium was only a few months old when the pandemic was declared. The Finance Unit and the United Church Foundation worked quickly to secure \$3 million in emergency funding for communities of faith who saw their givings drop and tenants vacate, as well as arranging for a \$10 million line of credit through the bank to offer communities of faith bridge financing for their recurring expenses.

The Finance Unit and the Communications Unit put together a series of weekly webinars for treasurers trying to navigate the shifting rules for interim government support for salaries and rents. Those webinars were so successful, they have continued monthly since the fall of 2020. The Moderator also conducted a series of national worship services as an alternative for communities of faith who were in the throes of a technological shift they had never contemplated. Within a few months, communities of faith had made the transition, in many cases reporting more people online than in the pews.

The 2017 consolidation of the General Council Office from three floors to one floor necessitated a leap in technology. Paired with a continuing push to reduce mailing and paper costs by moving more transactions online, the General Council Office was in a strong position to maintain its donation platforms. The technology investments also helped staff make the sudden move from office to home workspaces.

### **Staff Transitions**

My report is only for part of the quadrennium as I was appointed General Secretary following Nora Sanders' retirement in November 2020. Previously, as part of the realignment of the General Council Office, the joint position of the President of The United Church of Canada Foundation and Executive Minister, Philanthropy, was eliminated, pending a review of the relationship between the denomination and the Foundation. This review, by consultants with Optimus SBR, was part of their larger report referred to below.

In the spring of 2021, Sarah Charters was appointed into the new, realigned position as the Foundation's President and Executive Officer of Philanthropy. Adele Halliday, an educator and Church in Mission staff person with responsibilities for intercultural ministries, including persons with disabilities, was appointed the church's first Anti-Racism and Equity Officer in October 2020. We later changed the title to Anti-Racism and Equity Lead following significant feedback about the use of the term "Officer." Rev. Murray Pruden, formerly staff with Pacific Mountain Regional Council, became the Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries and Justice,

following the interim appointment of Cheryl Jourdain, after the departure of Rev. Maggie Dieter in September 2019. Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu, program co-ordinator for Southern Africa and South Asia partnerships, was appointed as Executive Minister, Church in Mission.

And we said goodbye in 2021 to three colleagues who have long served the church and are now headed into retirement. Rev. John Young, Executive Minister Theological Leadership, retired in June and is taking a short furlough as Emmanuel College's interim Principal until June 2022; Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball was appointed in November to fill the role. Kathy McDonald, legal counsel, retired in August, and Nicole Treksler took up the position in December. And Catherine Rodd, Executive Officer, Communications, retired at the end of the year.

### **Optimus Report**

Facing a \$500,000 deficit in 2019 and nearly \$2 million in 2020, Nora Sanders commissioned a review by Optimus SBR, a Toronto-based management consulting firm, and implemented a series of its recommendations for each of the General Council Office units, which included re-evaluating the relationship between the denominational office and the Foundation as well.

As the General Council Office offers a mix of mandatory work—supporting the IT infrastructure of the office and the regional councils, for instance—and elective work—such as social justice initiatives—the report stressed the need to approach the work of the office in a holistic and strategic manner. Part of this is through matching expenditures to results, although those are not measured in traditional revenue terms for every program. Clear performance metrics at the beginning are crucial to evaluation criteria at the conclusion.

At the outset of my tenure as General Secretary, taking my cues from the report, I initiated an overall strategic planning process for the office that would naturally spill into values for the denomination as a whole. The final report of the Strategic Planning Working Group was approved by the General Council Executive in November 2021, and the operational plan is underway for the office's work.

The vision statement that I speak more fully about elsewhere in the report and underlines all these future plans is:

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

### **Developing Staff Capacity**

In addition to supporting staff through the rapidly evolving technological changes that impact their work, the Human Resources (HR) team in the Ministry and Employment Unit is leading on staff training in areas of management training. Training includes best practices for managing staff compassionately, and tools for advancing the denomination's values, particularly around equity, diversity, and inclusion. The team is also leading the task force responding to the COVID-19 crisis, implementing safety protocols, policy development, and planning the transition to the new realities of hybrid working environments, alternating between office and home office.

The HR team has also worked to renew hiring and recruitment practices across the organization. Starting in 2021, all executive recruitment has been led by the HR team. An executive recruitment process was developed around a leadership competency model that articulates the values and skills needed by senior leaders and managers. The review of recruitment and selection will continue in 2022 to ensure that recruitment and selection for staff positions also goes through a fair and rigorous process. As the nature of staff responsibilities has changed over the years, the compensation and categorization tools have been renewed to ensure that compensation is managed equitably. This work was completed in the fall of 2021.

The Payroll team has also supported the rollout of an upgrade to the ADP payroll system to the church's 2000+ communities of faith. The migration to TeamPay is one of many major platform transitions that are expected to streamline human resources and payroll.

### **United Property Resource Corporation**

The United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) is now fully funded through a United Church of Canada investment of \$10 million and will not require additional funding from the United Church.

UPRC also has received the full \$20 million credit facility from the CHMC Affordable Housing Innovation Fund. This is funding that would not otherwise be available to congregations and allows the United Church to maintain stewardship of the property for future generations, along with ensuring a United Church presence will remain at the heart of these communities.

UPRC continues to refine its focus on building affordable rental housing with community space across Canada and addressing the climate crisis through environmentally responsible building practices aimed at net-zero carbon emissions. UPRC's model will prioritize Indigenous and social enterprises, working in collaboration with advisers in these areas.

To date UPRC services have been requested by over 100 communities of faith, from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Victoria, British Columbia. UPRC currently has 22 active projects in the pre-development/municipal approval process, representing over 2,300 total rental units. It is anticipated that four projects will have shovels in the ground in 2022.

From a governance perspective, General Council's ongoing involvement will be that of sole shareholder. UPRC has been working with the Canada Revenue Agency to develop a holding structure for the property that will see the property transferred to a Trust with the congregation as the beneficiary of the Trust, aligning with the polity and policies of property in the United Church and regional councils.

### **The United Church of Canada Act**

The project to update The United Church of Canada Acts across Canada continues. The progress was a little delayed due to COVID, but provincial legislatures have generally resumed regular activities and committees are continuing to meet, some now online. In recent months, the General Secretary has met virtually with legislative committees in both Alberta and British

Columbia to explain the denominational restructuring and respond to questions about it. Out of the 11 jurisdictions where legislation requires amendment, seven are completed and the remaining four are in progress.

### **Embracing the Spirit and The United Church of Canada Foundation Grants**

Through the quadrennium, Embracing the Spirit, an initiative to foster innovation and spiritual growth across the church, saw different trends emerge from communities of faith seeking their support. Grants are administered through the joint-grants committee of the Foundation.

In 2018, many communities requested funds to create community hubs, where church and other social and entrepreneurial organizations could come together to provide a space for economic and social improvement. The application process was streamlined in 2019 as the Foundation moved to a digital platform, with everything in one location and the ability for each side to see how the application is proceeding. In 2020, the pandemic and the move to online worship services and meetings accelerated the growth, with an increase in grant requests for tech upgrades in communities of faith. That trend continued through 2021.

#### **2018–2021 Total**

- \$4,297,592.67 total to 437 communities of faith, United Church partners, and leaders (lay and ordained)
- Seeds of Hope: 263 grants totalling \$2,392,590
- Scholarships: 106 grants totalling \$360,902.67
- New Ministries: 68 grants totalling \$1,544,100

The full scope of Embracing the Spirit's work and its success stories can be found on [an interactive map](#) that is regularly updated.

### **The Journey So Far**

As the 39th General Council ended in August of 2006, the Commissioners issued a call to the church. The call, entitled [A Call to Purpose: a message from the church to the church](#), raised the question, "What purpose lies at the heart of the United Church in the beginning of its third generation?" This question has been part of the journey of the church over the past 15 years.

Over that time the church has committed itself to be an intercultural and anti-racist denomination; it has continued its journey of living into its 1988 and 1996 apologies to the Indigenous communities with the establishment of the National Indigenous Circle and is committed to live authentically into the [Caretakers Calls to the Church](#). It has restructured itself, providing opportunity for every community of faith to contribute to the life and ministry of the church through assessment, and has clarified the roles of the various councils. In addition, the church committed to spending a percentage of its resources to experiment with new expressions of ministry through the Embracing the Spirit initiative.

The General Council in 2006, as it reflected on the experience of the council and the question of the future of the church, identified four themes. The first was *a longing for a deeper*



*relationship with God*; secondly was for a *deeper connection with each other*; thirdly, was a *realization of the brokenness, pain, and fear* that was present in the life of the church; and finally, an appreciation that the *church's spirituality and prophetic voice* sprang from one source and lived in one body. Over this past year as we have engaged in a process of consultation about a purpose and vision statement, we have heard similar themes, as has the General Council Executive.

The 2021 annual meeting of the 43rd General Council affirmed these words, **Deep Spirituality: Bold Discipleship: Daring Justice**, as the purpose statement for the church. In doing so we recognize that these are statements for our time ([A Song of Faith](#)). Every part of the church will be invited to explore the implication of the purpose and vision statement for their ministry and engagement.

In conjunction with the process of identifying a purpose and vision statement for the church, the Executive engaged the development of a strategic plan building on the statements. The strategic plan aims to shape the work of the General Council Office. The plan named five objectives:

- ***Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship:*** Renew a vision of leadership based on the emerging mission of the denomination—deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice--and align discernment, recruitment, training, and support of ordered and lay leadership to this vision.
- ***Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World:*** Make meaningful collective progress on Indigenous justice, racial equity, and LGBTQIP2SAA rights both in the church and world, while demonstrably deepening bold effective solidarity on other justice issues, through ecumenical collaboration and denominational networking.
- ***Nurture Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources:*** Significantly increase denominational capacity and will to make decisions on properties and resources focused on the ministry of the whole church, enhancing equity, sustainability, right relations, and administrative efficiency and effectiveness.
- ***Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments:*** Amplify and integrate current initiatives in a bold, hopeful denominational climate strategy that accelerates reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030.
- ***Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith:*** Develop and implement effective and connected regional and national strategies that result in growth within existing ministries, and by seeding and sustaining new ministries and communities of faith.

These objectives will be developed into initiatives and shape the development of an operational plan. As General Secretary I will be reporting on how we are engaging the plan.

### Anti-Racism

One of the critical deliverables for this season is the [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#). The Anti-Racism Common Table has worked on an action plan that has been adopted and integrated into the

strategic plan with initiatives building on the commitments to becoming an anti-racist and intercultural church.

The national Anti-Racism Action Plan is a three-year strategy for the whole church. It will have goals that will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis. The goals will be the same across the church; however, they may be implemented differently depending on the regional and local context. Nationally, the goals will be accompanied by clear activities, milestones, and indicators as part of the strategic plan. For others, there will be suggested activities that are descriptive (not prescriptive), and parts of the church will be supported in the development of their own action strategies.

There are five theme areas that will be included in the Anti-Racism Action Plan. There is no “order” to these themes, and they are not listed by a hierarchy. These themes are:

- **Theology:** exploring our understandings of God, and challenging the ways in which current dominant belief system might enable racism and White supremacy; creating space to better recognize and honour theological perspectives that have existed over many years and that have been developed by diverse Christian theologians.
- **Healing and Accountability:** racism harms us all, regardless of racial identity. This will explore healing process from racial trauma for Indigenous and racialized people, and also for White church members to repair relationships damaged by White supremacy and settler colonialism.
- **Governance:** this encompasses the relationships, processes, structures, and policies where decision-making and leadership are situated throughout the church.
- **Education and Awareness:** continued opportunities for learning are necessary for church members to be able to better understand deconstruct racism and other systems of oppression.
- **Advocacy:** is a vehicle for the church to work in solidarity with social and racial justice movements that impact church members.

## Towards 2025

As we look to the celebration of our centennial in 2025, we realize the significant part United Church union has played in the imagination of the global ecumenical movement. As we celebrate, we will also be celebrating with the over 70 united and uniting denominations around the world. We have much to both celebrate and lament as a denomination out of the richness of our past, and much to anticipate as God continues to propel us into God’s future for us as the people of God.

The Executive has appointed a small working group chaired by the Moderator, Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, to help the church imagine the variety of ways to mark our history. We are also anticipating that we will finally relocate the General Council Office to 300 Bloor Street West, Toronto, in the redeveloped Bloor Street United Church building. We are working through the final stages of agreement with a couple of denominations with whom we might be able to share the space.

As I imagine the days ahead, I envision a church celebrating and living into a new vibrancy as the *Beloved Community*. I see the experimentation happening in [Ministries in French](#), the growth of our engagement with [migrant churches](#), the scaling up of the learnings for the experimentation from the [Embracing the Spirit](#) initiatives, virtual hybrid communities, the continuing work of [Faithful Footprints](#), the commitment to the sustainability of the United Church as represented by the work of the [United Property Resource Corporation](#), a re-energized ministry leadership engaging the people of the United Church in seeking the welfare of their ministry context as bold disciples of Jesus, all contributing to the renewed vibrancy.

And so, as we move towards 2025, we continue to pray “propel us into your future, rooted in the richness of our past.” Amen.

Thank you for the privilege to exercise God’s call on my life in the service of our denomination.

Michael Blair  
General Secretary

## EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

### Origin: Executive of the 43rd General Council

Most of the operational decisions of the Executive are captured in the other reports in this workbook. This report attempts to capture the ways in which the Executive worked to make those decisions and the values that underpinned them. The Executive wanted to set an example of good governance as the church embarked on its most significant restructuring since 1925.

With the rise of the 43rd General Council in July 2018, the new Executive—first as the Executive-elect, and then as the Executive effective January 1, 2019—began its work as a smaller body, meeting more often. With a membership of 18, drawn from across the church, it agreed to meet four times each year, with the majority of its meetings online. The arrival of the pandemic in 2020 moved all meetings online and extended the terms for all members and the Moderator by a year once the date of the 44th General Council was moved from 2021 to 2022.

In total this Executive met 21 times over the quadrennium, with numerous preparatory learning sessions in addition. This allowed members to read material well in advance, ask questions of the resource people, and consider the longer-term effects of their decisions on the church.

This differently configured Executive also elected to work in a new way. Initially, it took time to hone its working principles of equity, trust, and transparency.

From the outset, the Executive set its priorities to provide connection within the conciliar church, to work in an open and transparent manner and communicate with the other councils of the church and the membership. Recognizing that the role of governorship holds significant power and that power needs to be exercised responsibly, the Executive also worked with the knowledge of the church's continuing efforts to decolonize its policies and practices.

An Elder was asked to attend each meeting to offer advice and wisdom. The Executive also decided that having an Equity Support Team at each meeting was crucial to equitable processes and decision-making of its work and meetings. The members of the Equity Support Team were drawn from the Executive in a rotation. The Equity Support Team offered back to the Executive observations on whose voices were being heard, whose voices were missing, and suggestions for greater equity in meeting processes.

The Executive's work was impacted by the final hours of the 43rd General Council, when many racialized ministers and members shared their experiences of racism in the church. Becoming an anti-racist denomination was a major priority. The Executive established a small working group in addition to the existing White Privilege Working Group and the two reference groups. In October 2020 the General Council committed the church to becoming an anti-racist denomination. The General Secretary created a position, Anti-Racism and Equity Officer (later Lead). The existing groups were disbanded, and a Common Table was created to direct the work under the shared authority of the Executive and the National Indigenous Council. The work will take time and significant effort. The General Secretary has set out the pillars and the Common Table's Anti-Racism Action Plan in his report.

The Executive is conscious that it represents all the church yet also walks in step with the National Indigenous Council as it supports the Indigenous Church. A meeting between the two governing bodies was held in January 2021 to share values and start to build relationships.

As a result of a consultant's report by Yves Savoie & Associates, commissioned by former General Secretary Nora Sanders, the Executive approved a new relationship agreement between the General Council Office and The United Church of Canada Foundation. This agreement builds on past agreements and solidifies a collaborative working partnership that will create new opportunities to support revenue generation to sustain the work of the church.

In another consultant's report, this one by Optimus SBR, referred to in the General Secretary's report, the outcome was to undertake a strategic review of the General Council Office, which has seen successive downsizings over the years. With a new structure in place and a new Executive pledged to leading with purpose, gleaning the will of the church and setting priorities were an important first step in aligning the work of the General Council Office. The intense 10-month process involved consultations with leadership across the church, resulting in the development of a strategic plan that the Executive approved in November 2021. The plan will shape the work of the General Council Office over the next three years. The General Secretary's report has an excellent synopsis, and the operational plan will be shared with the new Executive of the 44th General Council in the fall of 2022.

### **Finance Advisory Committee**

The Finance Advisory Committee is the only standing committee of the Executive. The committee's role is to review and evaluate the General Council Office's financial and risk management plans and activities. The committee makes recommendations that enable the General Council Executive members to have a clear understanding of finances and risks in order to enhance their decision-making. For most of the quadrennium, the committee met monthly.

With the General Council ratification of remits in 2018, this adjusted triennium began with a focus on implementing the new funding model and new structures across the church. The transition continues with ongoing learning and refinements to our various systems and processes. This task in itself would have entailed managing considerable uncertainty, variability, and multiple financial scenarios.

However, with the onset of the pandemic, navigating ever-changing circumstances and uncertainty became the predominant theme for this cycle. 2019 was devoted to the implementation of new structures, which included orientation of new governors, major upgrades to information systems, sorting out various transition-related issues, obtaining various regulatory approvals, and overall change management for staff and volunteers alike. The 2020s major stock market crash and rebound early in the year, followed immediately by the pandemic closures and impacts, persist to time of writing. Federal emergency wage subsidies helped offset revenue shortfalls across the church.

Technology investments helped facilitate staff working from home and volunteers meeting almost exclusively by electronic means. A number of key IT initiatives were completed in 2021,

including cloud-based accounting and a donor management system; some projects will continue into 2022.

The committee focused considerable effort on implementing the new funding model, the related denominational assessment process, and resulting revenue forecasts. Included in this was monitoring the impact on Mission & Service giving. The Finance Advisory Committee worked with the Audit Committee to support efforts to develop an overall risk management framework—broadening the risk perspective from purely financial measures. Broader risk management will be a key lens going forward. As always, the committee reviewed annual operating budget proposals, including the difficult decision to continue cost reduction through staff and grant reductions in 2020. The committee also devoted considerable effort towards the financial elements and projections related to the new strategic plan.

The Treasury Investment Committee continued to steward our investment holdings, with a particular focus on responsible investing and active shareholder engagement in partnership with SHARE. Key themes continue to be climate change and reconciliation. Having divested \$3.5 million in fossil fuel holdings in 2015, we now hold more than four times that amount in thematic holdings focused on sustainable development and a just transition. Investment results can be volatile, but our chosen managers consistently exceeded benchmarks over the period. After a flat year in 2018, annual returns exceeded 10% in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

We would highlight a few key transactions and/or decisions that provide a foundation for implementing the new strategic plan.

- The United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) was established in 2019 with seed funding totalling \$10 million to support the redevelopment of church properties, with a particular focus on the creation of affordable housing. UPRC is growing as hoped and expected to generate an ongoing return beginning in 2024.
- A \$10 million line of credit was obtained in 2020 as a contingency against longer-term pandemic impacts. This line of credit has not been utilized, but having the facility in place is prudent because obtaining credit during an emergency is much more difficult.
- A \$3 million commitment was made in 2021 in support of uncovering the unmarked and undocumented burial sites on the former residential schools, further investigation, and initiatives related to reconciliation.
- Upon review of the first pilot phases launched in 2018, the [Faithful Footprints](#) program was expanded and a funding commitment made through 2023 (subject to ongoing review and milestone achievement),
- Regional council funding assessment funding support has been four years (2019–2022) instead of the original two years. In addition, the Executive approved a one-year extension in meeting congregation target assessment for those congregations facing larger increases.
- These actions were made possible by better-than-expected financial results, with investment returns and a number of extraordinary items offsetting pandemic-related shortfalls.

As the church seeks to implement a new strategic plan, the Finance Committee again reminds commissioners to be particularly cognizant of the need to plan for financial uncertainty and variability as well as cost reduction during a period of unprecedented change for our church. With over 80% of regional and denominational council funding coming from our congregations, governors need to remain current and cognizant of congregational financial health and ability to fund the work of the broader church.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the church during these past four years. A special thanks to the Moderator, the Right Rev. Richard Bott, for his leadership; and to Deborah Richards, chair of the Business Planning group.

## **INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES REPORT: INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES AND JUSTICE/NATIONAL INDIGENOUS COUNCIL**

**Origin: The Office of Indigenous Ministries and Justice**

### **Executive Summary - Rev. Murray Pruden, Executive Minister Indigenous Ministries and Justice**

As we work and pray together as a United Church there has been so much change these last few seasons and years within the Indigenous United Church and our Circle of Indigenous Nations. Change is so impactful and has both positive and negative effects. And as the current events that we live in impact our daily lives, we still continue the work as faithful and loving people and people of the land. Together, we stand and support one another to have strong voices and the ability to continue to live in a good way.

In 2018, we followed the movement with the change in structure of the United Church. There was much concern with the change as it took away a process for all of our communities of faith (CoFs). There was a sense of loss in what the Indigenous Church community had accomplished over the prior 30+ years with the ideals of being self-sustaining. This initiated a time of mourning for many CoFs within the Indigenous Church structure. Some CoFs placed a four-year period of mourning to gather strength and understanding in the loss of identity. But, we also continued the needed work to be a voice in this new United Church structure and build on what identifies us as the spiritual and placed people of the many Nations on this great land we call home. And GC43 gave us the means to evaluate the greater church and the General Council on meeting the needs we set out in the Calls to the Church.

There are nine calls that we created by a Circle of our membership giving direction of our needs as an Indigenous church, today we have some fulfillment to those nine calls. And as 2021 approached the work for the National Indigenous Council leadership (NIC), it was recommended that the NIC start working on an evaluation and report on continued assessment to the General Council Executive. This is to help the greater church understand what has been accomplished, what needs more support, and what needs cooperative measures to secure success of our relationship path together in the church. This assessment is in current work by the NIC and will be submitted in detail to the GC44 in these next three years. ([Calls to the Church full document.](#))

### **Currently the work and accomplishments of the Calls to the Church:**

#### **1. Concerning an Office of Vocation**

- A. The establishment of an Indigenous office or department within the Office of Vocation so that ministry personnel in our communities have services provided by people who are knowledgeable of Indigenous ways of being and working.
- B. That this office or department have an advisory group that is engaged in the development Indigenous ministry policy.



This Indigenous Office of Vocation has been established and was staffed by two part-time individuals, Will Kunder and Tim Hackborn. Will Kunder has now retired from his work with Office of Vocation and the fulfillment of Office of Vocation Minister is continued on a full-time basis by Tim Hackborn. The work the last two years by the Indigenous Office of Vocation was to create an advisory group to oversee and give mentorship to the Office of Vocation Minister. Today, we have a Grandmothers Circle that involve four Elders from across Canada to advise the Office of Vocation Minister and help with the direction of Indigenous Ministries Candidacy Board.

## **2. Concerning Indigenous Ministry Formation Accompaniment and Oversight**

- A. Students accepted for ministry training have community of faith and Elder support;
- B. Continued strong Indigenous oversight of Indigenous ministry students in training from the community of faith to regional and national Indigenous groups with appropriate overseers who are suited to the student and their Indigenous ministry context;
- C. A clear pathway for students and Indigenous communities of faith to follow in accompanying and overseeing Indigenous ministry formation;
- D. Ensuring the accompaniers and overseers are primarily Indigenous people experienced in the work of ministry and have resources adequate to provide sufficient oversight (meeting at least yearly);
- E. Ensuring that non-Indigenous accompaniers and overseers have the Indigenous orientation education required of those working in Indigenous communities;
- F. Ministry training be provided in Indigenous communities and urban settings, as is feasible;
- G. Providing support following Testamur to ensure a good transition into ministry life;
- H. Ensuring that a trauma-informed approach be taken in the ministry training program, accompaniment, and aftercare of all students and ministry personnel.

We continue to evaluate and work with our stream of Indigenous Ministry Candidates and work on process of Testamur. The pathway for our student ministers will always be one of community work and building and guidance from our schools of seminary. But, we also currently are working on creating circles of support, led by our Elders to help our ministers in community. Since the 215 unmarked graves current events in May 2021, the trauma and impact on our ministers has been numerous. The Indigenous Ministries and Justice office and the Indigenous Office of Vocation have been working on these support circles for our ministry staff within the Indigenous Church.

## **3. Concerning Indigenous Communities of Faith Approved Ministry Placement**

- A. Indigenous community and region approved ministry placements options outside of the church context;
- B. Agencies outside of the church to be educated to work cooperatively in assisting the Indigenous ministry formation accompaniers to supervise these placements;
- C. Programs to be established to provide clinical, helping, and healing skills for ministry students, and, community development and networking;

- D. Reporting to and celebration from the church concerning this work of ministry students in such placements.

These few years we had Indigenous Ministry Candidates be Ordained and Commissioned by the United Church. And as we move forward we congratulate the following individuals:

- Rev. Mitchell James Anderson, St. Paul's Pastoral Charge
- Rev. Susan McPherson Derendy, Keeper of the Learning Circle - Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre
- Rev. John Snow Jr., Regional Indigenous Minister - Pacific Mountain Region
- Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt, Regina Indigenous Outreach Ministries
- Rev. Bruce Neal Kakakaway - Hazelton/Gitsegukla Pastoral Charge
- Rev. Murray Pruden, National Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice
- Rev. Elenor Thompson, God's Lake Narrows United Church
- Rev. Samuel Ross, Johnston Garrioch Memorial Pastoral Charge

#### 4. Concerning Indigenous Testamur

- A. The establishment of an Indigenous Testamur (a required completed program indicating that a person is suitably trained for ministry in The Indigenous United Church of Canada) that recognizes unique Indigenous competencies needed to work in our communities;
- B. The currently accepted United Church Testamur to contain components to ensure cultural competency and safety when working in Indigenous and other cross-cultural settings;
- C. Ministry personnel serving in Indigenous communities of faith will require ongoing culturally appropriate oversight and support, equipping them to deepen ministry skills in the context of Indigenous ministry;
- D. For coordinated development of Indigenous theological resources to support the needs of Indigenous communities of faith and education on Indigenous matters for the United Church.

Currently, work confirmed establishment of Indigenous Testamur is still needed within Indigenous church. Over the past three years there have been work, measures, and discussions on the means and approved process for Indigenous Testamur. And the work will continue within our leadership as we process and accomplish our needs and means as an Indigenous church body.

#### 5. Concerning a National Indigenous Organization for Support and Fellowship

- A. A National Indigenous Elders Council
- B. A National Indigenous Organization

Since August of 2019 at the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering (NISG) in Rama, Ontario the Indigenous Church has created and continued the initiatives to these Calls to the Church. We elected the executive of a National Indigenous Organization, which is now named as the National Indigenous Council (NIC), which has gone through leadership changes to date.

***NIC Council Listing:***

Beverly Brown, August 2019 to January 2021; Russel Burns, August 2019 to Current; Cathie Cunningham, August 2019 to Current; Nicky McKay, August 2019; John Snow, August 2019 to July 2020; John Thompson, August 2019 to Current; Tonya Antone, August 2019 to Current; William Miller, August to Current; Leeann Shimoda, August 2019 to Current; and Alternate Council Member Samantha Miller, August 2019 to Current.

***National Indigenous Elders Council Listing:***

Lorna Standingready; Bernice Saulteaux; Donna Kennedy; Lorraine Kakegamic; Ray Jones; Marlene Lightning; Grant Queskekapow; Doreen Angus; Evelyn Day; Jimmy Hunter- Spence; Jim Angus; Agnes Spence; Lisa Anwar; Reynold Anderson; Isabelle Meawasige; Robert Patton; Elenor Thompson.

**6. Concerning Belonging**

- A. For the right of Indigenous church communities to choose their relationships within a three-court structure; i. The right to dual belonging; ii. To fully belong to a regional body, and;
- B. To fully belong to a national Indigenous body;
- C. That urban Indigenous ministries be recognized as communities of faith with the same rights and responsibilities.

In October 2019 the General Council approved that the National Indigenous Council have the authority of a Region to help action self governance and determination. To this date the NIC have been working on a platform to this purpose but more so an equitable and belonging National Indigenous body within the United Church. This first step sets the ongoing work on a process and dialogue of dual belonging as well for the Indigenous church membership and communities. The same is said for the pathway for our urban Indigenous Ministries communities. Currently a handful of our Urban Indigenous leaders in 2021 have started this work to start the footprint in this pathway.

**7. Concerning Indigenous Community Leadership and Consensus Building**

- A. Consensus decision-making in the Indigenous faith community be honoured by ensuring enough time (as determined by the Indigenous community) is afforded for community discussion before major issues are decided upon;
- B. Resources to help the communications necessary for Indigenous communities of faith to arrive at consensus regionally and nationally;
- C. The national church to incorporate Indigenous community of faith input into all its programs, departments, divisions and works.

Communication is an ongoing task within the Indigenous church and we are setting standards and methods at our best to ensure that as much information is being networked within our community. We are holding strong on the process of Consensus measures in our decision-making process within our Leadership in Councils, Working Groups and Committees and Staffing protocols. We work with a supporting hand with the Communications department to

fulfill good measures of methods of Communication and support these last 2 years to ensure we keep intact with the greater United Church community.

#### **8. Concerning Sustainable Support**

- A. Equitable distribution of Mission and Service Funds keeping in mind the whole Indigenous community across the country;
- B. A policy be developed to that would ensure there is a percentage of the proceeds of property liquidation allocated to Indigenous ministry and justice work
- C. Any properties turned over to Indigenous communities be brought up-to-code before they are transferred;
- D. Financial decisions that affect Indigenous communities of faith be determined by the Indigenous communities;
- E. Relational connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of faith and Regions be encouraged to continue. Local engagement and support of Indigenous work is valuable and needs to increase;
- F. Adequate resources (i.e. financial support, staff, and space, etc.) be included to address the needs of urban Indigenous ministries.

Our current Working Groups and Committees have been in constant work to establish the best efforts to meet the needs of Communities. And with the given means and change in the Church structure of 2018 has placed much workmanship to create and build proper mandates and terms to meet these always changing needs. We have created forum for our Real Property and Capital Working Group, Mission Support Working Group, Healing Fund Council, and cooperative efforts with the settler church community in the Indigenous Justice Advisory Group. We also gain momentum in the group planning with appointing our representatives to the Anti Racism Common Table group. We have seen church property be sold over these 3 to 4 years by church communities across Canada and a percentage of monies contributed to the Indigenous church. These funds are being held by the office of Indigenous Ministries and Justice till the NIC creates and makes fulfilled direction of the funds to help the continued support of the NIC and National Indigenous Church structure/body.

#### **9. Concerning sexual orientation and diversity**

- A. Educational resources that will invite and assist Indigenous communities of faith to support LGBTQ2A+ members and youth;
- B. That the United Church of Canada through its health benefit coverage plan continue to support employees and their families who are transitioning gender.

The Indigenous Church is still on a pathway to create the dialogue and means to see our Two Spirit and Queer communities and membership gathered in our circle. This path of equity and the return of spiritual teachings and leadership is needed to help fulfill the understanding us of various Indigenous Nations ways of being who we are as Creator has made and accepted us to be. This path is still needed to be supported with love, acceptance and respect and we will accomplish it with faith and understanding for generations to come in a good way.

Since the events of Kamloops, BC, in May 2021, the work, impact, and understanding of our projects within Indigenous Ministries has been one of needed change to our efforts as a team and within the developed path of Indigenous Ministry for the United Church. There is much to consider, that is important, when we are upholding and honouring the topics of Indigenous peoples in the categories of residential schools and the unmarked graves—our lost children, who are our ancestors. We within our IMJ unit see the need for developing new relationships and supporting the need for understanding of our many Indigenous Nations ways of being a spiritual circle of Nations to the rest of the church and world, and ensure the needs of our vast communities across this great land are maintained in respect.

As a unit, we have dedicated our experience and knowledge with the greater church leadership to support and guide the initiatives for the Calls of the Church and to the needs of relationship and programs for Bringing Our Children Home. In 2021 we created the National Indigenous Council newsletter *Messenger* to help create some connection within the Indigenous Church. And as we move forward on our social media platform, we are creating a growing presence in this means, with online vigils, community giveaways, and panel discussions every month. With our justice work we will continue to work on the pathway with our partners on the Truth and Reconciliation work and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples law.

### **Community Capacity Development Coordinator (CCDC) Work**

Keeping in mind my support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I presented cultural awareness sessions to non-Indigenous church groups such as Trinity St. Andrews United Church and the East Central Ontario Regional Council, who trekked across Canada virtually and “visited” Treaty Six Territory. My partner Russel and I are often asked to speak about our Cree Way at non-Indigenous CoFs in Alberta and are happy to do so as time permits.

Contributed to the United Church conversation about the discovery of unmarked graves at residential school sites across Turtle Island. Grieving has not been easy especially since I am a residential school survivor, I have long recognized that is not my legacy; that legacy belongs to the churches and the government of Canada.

*Provided by Charlene Burns, CCDC*

COVID-19 has certainly changed the way we work with the communities of faith and so most of the communication has had to be done “virtually.” Indigenous CoFs have also had to do community ministry in a different and creative way, using local radio and TV and other forms of communication and technology. Most CoFs in Keewatin however, due to their isolation factor, do not have proper connectivity to the internet and so communication is a challenge at most times. Some ministry included outdoor services, and funerals took place in the cemetery with family only.

*Provided by Gloria Cook, CCDC*

I provide information when requested on Real Property, M&S dollars, Grant funding, Pulpit Supply, Ministerial search process, Residential and Day School, Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women & Girls. I have spent a lot of time updating myself on the process for a Minister search and Tim Hackborn has been a great mentor. He has provided background information on the communities of faith so that I have a greater IMJ Staff Annual Report 2021 understanding in what has taken place such as New Credit, Chapel of the Delaware, Kettle & Stony Point.

*Provided by Martha Pedoniquotte, CCDC*

### **Real Property and Capital Plan Working Group**

The Real Property and Capital Plan (RP&CP) Working Group members and staff have done an amazing job navigating through their Zoom meetings, many times learning together but through it all being patient with one another, i.e., when someone forgets to mute and the background noise becomes disruptive or when someone forgets to unmute when they are talking. Throughout this entire time this working group have held all their meetings via Zoom.

The RP&CP working group held monthly meetings since Feb. 18, 2021. As required and to alleviate delaying projects in the communities of faith, the working group coordinated and approved some of the applications via email responses.

The RP&CP Working Group members consisted of Beverly Brown, Russel Burns, (late) Frank Evans, Lorraine Kakegamic, Robert Patton, and Lawrence Sankey. Frank Evans passed away on January 10, 2021. Bruce Neal Kakakaway joined in February 2021. Beverly Brown left in February 2021. Allan Sinclair joined in June 2021. Lawrence Sankey left in September 2021. Currently, there are two vacancies to be filled.

*Provided by Lorraine Kakegamic and Russel Burns*

### **Mission Support Working Group Report 2021**

In July of 2020, the Mission Support Working Group was asked to review the letter prepared by the National Indigenous Council to advise Indigenous communities of faith that they could apply for additional funding to come from the 2020 surplus. This funding was offered in response to the needs of communities of faith due to the impact of COVID-19. The letter advised that applications could be submitted by September 30, 2020. It further informed the communities of faith that applications would be received three times in 2021, as surplus funds were available.

The M&S Working Group began with seven members: John Thompson, Leeann Shimoda, Lorraine Kakegamic, Cindy Grieves, Wendy Wesley, Martha Pedoniquotte, and Joan Golden. At the November 2020 meeting Joan Golden became the rotating chair of the Working Group for a one-year term.

*Provided by Joan Golden*

## **Youth Leadership**

### **Youth and Young Adult Support**

The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on young people and their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. The Youth Leadership Coordinator has offered a variety of supports that provided young people assistance with finding suitable mental health supports, securing housing, providing emergency food assistance, locating treatment programs, and a variety of other supports.

### **Mental Health First Aid Training**

The Youth Leadership Program has been working with the Canadian Mental Health Association on another training opportunity in October for Mental Health First Aid Training for Adults who engage with young people. Registration opened on September 14 and we will once again be accepting 15 participants. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

### **Online Presence**

On September 28, 2021, an online learning event was hosted so that United Church of Canada members will have an opportunity to learn about Indigenous Child Welfare Policy and the continuum that exists between residential schools, the 60s Scoop, and now the Millennial Scoop.

### **Bringing the Children Home**

Upon the announcement of Kamloops and Cowessess, much time was put into assisting the wider church in their response and the steps that they would take as it pertains to reparations. It was decided that the United Church would connect to Indigenous leadership whose communities had children attend the church-run institutions and offer financial reparations in the effort of bringing the children home. The Youth Leadership Coordinator assisted in writing the letter that would be sent to Indigenous leaders, the press release, and helping the Moderator and General Secretary prepare for their meetings with community leaders.

### **Philanthropy**

A significant part of the winter was spent with the Gifts with Vision Committee in determining what community partners will be selected for the Gifts with Vision catalogue. Most of the projects that were funded are in direct response to food security and COVID-19.

*Provided by Springwater Hester-Meawassige, Youth Leadership Coordinator*

## **Healing Programs**

### **Healing Fund Working Group**

The Healing Programs working group met on May 18, 2021, to discern and make decisions regarding the applications received at the March 15 deadline for the Healing Fund, and the

Indigenous Endowment Fund. They received 17 applications to review for the Healing Fund, and 7 applications for the Endowment Fund.

The working group discussed whether the aftercare section of the application is appropriate or whether it needs to be tweaked. The aftercare section needs to be better defined. We need to give people the ability to provide feedback to the project. Aftercare could be the project itself, since they can include prevention, reduction, identity, and belonging. This section needs to address different types of aftercare, and guide applicants to have the correct type of aftercare for their project.

Dallas Fiddler and Erin Parsons revamped this section of the application and are awaiting approval from the Healing Programs working group.

*Provided by Dallas Fiddler, Healing Fund Program Coordinator,  
and by Erin Parsons, IMJ Administrative Assistant*

## **Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice**

### **Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement**

Coordinating meetings of the Parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (“All Parties”)

Collaboration with All Parties on Call to Action 46 (Covenant of Reconciliation): development of development of draft text and inclusion process

Collaboration with All Parties on response to Calls to Action 73–76 (missing children and burial sites)

### **Bringing the Children Home Initiative**

With colleagues, developing, coordinating, and implementing United Church response to announcement of unmarked burial sites on former residential school properties, including:

- Preparation of background materials, statements, proposal to GCE, and parameters of initiative
- Responding on behalf of the Moderator and on social media to inquiries related to unmarked graves.

### **Education and Advocacy**

Responding to speaking/educational requests from regions, congregations, interest groups, and theological schools

Participation in and assistance in coordinating the United Church’s Anti-Racism Common Table

Participation in the United Church’s Climate Justice Advisory Group and ecumenical climate justice campaign (“For the Love of Creation”)



Collaboration with ecumenical partners on Bill C-15: UNDRIP (TRC Calls to Action 43 and 48)

*Provided by Sara Stratton, Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animator*

### **Continued Work with Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice**

#### **Legacy of Mission and Ministry in Indigenous Communities (TRC Calls to Action 60 and 61)**

Continue to chair drafting sub-committee, which meets every other week

Ongoing research and writing for draft document

Goals: i) complete draft document and circulate for comment before the end of 2021; and ii) reconvene larger ecumenical group, which has not met since the latter half of 2019 when plans were formulated for a smaller team to hold community meetings in 2020. The latter were sidelined by the pandemic and new plans need to be considered given passage of time and changes among the ecumenical partners.

#### **Justice and Reconciliation Fund**

Coordinate the Fund Committee's work to review Fall 2021 applications to the Fund

Follow-up on outstanding reports from previously funded projects

Work to update statistical information and analysis of trends in applications

Share stories of how the Fund is being used through the *Living into Right Relations* newsletter

Indigenous Justice Advisory Committee (IJAG)

Work to plan and hold an IJAG meeting, which we currently co-chair

#### **United Church Anti-Racism Work**

Advise Anti-Racism and Equity Lead on consultation process for Indigenous Church

Contribute to development and delivery of mandatory training for church staff on the Calls to the Church

Provide additional support to Anti-racism Common Table's work as requested

#### **Missing Children and Unmarked Graves**

Advise on the United Church's ongoing response to this issue and take on related work as requested

Day Schools project and other archival work

Support the Executive Minister (EM) in determining and carrying out next steps on the project, in consultation with Archives; this may include arranging to post narratives on the United Church website and developing educational resources for the church

Review residential school narratives posted on the Remembering the Children website and recommend updated language, as needed, to The United Church of Canada Archives

### **National and International Indigenous Ecumenical Relations**

Work with EM to develop and implement a strategy for engaging in international Indigenous ecumenical relations

Work with EM to ensure a United Church representative is appointed to the KAIROS Indigenous Rights Circle and that there is good communication with that representative

### **Responding to Emerging Issues and Advocacy**

Develop strategies, make recommendations, and develop materials to ensure The United Church of Canada responds appropriately to ongoing and emerging Indigenous justice issues, coordinating ecumenically where appropriate

*Provided by Lori Ransom Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animator*

### **Justice and Reconciliation Fund Committee**

There were two resignations from the Justice and Reconciliation Fund Committee. Though newly appointed in the fall of 2020, Grant Queskakapow resigned from the committee before attending his first meeting. Martha Pedoniquotte, who had just begun her second term on the committee, was hired on as a Community Capacity Development Coordinator in May 2021, and therefore had to resign from the committee as well.

There has been a call out to fill the two vacant committee spots, with a closing date for applications of September 30, 2021. Appointments are made by the Indigenous Justice Advisory Group (IJAG).

*Provided by Erin Parsons and Lori Ransom*

### **United Church Indian Day Schools Project: August 2021**

The source material for this report has come primarily from documents and correspondence in the United Church Archives and also from DIA Annual Reports. Although Indigenous voices have been cited whenever possible, additional work must be undertaken to highlight more Indigenous sources of knowledge and memory, including the stories and recollections of Day School Survivors. Therefore, this report should be seen as the starting point of research into the important history of the Indian Day School system in Canada, and not the final result.

*Provided by Michael Kitching*

### **Conclusion**

These are a few items we have been working on and look forward to continuing for the Indigenous Church and community. But, next year, due to COVID-19, the Indigenous Church will take most of our work focus on the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering that will be held in Edmonton at the University of Alberta campus in summer 2023. Also, in 2022 our work initiative will focus on supporting the needs of GC44 and the NIC commissioners in fulfilling

their roles for the next three years. We within the Indigenous community have dealt with the effects of COVID-19 over the past two years, loss of family and friends, and the social restraints that go along with the pandemic. We do our best to be in community and support to one another. And we look forward to better days with one another that allow us to look at old and new ways of keeping our network strong within the Indigenous Church.

We strive for an equal seat at the table, but we also look forward to inviting the greater church to our way of living, praying, and being in good relationship with our Mother. Our hope, as we come out of COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, is that we will be able to be in community and meet again with our membership. We look forward to the continued work to be a Uniting Church in a good way.

### **Recommendations**

Please see proposal [NIC01 National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church](#).

## THEOLOGY AND INTER-CHURCH INTER-FAITH COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (Alison Etter, interim chair)

### Introduction

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee is a committee of the General Council. Its usual meeting pattern is to hold a three-day in-person meeting each fall, with other two-hour virtual meetings from time to time during the year. With the pandemic, even the lengthier fall meetings have been held virtually. The Committee reports regularly to the General Council Executive and also reports to each meeting of the General Council. This accountability report will address issues referred to the Committee by the 43rd General Council, matters that arose since the last General Council, and some ongoing work from the previous triennium.

### A. Adoption Apology

The United Church's work on adoption dates back several years. In 2013, the United Church contracted with an external researcher to compile a history of church-run maternity facilities. The United Church and its predecessor churches operated such facilities between 1900 and 1989. Some women who resided in these facilities report being pressured, coerced, or forced to place their child for adoption.

Between 2015 and 2018, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee developed a report entitled "Theologies of Adoption" that explored a broad range of adoption experiences, including experiences of pressured, coerced, or forced adoption.

Following the acceptance of that report by the General Council Executive, the Committee was asked by the General Secretary to create wording for an apology to be issued by the United Church for its role in unethical adoption practices. In drafting the wording, the Committee considered the experiences of all those affected by adoption, including mothers, children, and other family members.

On November 20, 2020, the General Council Executive voted to adopt the apology and communicate it to the general public, the Senate Committee on Science, Social Affairs, and Technology, which has been studying the issues of adoption during the post-war period, and to communicate the apology directly to Origins Canada, Adoption Support Kinship (ASK), Parent Finders Canada, and the Canadian Council of Natural Mothers.

A Worship Service of Apology and Lament was held on Mother's Day, May 9, 2021. During this service, the apology was delivered by the Moderator and General Secretary to all those affected by the United Church's role in unethical adoption practices.

### B. Membership

Both the 42nd and 43rd General Councils considered proposals on the meaning of membership within the United Church. In each case, the General Council asked the Committee to do further study of the matter. The Committee gave careful consideration to the questions and concerns

raised by commissioners at both General Councils. Societal and cultural changes have led to a shifting sense of what it means to “join” or be a “member” of an organization. Yet the church is often called to be counter-cultural, inviting a rigorous commitment to practising our faith.

In light of the lack of consensus found at either of the previous General Councils, the Committee proposes a new starting point for the discussion of membership: an emphasis on discipleship. The 44th General Council will be asked to consider directing the church to engage in a study of the meaning of discipleship, as a first step to examining the meaning of membership. See the separate report and accompanying proposal on membership.

### **C. Questions Asked of Persons to be Commissioned, Ordained, Recognized, or Admitted in the Celebration of Ministries Service**

The 43rd General Council directed the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to engage in a study on modernizing the theological language in the questions for admitting, commissioning, ordaining, and recognizing persons into ministry in the United Church (in the Celebration of Ministries services) and report back to the 44th General Council. In completing its work, the Committee considered current and historic questions as well as those from other denominations. Particular attention was given to two aspects of the questions. First, should the questions reflect a Trinitarian understanding of God? The Committee concluded that yes, given that this understanding of God is unambiguously affirmed in our doctrine. Second, should the questions reflect more inclusive language, as opposed to exclusively male language for God? On this question, the Committee affirmed the concern. It considered the wording from a number of perspectives including: scripture; the link to baptism; whether the current wording creates a crisis of conscience for candidates and Admission ministers; and the requirement for a Category 3 remit for any changes to the wording of any of these questions. In the end, the Committee decided not to recommend a change in the wording of the question that uses the traditional Trinitarian formula but to urge regional councils to ensure that all Celebration of Ministries services include a range of images for God throughout the liturgy. The report itself is found in the documents submitted by the Committee for this meeting of the General Council.

### **D. Essential Agreement**

The 43rd General Council (2018) directed “the Theology, Inter-Church, Inter-Faith Committee to engage in a study of the meaning of ‘essential agreement.’” This refers to the Basis of Union (13.2), which states that each candidate for ministry shall be examined to satisfy the Office of Vocation that the candidate is in “essential agreement” with the United Church’s Statement of Doctrine and accepts this doctrine “as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.”

The Committee’s report, disseminated in February 2019, outlined some misconceptions concerning essential agreement and noted how the concept of essential agreement was adopted during the negotiations that led to Church Union in 1925. The report further explained what essential agreement means and why it continues to be important in the examination of persons seeking commissioning, ordination, recognition, admission, or readmission as ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada.

### **E. Medical Assistance in Dying**

In 2017 the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee responded to the direction of the General Council Executive to examine the theological implications of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and offer guidance to the Executive in developing a United Church statement on the issue. That report was adopted by the Executive as an official statement of the United Church on MAID.

The 2017 statement followed the passage of legislation by the Federal Parliament permitting MAID for patients at the end of life. Soon challenges to the federal act arose, focusing primarily on three questions: access to MAID for those suffering mental illness; the use of advance directives; and the age of consent for access for MAID. A 2019 Quebec court decision struck down the legislative requirement that a patient seeking MAID be at the end of life. This resulted in proposed amendments to the federal MAID legislation. The United Church's 2017 statement did not offer specific guidance on these three questions, which were also being discussed broadly in the church in the context of end of life decision-making. Therefore, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee reflected on these challenges using the lenses of our tradition and the 2017 statement's emphasis that the decision for MAID be the result of a free and informed choice. The Committee wrote a statement on MAID for people with mental illness, advance directives for MAID, and age of consent for MAID, which was adopted by the General Council Executive at its May 25, 2020, meeting. Subsequently the chair of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee was one of the witnesses appearing before the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs during hearings on Bill C-7, the amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada regarding MAID. The bill was passed by the Federal Parliament in March 2021.

### **F. Other Work**

From time to time, the Committee is asked to appoint members to task groups or committees, and to provide theological reflection on topics of relevance to the wider church, as identified by the General Secretary. This triennium, the Committee has appointed members to the Ministry Streams Task Group, the Theology of Copyright Task Group, the Sacraments Task Group, the Laying on of Hands Task Group, and a group examining the theology of stewardship and giving. In addition, the committee was asked to consider the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism and to engage in ongoing discussion about personal relationships as they relate to the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel. Work on the latter topic will continue into the next triennium.

### **G. Inter-Church and Inter-Faith**

The Committee is the place to which reports from our representatives to various inter-church and inter-faith matters come. Through this Committee, key aspects of those reports and suggested actions are shared with the General Council Executive or with the General Council itself. The Committee received regular updates from our representatives on the Canadian Council of Churches, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, and the Caribbean and North American section of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

The 43rd General Council approved a full communion agreement with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. A worship service to formally recognize this agreement took place in October 2019 in Winnipeg. The United Church continues to live into its full communion agreement with the United Church of Christ, a full communion agreement inaugurated in the fall of 2015.

The Anglican Church-United Church Dialogue Group, reappointed by both denominations for 2017-2020, concluded its work with a report to both denominations. That final report contained two key texts. One, "Sharing Ministry Ecumenically," included guidelines and suggestions for creating and sustaining shared ministries between the two denominations. The second, "A Ministry of Unity: Further Reflections on Episcopate in the Anglican and United Churches in Canada," addressed the challenges to a closer relationship that the different practices and understandings of oversight and governance in the two denominations present. This report was presented to the General Council Executive, and as a result of its decisions, work is ongoing on both these matters.

The Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group has, at the time of writing, largely completed its work on a document entitled "Common Baptism, Common Ministry," a document that looks at the significant degree of mutual agreement in these areas.

## **Conclusion**

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee continues to be asked to do work on a wide range of tasks and topics arising from a variety of concerns within the church and society. This work requires committee members with a diversity of interests, backgrounds, experience, and knowledge. All of the Committee's members deserve thanks from the General Council for the time and effort they have given to theological questions and interfaith and ecumenical relations of The United Church of Canada. It is worth noting as well that there have been changes in committee membership and in staff support during this triennium. The Committee thanks all the past members and staff who have offered significant support and input over the triennium.

### **Committee Members this triennium:**

Daniel Hayward (chair), Alison Etter (interim chair), Ryan Slifka, Collin Smith, Brian Thorpe, Dyane Matthews, Deborah Elliott (2019-), Andrew O'Neill (2020-), Lloyd Nyarota, Isaac Kamta, Jamie Bradshaw, Andrew Macpherson, Michelle Owens, Lawrence Sankey, Jane Dawson (2018), Jennifer Janzen-Ball (2018-2019)

### **Staff Support:**

John Young (2018-2021), Gail Allan (2018-2020), Jennifer Janzen-Ball (2022-)

### **See Other Reports/Recommendations in materials for this meeting:**

[Membership Report - TICIF](#)

Report on Questions Asked During Celebration of Ministries Service - TICIF  
TICIF01 Membership Proposal

## REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP

**Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee**

### Introduction

Since 2012, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has devoted significant attention to the concept of membership in the United Church. Several factors led to that study: (a) an awareness of an increasing gap between our polity concerning membership and the practice in a number of our communities of faith; (b) confusion over the distinction made in United Church polity between being a “member” of the church (by virtue of being baptized as a child or being the child of a “full member”) and being a “full member” (full membership requiring either a profession of faith by someone already baptized, or adult baptism, or a transfer of membership from another Christian denomination); (c) a wondering whether the understanding of membership in our polity represented the cultural pattern of an earlier era and needed to be rethought in light of a changing context. The Committee presented reports to the 42nd (2015) and 43rd (2018) General Councils, offering a new model of membership to the 42nd General Council and inviting the 43rd General Council to choose among two different approaches to membership. In each case, the General Council asked the Committee to do further study of the matter. In its further discussion since 2018, the Committee’s reflections on membership have moved the Committee’s thinking in a different direction from its earlier concentration on models of membership. That different direction is an invitation to the church to study, and place an emphasis on, discipleship, rather than concentrating on finding a “technical fix” to some of the issues related to membership in our polity.

### Background

Current United Church polity makes a distinction between being made a “member” of the church via baptism as a child or being the child of “full member” and being a “full member” of the church, via either a profession of faith (also known as confirmation) for those already baptized, or adult baptism, or a transfer of one’s membership from another Christian denomination. Membership for a lay person is held in the local community of faith; for members of the order of ministry, it is held at the regional council.

Certain privileges in the United Church are reserved for “full members.” In a meeting of a community of faith, those in full membership decide whether adherents (persons who are active in the community of faith but who have not chosen to become full members) will be able to vote on all matters that will come before the meeting. Certain governance positions in the community of faith are reserved for full members. One must be a full member in order to become a candidate for ministry or to be elected to serve on either the regional council or the General Council.

In the 1980s and again in the early 2000s there were remits that sought to remove the distinction between member and full member. None of the three remits received sufficient support to be adopted. That said, questions continued to be posed wondering whether our inherited practice of membership was serving the denomination well in the early 21st century. Those questions led the Committee on Theology and Faith to take up the matter of



membership during the 2012–2015 triennium. The Committee submitted a report to the 42nd General Council (2015) outlining a possible new model for membership. This model broke with our historic practice by including a category of local membership that did not require baptism as its starting point. Rather, it noted that for many people now coming into the United Church, their journey began with attendance and involvement and moved from there to belief. The 42nd General Council did not adopt this proposal. Rather, it adopted a motion asking the Committee “to invite the church into a study of the meaning of membership, including the relationship of baptism and membership, and bring to the 43rd General Council [2018] a recommendation on membership for the church as a result of that study.”

The Committee prepared a study document that was circulated across the United Church in the spring of 2017. The study presented two different models of church membership, one model being a slight revision of the current model of membership and the other a “new model” that would emphasize belonging as the route of entry to church membership and that would allow the development of a local concept of membership that started with attending and becoming active in a community of faith, rather than beginning with baptism and a profession of faith. The responses to the study document received from across the church were almost evenly divided in terms of a preference for one or other option.

The Committee sent a report and a proposal to the 43rd General Council (2018) asking the Council to choose one or other of the two options it had presented in the study document. In its report, the Committee pointed out that each option arose from a different reading of the current context and therefore a different sense of what this context required.

Advocates of the “new model” saw the current context as one in which people generally, and younger persons especially, did not “join” organizations and institutions in the way that was common for the first three-quarters of the 20th century. In addition, when persons did “join” an institution or organization, they did so by first becoming involved in the life of the entity. Involvement led to an acceptance of the principles and ethos. To use church terminology, and borrowing here from the work of Diana Butler Bass, “Belonging” led to “Behaving” led to “Believing.” Advocates for such a model believed the United Church’s current model was stuck in an earlier paradigm, a paradigm in which most people in Canada and Bermuda grew up involved in a church and when “joining” an institution was the thing to do. They concluded that the United Church needed to adapt to this cultural change by changing its approach to the concept of church membership.

The other model the Committee presented to the 43rd General Council was a slight revision of the church’s current model. Advocates for the current model of membership, or indeed a more rigorously practised version of that model, made a different assessment of what being a Christian in the current culture demanded. Holders of this viewpoint agreed that the culture had dramatically changed. But the change those favouring a rigorous approach to church membership highlighted was the secularization of Canada. In contemporary Canada (or for that matter, Bermuda), belonging to a church (or any religious organization) was often a highly counter-cultural activity, particularly if you were younger. Supporters of a more rigorously

practised version of our current model of church membership pointed to somewhat analogous situation of the church during the first several centuries of its existence, a time when being a Christian was similarly regarded with ambivalence or hostility. In the first several centuries of Christianity's existence, one became a Christian only after being well-schooled in the faith.

Supporters of this model acknowledged that the current model in the United Church came from a time when the culture strongly supported the practice of Christianity and in which an institutional mindset reigned. However, they thought that a more rigorously practised form of this model, with its emphasis on the need for a knowledge of the faith tradition and a commitment to it for membership in the church, was precisely what was needed when the practice of Christianity in Canada and Bermuda was such a counter-cultural activity.

In its report to the 43rd General Council, the Committee urged the General Council to offer guidance as to which of these two visions (and models) it believed would best nurture individuals in the Christian faith tradition in the current context. The Committee indicated that it believed it could offer a compelling case for either model, but it did not think it should be the body to decide which particular reading of the culture, with the vision for church membership that came with that reading, the church should adopt. It saw making that choice as the role of the General Council.

The 43rd General Council did not make a choice between the two options. It asked the Committee to undertake further study of the matter of membership and to report to the 44th General Council. The notes from the discussion groups at the 43rd General Council, shared with the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, reveal the same, roughly even, division of opinion between the two options as was the case with the responses the Committee received to the church-wide study in 2017. The rationale for why individuals preferred one option over the other was also similar to what the Committee had heard from the wider church in 2017.

### **Suggested Direction Forward: An Emphasis on Discipleship**

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee suggests a different way forward from what has been the focal point of its reports and proposals to each of the two previous General Councils. The impetus for a "new model," while a continuation of earlier thinking about the United Church's somewhat ambiguous distinction between "member" and "full member," was driven by two complaints from communities of faith: 1) the lack of clarity among many church members about the church's concept of membership and the related belief of many that attendance and activity made one a member (not to mention the hurt felt by many when they realized that they were not members despite having been involved in a United Church community of faith); 2) the difficulty a number of communities of faith had in finding a sufficient number of "full members" to fill necessary governance positions in their congregational structure, a difficulty that has led either to a few "full members" holding multiple offices or non-members holding certain offices in violation of United Church polity.

The Committee has become convinced that an approach to the concept of membership driven primarily by an effort to provide a technical fix for a problem in our polity is not a helpful way to address the concept of membership. The responses to the 2017 church-wide study and the notes from discussion groups at the 43rd General Council revealed a generally evenly divided view about which of the models presented members preferred, but the responses also raised some of the “vision” matters noted above.

Further, the 42nd General Council adopted a remit that, with the permission of the full members present at a meeting of a community of faith, enables adherents to vote on all matters that come to that meeting. That change in our polity removed the most commonly expressed irritant about membership.

The Committee’s own discussions in light of the failure of the 43rd General Council to make a choice between the two options, and the Council’s request that the Committee study the matter of membership further and report back to the 44th General Council, led the Committee to ask itself: “What does it mean for the concept of church membership when being involved in a committed way is contrary to the existing culture in which we live?” The Committee came to the conclusion that the United Church’s further development of a concept of membership needed to begin with a discussion about discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Are we, as individuals, prepared to pay the cost of being a disciple? This question was posed with the awareness that in much of the world being a disciple is costly, and, as Canada and Bermuda move further and further from Christendom, there is an awareness that being a disciple begins to carry a greater and greater cost. Younger members in our church expect discipleship to be costly, for they are increasingly aware of how counter-cultural it is in our context to lead one’s life according to any faith tradition. In thinking about church membership, we need also to remember that becoming a church member is only the beginning of a lifelong journey, not the end point of a journey or a process.

The Committee believes that a focus on discipleship, and clarity about discipleship, might allow an understanding of membership in the United Church to flow from a renewed understanding of what it means to be a disciple. Such a discussion would fit well with some recent faith formation initiatives concerning how we pass the faith tradition on to subsequent generations and how we do evangelism, that is, share the faith tradition in an invitational way with seekers. Reflection upon our understanding of baptism, which makes a person part not only of the United Church but of the universal Church, would also be a helpful inclusion in such a discussion.

The Committee thinks that the church needs to have a discussion on discipleship. It would be prepared to undertake such a study were such to be the desire of the 44th General Council. From a concentration on discipleship, a faithful, usable model of membership could develop.

## QUESTIONS ASKED OF PERSONS TO BE COMMISSIONED, ORDAINED, RECOGNIZED OR ADMITTED IN THE CELEBRATION OF MINISTRIES SERVICE: A REPORT TO THE 44TH GENERAL COUNCIL FROM THE THEOLOGY AND INTER-CHURCH INTER-FAITH COMMITTEE

Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

### Origin of This Study

This paper arises as a response to a General Council motion dealing with a proposal to the 43rd General Council from Saskatchewan Conference. The proposal from the Saskatchewan Conference asked “that GC43 decide to replace the words of the first question of Basis of Union 11.3<sup>1</sup> with a formulation that allows for a broader understanding of God, ... followed by the words, ‘and do you commit yourself to God anew.’” The proposal also asked that a remit be authorized, with the results reported to the 44th General Council. When the Facilitation Group at the 43rd General Council looked at the responses from the various discussion groups, it concluded that “there was mixed reaction in groups, but no affirmation for the proposal.” The Facilitation Group determined that there was support in the discussion groups for the church to have a conversation about the matter, though concern was also expressed by some groups about a move away from Trinitarian theology and the ecumenical implications of that. The Facilitation Group proposed the following wording with regard to how the General Council might respond to the proposal from the Saskatchewan Conference, and the 43rd General Council accepted that wording in the following motion that it adopted:

That the 43rd General Council:

1. Direct the Theology, Inter-church, Interfaith Committee to engage in a study on modernizing the theological language we use for agreements required in ordination/commissioning/admission/recognition of ministry and report back to the 44th General Council; and
2. Take no further action on proposal SK 02.

### Background

During the Celebration of Ministries Service held by regional councils, at one point in the liturgy there is a Preamble that talks about the ministerial office followed by questions [what the motion of the General Council refers to as “agreements”] asked of those seeking commissioning, ordination, recognition, or admission. These questions are also sometimes referred to as “vows,” for they represent declarations or promises the person makes, and an affirmative answer is required by each person to each relevant question. Following is the current wording of the questions:

1. (to each Candidate) Do you believe in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you commit yourself anew to God?

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of GC43, these questions were found in the Basis of Union, section 11.3. With the publication of the 2019 and subsequent editions of *The Manual*, these questions are now found in section 13.3.

2. (to each Candidate being ordained) Do you believe that God is calling you to the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?  
(to each Candidate being commissioned) Do you believe that God is calling you to the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and do you accept this call?
3. (to each Candidate) Are you willing to exercise your ministry in accordance with the scriptures, in continuity with the faith of the Church, and subject to the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada?

While the first and third questions are asked of all those whose ministry in the United Church is being authorized in the Celebration of Ministries Service, the second question is asked only of those being either ordained or commissioned. While anyone being admitted to ministry in the United Church is already either ordained or commissioned, and so has their stream of ministry reflected in the Preamble, we would note that there is no reference to Designated Lay Ministry in the prescribed Preamble, nor is a specific question asked related to their stream of ministry.

The Committee is aware that the recognition of Designated Lay Ministers happened at the Annual Conference Meeting up through 2010, and that between 2011 and 2018 their recognition took place at a meeting of their presbytery. With the reorganization of the United Church's structures, their recognition now takes place at the Celebration of Ministries Service held by the regional council. Variation doubtless existed across the denomination in the liturgy and the questions asked when the recognition of Designated Lay Ministers took place at presbyteries and when no wording was prescribed for this rite of recognition. The Basis of Union makes clear that they are now recognized at a Regional Council Celebration of Ministries Service. The wording for the Preamble and questions asked of those being authorized for ministry in the United Church via this service is laid out in the Basis of Union, and Designated Lay Ministry is absent in that wording. While this matter is beyond the terms of the motion directed to the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, we think the discrepancy is something the church should address.

Although the proposal from the Saskatchewan Conference concerned only the first of these questions, the Committee examined the Preamble and all three questions or vows. The Committee did so because the Preamble is background for the questions and the motion adopted by the General Council asked the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to look at the "agreements required in ordination/commissioning/admission/recognition of ministry."

The Committee was uncertain as to what the General Council had meant by "modernizing the theological language." Reportage both of the discussion at the Saskatchewan Conference when the proposal was adopted there and also of the presentation at the 43rd General Council by representatives of the Saskatchewan Conference suggested potentially two different concerns lying behind the proposal—one concern was the gendered language of the first question or

vow, while the other concern was some discomfort with the concept of the Trinity itself. The Committee has chosen to address both these possibilities in this report.

### **Our Own History as the United Church**

In the United Church's earlier history, persons entering different streams of ministry were asked different sets of questions. The current three questions, or vows, date from 1972, following a report to the 24th General Council [1971] and a remit to change the questions, or vows, used previously to the current ones. The result of the remit being positive, the 25th General Council [1972] ratified the remit and the vows currently in use were then adopted. The creation of separate versions of the second question for Candidates for ordination, versus Candidates for commissioning, happened in 1989, again following a remit.

Following are the questions used for ordination from 1925 until 1972:

1. Do you believe yourself to be a child of God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?  
Answer. I do so believe.
2. Do you believe yourself to be called of God to the Office of the Christian Ministry, and your chief motive to be zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire for the salvation of men? Answer. I do so believe.
3. Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrines required for eternal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ? and are you resolved out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing which is not agreeable thereto? Answer: I am so persuaded, and am so resolved, by God's grace.

In this earlier period of our history, deaconesses were set apart at a different service during the Annual Meeting of the Conference, and the questions asked of them were the following:

- Do you believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess anew Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord? Answer. I do.
- Do you believe that God has called you to the office and work of a Deaconess? Answer. I do.
- Will you, in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, walk worthy of your calling, and discharge faithfully the duties of your office? Answer. I will endeavour to do so, God helping me.
- Do you promise to seek the unity and peace of the Church, and to yield yourselves to the authority of those to who the Church has committed the direction of your work? Answer. I do so promise, God helping me.

The questions to both those being ordained and those being set apart as deaconesses have some similarities, e.g., do you believe you have been called to the office; the emphasis on carrying out faithfully the duties of the office. Interesting also are the differences, for the initial question to the ordinands reflects a key emphasis of liberal theology, a growing force in Canada in the first quarter of the 20th century, while the opening vow for the deaconess reflected more

directly the language of the original doctrine statement in the Basis of Union. Deaconesses were also asked a question about recognizing the authority of the church.

The Committee found particularly helpful in its thinking about the matter of the questions, or vows, the report of the Committee on Christian Faith to the 24th General Council [1971]. That report will be considered at greater length later in this document.

### **Vows in Other Denominations**

The Committee examined the ordination vows or related material in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Uniting Church in Australia. We looked at ordination vows, expecting to find more comparable questions, given the diversity of diaconal history and structure in the sample denominations. Across the denominational spectrum, no uniformity exists in what is asked of candidates during the service. In some denominations, there is a lengthy series of questions or vows or declarations that the candidate for ordination must make. In others, there are only a few questions asked or declarations made. Some denominations emphasize the duties of office and the acceptance of the discipline of the denomination in the exercise of their ministry. In others, the emphasis lies more on some key faith statements or questions, usually focussed on the Christian faith more broadly as opposed to distinct denominational emphases, although the duties of office and the acceptance of the discipline of the denomination is also usually present. A question as to whether candidates believe themselves called to the office of minister often appears.

### **Structure and Purpose of the Preamble and Questions**

The Committee examined all aspects of the section of the Celebration of Ministries Service that includes the act of commissioning, ordaining, recognizing, and admitting. This examination included the structure, Preamble, and the individual questions in order to determine whether the Preamble and the questions continue to be suitable for our present context and reality (i.e., if “modernization” is necessary).

As mentioned above, the current Preamble and questions were adopted by the 24th General Council and approved by remit, with an additional separation of the second question into the categories of commissioning and ordination in 1989. These changes by the 24th General Council were made in response to questions posed in the Report of the Commission on the Ministry in the Twentieth Century. The content of that report largely had to do with clarifying the role of the laity and the meaning of ordained/diaconal ministry as part of the whole ministry of the church. While returning to some fundamental principles, the present Preamble and questions were intended to “modernize” the language through an egalitarian vision of ministry. The goal was to see ordained/diaconal ministry less as a specialized “profession” apart from lay people, and more as a vocation or calling to equip all members of the church to minister to the world as disciples of Christ.

To that end, the General Council Committee at that time agreed that the questions should concern four general areas: a profession of faith; acknowledgment of call to the ministry; willingness to do the work of ministry; and willingness to submit to the corporate discipline of the church. The Preamble was then proposed as a way to root the questions theologically and ensure the questions were “simple and not didactic.” The Preamble was then written to include statements regarding: church and the ministry of Christ itself; general ministry; baptism and confirmation; and the special ministry of the ordained as part of that overall framework. As such, our Committee agreed that these four general areas and the resulting structure (Preamble and three ordination questions) continue to be theologically and practically valuable. The structure sought to root all ministry first in Jesus’ own ministry, then in the baptismal vocation of each Christian as a disciple of Jesus. Thus, it provided both a traditional Protestant emphasis on the “priesthood of all believers” for lay people and a modern egalitarian sensibility of “servant leadership” (*diakonia*) for clergy.

### **The Preamble**

The Committee agreed that the Preamble appropriately expresses the nature of Christ’s ministry and the ministry of the church as one primarily of mutual service, and locates ordained/diaconal ministry within that broader framework as noted above. Some minor wording changes were considered, but in the end, we concluded that the basic shape and content for the Preamble should be retained as theologically sound (with the caveat noted above concerning Designated Lay Ministry).

### **The Questions**

Similar to the Preamble, the Committee agreed that the content and language of questions 2 and 3 regarding the call of the minister, the work of ministry, and compliance with the discipline of the United Church needed to be retained.

The most extensive discussion occurred regarding Question 1. The Committee agreed that the language of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” was likely what concerns about “modernizing the language” referred to. The Committee discerned that these concerns would likely be related either to the concept of the Trinity as an outmoded or restrictive theological concept, or to the language of “Father” and “Son” being exclusively masculine, or both. The United Church’s Guidelines for Inclusive Language make it clear that there is no issue with masculine imagery for God *per se*, but that the use of exclusively masculine language for God excludes many vibrant and rich, and biblically rooted images for God that are feminine or gender-neutral in nature. In adopting expansive and inclusive language, we are attempting not only to do justice to the diversity of humanity, but also to adopt a fuller vision of God.

### **The Trinity**

In regards to the first concern, there was unanimous agreement expressed in the Committee that the first question should retain an explicitly Trinitarian understanding of God. The United Church’s understanding of God is governed by its doctrine, and all four subordinate standards unambiguously affirm the Triune God of Christian tradition, even while using a variety of images (such as Mother) that expand on traditional language. A non-Trinitarian or Unitarian



understanding of God would require first a revision to the church's doctrine itself. The language of the question could be revised, but it would need to be revised within a Trinitarian framework.

### **Inclusive Language and the Traditional Trinitarian Formula**

The Committee acknowledged the solely masculine language of the question as a legitimate concern in terms of the church's commitment to inclusive language. To that end, the Committee considered various alternative wordings for expressing the Trinity, with several different renderings proposed that attempted gender neutral or gender inclusive language. In the end, however, the Committee concluded that it was ultimately preferable to retain the present language.

While the United Church's most recent faith statement, *A Song of Faith*, expresses the Trinity in a variety of ways, the traditional Trinitarian formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one of them. In the Committee's view this formulation of the Trinity is not problematic per se. It is problematic if it is the only way in which the Trinity is expressed in the course of a Celebration of Ministries Service, let alone if all the imagery used of God in such a service is masculine. A diversity of language and imagery should be present in the service. However, unless the opening question or vow is very lengthy, only one expression of the Trinity can be used. Why, then, would one choose this formulation?

First, according to scripture, "Father" is the term Jesus used most in referring to God. Therefore, the use of the term "Father" has a scriptural warrant that makes its use, as one image for God, appropriate. The traditional expression of the Trinity is also the most explicit expression of this concept in scripture. Our doctrine, while regularly reforming according to context, is always rooted in and "subordinate to scripture" as our foundational story.

Second, this expression of the Trinity is one the United Church requires in baptism, given agreements we have made with ecumenical partners, the position of the World Council of Churches, and our awareness that, for many denominations, the use of this expression of the Trinity for baptism is required for the baptism to be seen as valid. Given the intention in the Preamble of linking commissioning and ordination to the baptismal vocation that belongs to each Christian, the use of the traditional Trinitarian formula in the question asked of persons during this service seemed to strengthen the linkage.

Third, the concern has been expressed: "Does requiring someone being authorized for ministry in the United Church to say 'yes' to a question using the traditional Trinitarian formula create a crisis of conscience for that individual?" To that concern, the Committee has two responses. First, all our language about God is metaphorical. God is neither male nor female, neither a rock nor a shepherd, nor any of the other terms used of God in scripture. All the images have a place, and some undoubtedly are more meaningful to any one of us than are others. So, we would expect that a person would move beyond the literal image here if such an image is less meaningful for that individual. Second, someone who is admitted, recognized, ordained, or commissioned will need to be able to say the traditional Trinitarian formula on any occasion

when they do a baptism. There, as here, the liturgy for the entire service of worship can and should use multiple images for God. Just as additional imagery for the Trinitarian God can supplement but not replace the traditional baptismal Trinitarian formula in a baptismal service, the Celebration of Ministries Service can do the same. But if an individual is not able to answer this question affirmatively because of the language, how is that person going to be able to use this same language each time they preside at a baptism?

### **A Remit?**

Another reason to retain the present language is a related but more practical one. To change the language of either the Preamble or the questions would require a Category 3 remit, with the resulting vote requiring a positive response by an absolute majority of pastoral charges as well as of regional councils. While the requirement of a remit is not a sufficient reason in and of itself, changes like this require grassroots energy and broad support. Neither the discussion at General Council 43 nor the Committee's own discussions suggest that such energy and support are present in the church.

### **An Alternative**

Nonetheless, the Committee agreed that the issue of inclusive language should be addressed. While the language in the first question is not gender-inclusive or expansive, this issue may be addressed liturgically in the Celebration of Ministries Service as an alternative to a remit. The Committee judged that in thinking about language, the service as a whole should be considered, rather than the questions as an isolated unit. We expect that Regional Council Committees entrusted with planning Celebration of Ministries Services already utilize additional images of and terminology for God and the persons of the Trinity throughout the service; those that do not should be encouraged to do so. This approach would achieve the goal of complementing the traditional gendered language of Father and Son; it would also enrich the liturgical celebration as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

The Committee concludes that the language of the Preamble and the questions in the Celebration of Ministries Service continue to be meaningful for our present context and suited for faithful ordained/commissioned/recognized ministry. It affirms the Trinitarian nature of the first vow, and the ongoing place of the traditional formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also affirms our commitment to inclusive language. Regional councils should include a diversity of gendered and gender-neutral imagery for God throughout their Celebration of Ministries Services alongside the traditional Trinitarian language of the first question.

## **MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Was provided as a video rather than a document.

## MANUAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Manual Committee is composed of the following elected members:

Linda Anderson	Fred Braman
Catherine Grant	Beth Moore
Mary-Beth Moriarity (Chair)	

Cynthia Gunn, Legal Counsel, provides staff resource to the Committee.

Since the 2018 meeting of the 43rd General Council, Alan Boyd and Peter Bishop completed their terms as elected members, and John Burton completed his term as Chair. Sadly, elected member Margaret Bain passed away during this period. The Committee is grateful for the service of all these members.

In 2019, the Committee welcomed Catherine Grant and Beth Moore to its work. Mary-Beth Moriarity was appointed Chair of the Committee after having served two terms as a Committee member.

The role of the Manual Committee is to assist the General Secretary with preparing *The Manual* for publication. The Committee acts as a resource to the General Secretary in proposing wording for the amendment of existing by-laws or the creation of new ones to reflect policy changes made by the General Council. The Committee's work includes addressing any gaps or inconsistencies in *The Manual*, and recommending improvements to the language and style of *The Manual* generally. There are a number of proposals from the General Secretary to the 44th General Council for these purposes.

The Committee is also responsible for drafting remits for circulation by the General Secretary to regional councils and, when required, pastoral charges. This includes the remit authorized by the 43rd General Council at its annual meeting in 2019: Remit 1 - Article 10 of the Basis of Union re: Ministry Personnel. The remit received the necessary authorization, approval, and enactment and so was incorporated into the 2021 edition of *The Manual*.

The Committee met in person in September 2018 and October 2019, and virtually in September 2020, October 2021, and December 2021. While the Committee has missed the ease of discussion and synergy of in-person meetings, the virtual format provides flexibility to hold shorter and more frequent meetings.

The work at the September 2018 meeting was considerable. Much of *The Manual* had to be rewritten to reflect the new denominational structure, following the enactment of the four restructuring remits by the 43rd General Council 2018. The Executive of the General Council approved the major revision of *The Manual* and it was published as the 2019 edition, coming into effect on January 1, 2019.

*The Manual* is now published annually to reflect the annual meeting cycle of the General Council. This allows for changes to be made to *The Manual* more frequently than once every three years as in the past. Since, however, the vast majority of new policies and policy revisions are approved by the General Council at its in-person triennial meeting, it is expected that any major changes to *The Manual* will also be made triennially in the edition published after the General Council in-person meeting.

As I bring this report to a close, I also want to offer my deep gratitude, our deep gratitude, to Cynthia Gunn, whose work and ministry has been invaluable to our committee and to our wider United Church. Cynthia has been for many of us the keeper of memory and history, an assuring and supportive presence, a constant in the midst of transition and change, and source of deep wisdom on the other end of the phone line or email message. Her love for this United Church evident in all that she has offered to us. Thank you Cynthia and blessings as you transition to this new phase in life's journey.

Mary-Beth Moriarity  
Chair

## JUDICIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The structure and mandate of the Judicial Committee changed significantly as a result of decisions made by the 43rd General Council 2018, including the changes to the structure of The United Church of Canada and the establishment of the Office of Vocation.

Prior to January 2019, the Judicial Committee consisted of an Executive of 13 members [one from each of the Conferences] and a pool of members available to serve on a formal hearing or appeal committee.

Commencing in January 2019, the Judicial Committee is composed of up to nine members appointed by the General Council on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee. At least four of those members will be specialists in adjudication.

The Judicial Committee is now responsible for dealing with appeals to the General Council of:

- i. decisions of formal hearings held by a community of faith or regional council;
- ii. other decisions of regional councils;
- iii. decisions of the Executive of the General Council;
- iv. decisions of the Board of Vocation; and
- v. rulings of the General Secretary of the General Council.

This includes determining whether an appeal meets the grounds for an appeal hearing as set out in *The Manual*, and appointing an appeal committee to hear the appeal if the grounds have been met.

In the term from September 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019 [prior to implementation of the new structure], the following item was dealt with and is reported below:

### Item 1

The Judicial Committee had appointed a Formal Hearing Committee to hold a formal hearing to consider whether to place Reverend Gretta Vosper's name onto the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary). The Formal Hearing Committee met once in Toronto on November 6, 2018. Prior, however, to the Formal Hearing taking place, Toronto Conference, Reverend Gretta Vosper, and West Hill United Church came to a settlement of all the issues dispensing with the necessity of a Formal Hearing.

In the period from January 1, 2019 to November 30, 2021 the following items were dealt with and are reported below:

### Item 2

Elizabeth Amirault appealed the Decision of the Candidacy Board of Quebec and East Ontario to terminate her candidacy. Reverend Margaret McKechny and Reverend Kathleen McCallum did not participate in the decision related to whether or not to hear the appeal as they were part of the Judicial Committee Executive which considered Elizabeth Amirault's appeal in 2012.

Reverend Catherine Gaw did not participate in the deliberations due to the possibility of the perception of a conflict of interest. The Judicial Committee considered the statement submitted by the appellant and the reply from the Candidacy Board and concluded it would not hear the appeal as the grounds for an appeal were not met.

### **Item 3**

Fairlawn Avenue United Church initiated an appeal of the decision by Shining Waters Regional Council through its Communities of Faith Commission not to approve the request of Fairlawn Avenue United Church for an extension of their intentional interim ministry to June 30, 2023.

The matter was resolved and the appeal withdrawn before the Judicial Committee met to deal with it.

Current members of the Judicial Committee, The United Church of Canada:

Reverend Margaret McKechney, Chair

Mr. Jim Blanchard

Reverend Catherine Gaw

Ms. Diana Ginn

Ms. Leslyn Gombakomba

Reverend Kathleen McCallum

Mr. David Smith

Mr. Stuart Whitley

## BOARD OF VOCATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT TO GENERAL COUNCIL 44

### Origin: Board of Vocation

#### Executive Summary

The 43rd meeting of the General Council in July 2018 adopted the remits and proposals implementing changes to organizational structure and governance of The United Church of Canada effective January 1, 2019. These included the establishment of an Office of Vocation with membership, responsibilities, and organization laid out in *The Manual 2019* section E. The Board of Vocation is the elected body that oversees the Office of Vocation, “honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry.”

The Office of Vocation ensures faithful, well-equipped, and effective ministry personnel, where applicants are encouraged, candidates for vocational ministry grow in learning and competency, and where allegations of ministry personnel misconduct are dealt with quickly and fairly, and action taken for the well-being of ministry personnel and communities of faith.

The Indigenous Office of Vocation is nested within the Office of Vocation. It is supported by the Board of Vocation and the Grandmothers Circle, regularly consulting with the National Indigenous Council, the Elders Council, the Indigenous Candidacy Board, and the Board of Vocation.

135 people serve on the Board of Vocation and its committees. Prior to 2019, approximately 1,400 volunteers undertook this work under the jurisdiction of 84 presbyteries, 12 Conferences, and one Circle.

There are 229 candidates and applicants currently in the Candidacy Pathway. Since inception, 109 ministry personnel have been commissioned, ordained, or recognized. There have been 175 inquiries and applications for Admission to the Order of Ministry from other denominations. 17 ministry personnel have begun serving United Church of Canada communities of faith through mutual recognition of their ordination, from the United Church of Christ, USA; Disciples of Christ; United Church of Christ in the Philippines; and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

Two designated lay ministers were placed on the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List, eleven ordered ministers on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary), and one on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary).

In its first years, the Board of Vocation celebrates the devoted, imaginative, and compassionate work of all the components of the Office of Vocation. The Board of Vocation highlights improved remedial work, leading to healthier pastoral relationships and less need for Formal Hearings and disciplinary work, a diverse and effective group of volunteers, consistency in standards and practices across the whole of The United Church of Canada.

The Board also acknowledges the challenges in nurturing a new system, communicating effectively the role and resources of the Office of Vocation, struggles with systemic issues that

leave too many Admittands without calls or appointments, and finding effective ways to promote and facilitate equity across the Office of Vocation and all that they serve.

The Office of Vocation is included in the scheduled full evaluation of the denominational restructuring in 2025.

### **Overview of the Office and Board of Vocation**

The 43rd meeting of the General Council in July 2018 adopted the remits and proposals implementing changes to organizational structure and governance of The United Church of Canada effective January 1, 2019. These included the establishment of an Office of Vocation with membership, responsibilities, and organization laid out in *The Manual 2019* section E.

Principles informing the formation and ongoing implementation of the Office of Vocation (ROP-GC43 p. 206) are:

- Consistency: the denomination articulates policy and implements the standards.
- Flexible and responsive to emerging realities, including contextual and cultural variations.
- Paid, accountable, and well-trained staff supporting oversight and discipline of ministry personnel.
- A design integrating the candidacy pathway remit and work of other task groups, for example the Admissions task group, avoiding duplication and parallel systems.
- A small elected body consisting of ministry personnel and laity make decisions on remedial and disciplinary matters.

The Board of Vocation is the elected body that oversees the Office of Vocation, “honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry.” Its members and the various commissions/boards and committees of the Board of Vocation gathered for training in November 2018 and began their work January 1, 2019. Six Office of Vocation Ministers were hired and deployed to the same grouping of regional councils as served by Regional Council Executive Ministers. An additional Office of Vocation Minister serves the Indigenous Church across the country. Their primary roles are support for a candidacy board, serving ministry personnel particularly in the areas of vocational support, and partnering with regional council staff in response to potentially unravelling pastoral relationships.

Not all commissions (boards) and committees of the Office of Vocation were at full capacity at the start, and the Board of Vocation has partnered with the Nominations processes to appoint people as needed, and according to the commitments for equity and inclusion of the General Council. The changes in the process for Admission agreed to by Permanent Committee – Ministry Employment Policies and Services in 2018 were implemented by the Board of Vocation in Fall 2019, including the appointment of a very diverse Admission Board.

Training has been ongoing in every part of the Office of Vocation, as has reflection to identify best practices and ensure alignment with the principles. The representatives from the seven candidacy boards have gathered regularly by Zoom for training, and the rest of the



commissions/boards and committees met in person November 2019 to build relationship and review progress. The Board of Vocation received a detailed accountability report from staff and elected members September 2020 and provided an overview of progress and trends noted to the General Council Executive following two years of work.

Further resources including the design are available at the [Office of Vocation webpage](#) of united-church.ca.

The Office of Vocation is included in the scheduled full evaluation of the denominational restructuring in 2025. The Board of Vocation will be collaborating around the General Council Strategic Plan with respect to the leadership initiatives.

### **Alignment with the Principles**

The Office of Vocation is a single, denominationally based entity with responsibilities for ministry formation, Admission, credentialing of Intentional Interim Ministers and Educational Supervisors, and oversight and discipline of ministry personnel, previously held by 84 presbyteries and 13 Conferences. It carries out its responsibilities with approximately one-tenth of the elected members previously involved. It has met the principles from the pilot projects of candidacy pathway and Effective Leadership Healthy Pastoral Relationships, which were:

- paid, accountable, well-trained staff supporting oversight and discipline;
- a small elected body consisting of both ministry personnel and laity making decisions on remedial and disciplinary matters;
- a less complicated system with fewer volunteers and less duplication; and
- removing oversight and discipline from the place of collegiality.

Its elected members and staff regularly examine whether the balance between regional flexibility and denominational consistency is appropriate and adjustments are made. Identified over the last three years are the values of Spirit-led discernment, respect, flexibility, consistency, adaptability to new insights, and timeliness.

Many ministry personnel engaging the processes, for example, of credentialing as an Intentional Interim Minister or responding to a concern raised about them comment on the care and respect with which they are treated in interviews. The Remedial Committee, which works with ministry personnel in the light of findings of investigations or reviews, have developed an option of allowing a ministry personnel to step back from ministry with dignity through a Memorandum of Agreement, rather than face a formal hearing to have their name placed on the Discontinued Service List (disciplinary).

While a few candidates who do not like the feedback received from Candidacy Boards can be publicly critical, overall the approximately 150 candidates have embraced the Candidacy Pathway. The living out of the guiding principles followed by the Office of Vocation and the other components of the restructuring are still being adopted by the constituency. While we know that change and transition create grief, anger, and a range of emotional responses, three years is not a long time for a denomination to effectively move everyone through a change

curve of this magnitude. This is particularly true when compounded by the COVID-19 global pandemic, which has created exhaustion for communities of faith and ministry personnel, making it difficult for some members to adjust to and understand the culture shifts inherent in the formation of the Office of Vocation.

## **Culture Shifts**

### **Board of Vocation**

The 15-member Board of Vocation has grown into its governance role as, along with the rest of the church, it experiences the impact of the denominational changes. In the fall of 2019, the Board of Vocation, in conjunction with the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, struck a task group to develop guidelines for “Laying on of Hands” to offer the regional councils to guide consistency in New Ministries Services. Developed in part through the Anglican-United Dialogue, a theological rationale for the “split episcopate” is provided in the [Appendix](#). The actual guidelines were revised in consultation with Regional Council Executive Ministers but not actually adopted. The theological rationale, however, was adopted and is offered here as it provides a foundation for the work of the Office of Vocation. The Board of Vocation understands itself to not only be governance with certain responsibilities given to it, but also to be leaders in the vocation of ministry and caregivers for its practitioners.

The Board of Vocation follows the pattern of General Council regarding its meetings, with separate listening, discussion, and decision times. It has provided members for the Ministry Streams Task Group, and a Communications Working Group that has since disbanded. It has put a lot of energy into anti-racism training and having conversations and making decisions that respect diverse voices and create equity of power for the variety of identities.

### **Indigenous Office of Vocation**

The first Call to the Church received by the 43rd General Council calls for:

- A. The establishment of an Indigenous office or department within the Office of Vocation so that ministry personnel in our communities have services provided by people who are knowledgeable of Indigenous ways of being and working,
- B. That this office or department have an advisory group that is engaged in the development of Indigenous ministry policy.

Subsequent calls also relate to the Office of Vocation: formation to be grounded in a trauma-informed approach; ministry placements options outside of the church context; the establishment of an Indigenous Testamur; and decision making that is highly consultative of Indigenous communities of faith.

The initial visible sign of an Indigenous Office of Vocation within the Office of Vocation was the Office of Vocation Minister position and the Candidacy Board serving the Indigenous Church with the elected members all being Indigenous. Gradually protocols are being developed, including consultation around the “medicine bundle,” interviewing candidates and applicants, and working with the National Indigenous Council and regional councils around liturgies for commissioning, ordination, and recognition.

In 2020 the advisory group was established—the Grandmothers' Circle with the two Indigenous members of the Board of Vocation along with two other women. From four different Indigenous nations, the Grandmothers are consulting with the National Indigenous Council, the Elders Council, the Indigenous Candidacy Board, and the Board of Vocation as they identify areas for their focus.

Regular cross-unit staff consultation ensures areas for development are identified and resourced. All staff within the Office of Vocation are trained in the trauma-informed approach.

A recent development is a partnership between the Southwestern Ontario Candidacy Board and the Indigenous Candidacy Board where a non-Indigenous candidate accountable to the former is completing a Supervised Ministry Education (SME) experience in an Indigenous community of faith where the model of an elder/mentor and a Grandmothers' Circle will provide assessment and evaluation for the SME.

### **Candidacy Pathway**

There are four notable culture shifts related to the Candidacy Pathway.

Each person moves through the pathway at their own pace and order. The Candidacy Pathway policy and procedures allow for more equity compared to the previous Education and Students system, as each person is treated as an individual as opposed to an "exception to the rule."

Candidates are expected to take responsibility for their process, for example forming their own "circle of accompaniment" rather than, as previously, having presbytery appoint them a discernment committee.

Candidacy Boards focus on learning outcomes, not process alone. Learning outcomes for each candidate come from their vocational assessment and other feedback received along the way.

Supervised ministry experiences for those in the Designated Lay Ministry and ordained streams are found through the pastoral relations system. Retraining the regional council bodies and staff along with communities of faith engaging their Living Faith Story has proved challenging. Grants for communities of faith are available.

### **Oversight and Discipline of Ministry Personnel**

The culture shift ensuring that regional councils can focus on collegiality by having the Office of Vocation focus on responding to formal concerns is still being lived out. The feedback from ministry personnel in the Effective Leadership Healthy Pastoral Relationship project, that some ministers were reluctant to build collegiality within presbyteries because their colleague might need to adjudicate a disciplinary matter, was addressed in the new structure. For some ministry personnel there is perception that the bodies within the Office of Vocation responsible for oversight—specifically the Response and Remedial Committees—seem distant and unknown. These committees have eight members each from across the country reflecting various diversities and are building much wisdom and expertise in supporting the learning of ministry personnel who have concerns raised about them. The perception that the Office of Vocation

has more power in these areas than a presbytery had is not factual and may be fed by lack of awareness of the role and by society's pervading lack of trust of those to whom we are accountable.

The Remedial Committee is identifying a pattern amongst the ministry personnel it is seeing—of the 34 cases, they are predominantly male ministry personnel (80%) with little collegial support, serving where there is no system of constructive feedback within the community of faith or beyond it, and where there was reluctance to seek help from the wider church early enough. Areas of growth typically identified for directed programs are self-management and relationship management (emotional intelligence), understanding the community of faith as an emotional system, using ministerial power appropriately, and developing expertise in conflict management. Engaging conversations are happening regarding how these skills might be developed earlier in ministry formation or as part of ongoing continuing education.

In order to live into the principle of consistency, the Office of Vocation is taking seriously its responsibilities with respect to ensuring standards for accreditation are being met. These include annual declaration of criminal charges and mandatory training. Ironically, the culture shift that candidates are struggling with is mirrored amongst ministry personnel—taking responsibility for our own requirements. Over the triennium this is improving, with far fewer ministry personnel each year failing to be in compliance with filing the annual declaration. ChurchHub allows ministry personnel to update their own addresses and other information, which is also part of the culture shift for us taking responsibility for our own information.

### **The Registry of Accredited Ministry Personnel**

The culture shift that separates the membership of a ministry personnel in a regional council from their standing and eligibility to seek call or appointment, the responsibility of the Office of Vocation, has led to some confusion. The policy adopted by GC43 included the language of a "Registry of Accredited Ministry Personnel." During the first half of the triennium this has been clarified by the Board of Vocation. *The Manual* defines good standing, and the Board of Vocation adopts the standards for accreditation. A ministry personnel can be in good standing but not on the registry of accredited ministry personnel—a prerogative for retired ministry personnel who may not want to keep their mandatory training up to date or file their annual declarations. They maintain their ministry standing but are not eligible for appointment.

Another conceptual shift is understanding "standards for accreditation." When the General Council began to add mandatory training, first for boundaries and then for racial justice, it was not part of a cohesive pedagogy or vocational system for ongoing training. As we live into the requirements from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example around Indigenous history, traditions, and practices, how will these requirements be met by current ministry personnel and communities of faith? What about the proposal for ministry personnel to be trained in mental health issues? The Standards for Accreditation Committee is on the leading edge of this conceptual shift and is bringing recommendations to the Board of Vocation as we live into Standards for Training, Accreditation and Continuing Education (*The Manual 2019* E.2.2.). Consultation about the efficacy of effecting culture shift in our denomination through

mandatory training for ministry personnel was a consultation with the General Council Executive in 2021. A staff member is focusing their sabbatical on models of continuing education from other denominations and professional colleges.

### **ChurchHub**

Concurrent with the need for the Office of Vocation to gather both data and documents about all ministry personnel and candidates into one place was the broader decision by the General Council Office Information Technology (IT) Steering Group to consolidate and update the more than 30 databases used in the General Council system. In addition, the General Council directed action around environmental sustainability, including moving away from paper files.

Development of electronic means for storage of documents and a database began in 2017, prompted in part by the move from two and a half floors to one at the General Council Office. Paper personnel files no longer exist. Files are stored in SharePoint, and the database is in Dynamics, both part of the MS Office 365 Cloud suite. The database is accessed through the portal—which is used by various groups, including now all the boards and committees—called ChurchHub. State-of-the-art security protects the information and controls who has access to what information.

While ChurchHub is associated with the Office of Vocation, it is far broader in its application. The complicated development, rollout, and slow uptake in the constituency flags how large a culture shift this is. It is, however, proving an effective tool for pastoral relations, minimizing “backroom” deals and ensuring ministry personnel are paid at their category. For the Office of Vocation, ChurchHub allows ministry personnel to file their annual declaration and take responsibility for updating their mandatory training. Behind the scenes the data and documents are accessible to both Office of Vocation staff and appropriate regional council staff. There are teething pains with the technology related both to the comfort of the users and the compatibility or ownership of the computer equipment, and the ongoing design and development. A recent launch is using ChurchHub as a tool for each step in the Candidacy Pathway.

### **Summary**

The ability to implement this complex new entity with simplified processes, the Office of Vocation, is due to the commitment of around 135 elected members and a robust staff team. Catching the vision of “faithful, well-equipped, and effective ministry personnel” and how the Office of Vocation might support the vocation of ministry has been significant in living out the principles and values. The Board of Vocation thanks all our ministry personnel and candidates for responding to God’s call in the present challenging time and echoes the words offered at the close of the PC-MEPS report (p. 429, ROP GC43) to GC43:

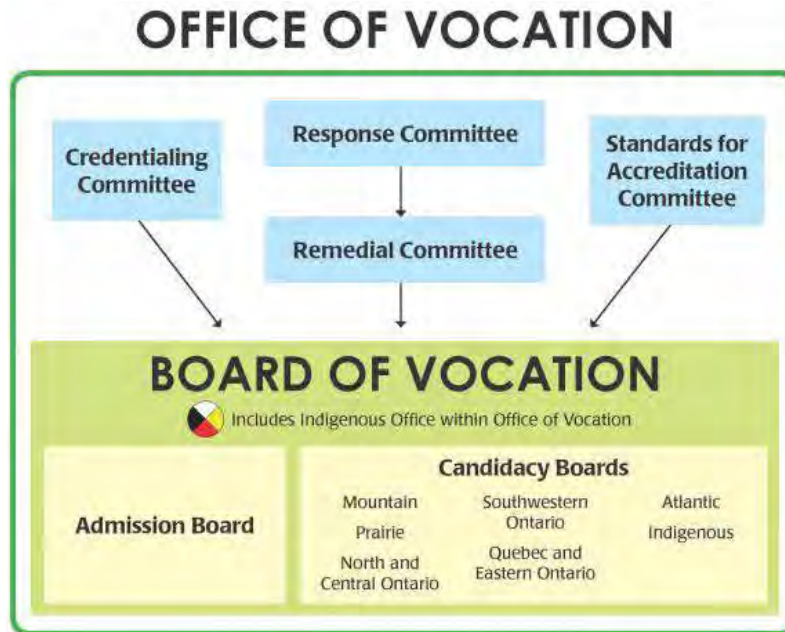
*Paid accountable ministry in The United Church of Canada is both a vocational response to a sacred call and a profession with standards of practice and ethical obligations. Ministry personnel serve in all aspects of our church’s life, in the regular pastoral, liturgical, and education roles, public witness and governance.*

*We give thanks for their call and for their commitment to ministry in this denomination.*

**Recommendations to General Council 44**

Proposals originating with Board of Vocation (via GCE November 19, 20, 2021)

1. GS 124 Updated Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process – Short Term Supply
2. BV 01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program



[Structure of the Office of Vocation](http://united-church.ca) webpage on united-church.ca

## Appendix to the Board of Vocation Accountability Report to General Council 44:

- Detailed Work of the Committees of the Board of Vocation
- The Numbers of Interviews, Decisions, People Involved
- Theological Reflection on the Ministry of Episcopate in the United Church

Origin: Board of Vocation

Date: January 11, 2022

### DETAILED WORK OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF VOCATION

This follows the arc of the vocational life of ministry personnel:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| I. Ministry formation:                          | Candidacy Boards  |
| II. Welcoming other leadership:                 | Admission Board<br>Mutual Recognition                               |
| III. Investment in vitality and specialisation: | Standards for Accreditation<br>Committee<br>Credentialing Committee |
| IV. Enhancing effectiveness:                    | Response Committee<br>Remedial Committee                            |
| V. Discontinued Service Lists and Re-admission: | Board of Vocation   |

### I. MINISTRY FORMATION: CANDIDACY BOARDS REPORT

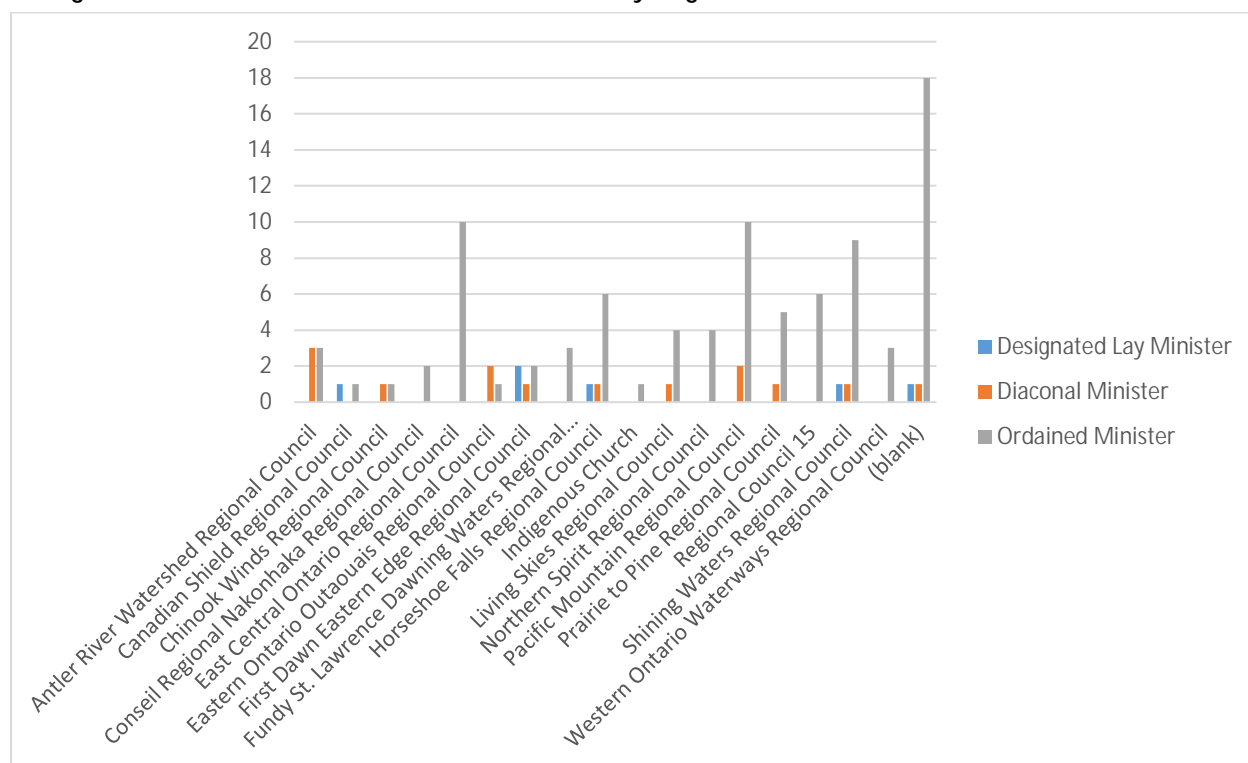
Candidates and Applicants as of December 2021

CANDIDACY BOARD	Total candidates and applicants	Candidates	Applicants
Indigenous	6	3	3
Pacific Mountain	33	23	10
Prairie	39	27	12
North and Central Ontario	29	14	15
Southwestern Ontario	46	31	15
Quebec and East Ontario	36	21	15
Atlantic	40	29	11
	<b>229</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>81</b>

**Ministry Streams as of December 2021**

MINISTRY STREAMS	Designated Lay Ministry	Diaconal Ministry	Ordained Ministry	Still discerning	Total
Candidates and applicants	30	20	170	9	229
Recognised, commissioned, ordained 2019–2021	6	14	89	N/A	109

**Recognised, Commissioned, Ordained 2019–2021 by Regional Council**



**Candidacy Board Observations**

Across the seven Candidacy Boards approximately 700 interviews conducted over three years for promise, suitability, Supervised Ministry Experience (SME) readiness, benchmark, or readiness for new ministries.

Large number of applicants, which is very encouraging. Office of Vocation Ministers report a few new contacts each month from those considering their call to ministry. Around 90% are second career, and there are increasing numbers with theology degrees either from non-United Church schools or from degree programs other than the M.Div from United Church schools. The time to onboard applicants for their promise interview is dependent on the commitment of the applicant to complete paperwork promptly and the schedules of Candidacy Boards.



Candidacy Boards members are feeling better equipped to journey with those in the pathway. Board members are becoming more comfortable with initiating guidance conversations with candidates to discuss withdrawing from candidacy and instead living into lay ministry through volunteer opportunities or Licenced Lay Worship Leadership training. These conversations are usually preceded by a lengthy period of non-engagement with the Pathway or the expressed desire from the candidate to have this conversation to explore their future in ministry.

In some parts of the country there is a shortage of SME sites. The Southwestern Ontario Candidacy Board needed 15 SME sites in 2020 and 27 in 2021. Atlantic Candidacy Board report no full-time SME sites, none with onsite educational supervisors, and few in urban areas. Candidacy Boards are aware of the extra time needed walking with candidates in a SME.

## II. WELCOMING OTHER LEADERSHIP: ADMISSION BOARD REPORT

### Credential Clearance (by Ministry Vocations Committee, a Cross-Unit Staff Group)

Number of inquiries and applications:	175
Number assigned one of 8 accompaniers for discernment:	163
Completed applications received by Ministry Vocations:	55 (52 cleared, 3 declined)

### Interviews Conducted by Admission Board from January 2020 to December 2021

	Approved	Declined	Total
Initial Interviews	47	5	52
Final interviews	17	1	18
Total			70

### Admission Ministers in Process

There are currently 69 ministers in the admission process including 53 searching:

Ministers approved prior to December 2019:	17
In appointment:	3
Ministers approved January 2020 and December 2021:	52
In appointment:	13
Offered appointment but waiting on immigration:	3

### Admission Board Observations

The members have been very generous with their time, and they have been very accommodating with ministers in different continents and time zones, who sometimes encountered significant challenges during the course of the interview. The members of the Board have worked assiduously, and commendably, at overcoming the challenges associated with being located across the four time zones, as well as interfacing with people who are themselves in completely different time zones.

The global pandemic has had a negative impact on people seeking to serve the United Church from other denominations, particularly those from out of country. There are delays in receiving and processing documents due to the lack of courier services from originating countries, or challenges delivering material to the GCO. Staff have been scanning received material weekly. Even more significant are the delays related to immigration, both the government processing then entry into the country. Combine this with communities of faith putting their searches on hold while not worshipping or meeting in person, and the Admission Board is deeply concerned about the long delay in Admission Ministers finding an initial appointment. Figures show that this impacts those who are not White disproportionately. This leads to questions around the extent of racism in communities of faith, and the kind of education or experience that might remedy this. While this is beyond the scope of the Admission Board, it creates huge concern for them as they accredit Admission Ministers for appointment while knowing how hard it will be for them to find a pastoral relationship.

#### **Welcoming Other Leadership: Mutual Recognition**

Since the formation of the Office of Vocation, 17 ministry personnel have begun serving United Church of Canada communities of faith through mutual recognition of their ordination, from the United Church of Christ, USA; Disciples of Christ; United Church of Christ in the Philippines; and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

### **III. INVESTMENT IN VITALITY AND SPECIALIZATION**

#### **Standards for Accreditation Committee**

Since January 1, 2019, the Standards Committee has met 21 times (last meeting was December 2, 2021).

The committee has approved the following standards:

- Learning Outcomes for Admission Ministers (September 11, 2019)
- Standard of Online Racial Justice Training (October 2, 2019)
- Learning Outcomes for Ministry of Supervision Training (April 15, 2020)
- Learning Outcomes for Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders Training (May 13, 2020)
- Learning Outcomes for Boundaries Refresher: Retiring with Grace (November 12, 2020)

(These standards can all be found in the Downloads section of the [Office of Vocation webpage](#) on united-church.ca.)

The committee also recommended to the Board of Vocation procedural policy for ministry personnel from other denominations who come to serve under the ethno-linguistic exception or as ordained supply for a short-amount of time, but do not fully engage with the Admission process.

Some of the work that continues includes standards on the continuing education and the professional development of ministry personnel (this includes recent work from the 43rd

General Council asking for mandatory training for ministry personnel in areas of mental health, anti-homophobia, and post-colonial learning).

### **Credentialing Committee**

Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2021, the Credentialing Committee has met 21 times.

The committee has completed the following for the designation of intentional interim ministers:

- 11 ministers interviewed and approved for continuing designation as an intentional interim minister (after completing their first intentional interim appointment)
- 1 minister interviewed and not approved for continuing designation as an intentional interim minister (after completing their first intentional interim appointment)
- 12 ministers interviewed and approved for initial designation as an intentional interim minister (after completing interim ministry training)
- transition team reports, exit interviews, and self-evaluations reviewed for 11 intentional interim ministers, and their gifts were affirmed for continuing designation (for intentional interim ministers who have been serving in intentional interim ministry for a number of years)

The committee has completed the following for the designation of educational supervisors:

- 60 individuals interviewed for designation as an educational supervisor (after completing the ministry of supervision training program)
- 59 individuals approved as educational supervisors

The committee has completed the following with applicants for readmission:

- 3 individuals interviewed for readmission
- 2 individuals recommended to the Board of Vocation to be readmitted to the order of ministry

The Office of Vocation has:

- 82 designated intentional interim ministers
- 447 designated educational supervisors (both lay people and ministry personnel)  
NB: including those who were previously designated or approved by Conferences

Some of the other work that the committee is involved in:

- The committee interviewed and supported one minister who felt called from being a diaconal minister to being an ordained minister.
- The committee interviewed and recommended to the Board of Vocation one individual, who was previously recognized as a Designated Lay Minister, be returned to the Registry of Accredited Ministry Personnel.

- The committee supports the work of the Canadian Forces Chaplaincy working group to provide an endorsement for those applying to serve in military chaplaincy by partnering with a couple of serving United Church military chaplains in this work.
- The committee continues to discuss how it can provide support to intentional interim ministers and educational supervisors.
- The committee reviewed four applications to the Interim Ministry Sabbatical Fund.
- The committee interviewed two ministers who required a letter of endorsement from the denomination as part of their re-accreditation process with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care.

#### IV. ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS

##### Response Committee

The Response Committee meets monthly (or more frequently if necessary, at the call of the chair). Concerns may be raised under the Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention and Response Policy (through the Regional Council Executive Minister) or the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy, or as an alleged breach of one or more of the Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel, which may lead to an investigation being conducted. A question about the effectiveness of a ministry personnel may lead to a review being ordered. In reviews and investigations, the investigators and reviewers are guided by the Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel which, while aspirational, describe the expectations, and the Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel, which define the minimum standards. The Response Committee may decline to take further action on concerns, unless under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy, where all concerns are investigated.

One member of the Response Committee attends any administrative leave hearings in relation to investigations, reviews, and sexual misconduct. In all investigations and reviews, the reports are sent to the Remedial Committee to guide the committee in meeting with the respondent and in determining next steps.

##### Consultants

There are 24 consultants on the roster available to work with complainants and respondents with respect to both the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Prevention Policy and the Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention and Response Policy. List of consultants available on the [Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training webpage](#), under Downloads.

The consultants are primarily members of the Order of Ministry, with some lay people (a nurse, a retired lawyer, and a psychologist who works with people with intellectual disabilities).

**Investigators and Reviewers**

We have a roster of nine investigators at this time.

Four of them are former police (RCMP, OPP, or municipal police service). Two are lawyers, one is ministry personnel, one is a human rights investigator, and one is an investigator from the financial services industry.

We have 10 reviewers on the roster. Half are ministry personnel, and the others have legal or investigative training along with training in United Church reviews.

We are currently recruiting more investigators and reviewers who are racialized. The policies of the United Church do provide for us to retain investigators with specialized experience or background if that is needed depending on the nature of the complaint, and we have done that when appropriate—for example, when a complaint alleges racism or systemic discrimination.

**Conflict Resolution Facilitators**

Another round of conflict resolution facilitators were recruited and trained in 2021, bringing the total available to regional councils and the Office of Vocation to 20. Individuals bring training in conflict and mediation and are oriented to the United Church dispute resolution policy.

**Observations**

Ensuring enough background is received by the Response Committee to make a decision about launching a review or investigation when requested by regional council. A couple of times Response Committee declined regional council's request to launch a review. On another occasion, they agreed to launch a review and requested regional council to conduct a review of the community of faith. Regional councils have also sought a joint review when they decide to review a community of faith. Particularly in the pandemic, it has been challenging to coordinate the work a regional council is doing with a community of faith and the directed program for the ministry personnel.

Collaboration with regional council around early invention or joint reviews. Typically through staff holding case conferences.

Committee members collaborate with regional council on decisions about administrative leave either following a criminal charge or pending the outcome of an investigation or review.

The committee appreciated the deeper relational work asked of them by the Board of Vocation regarding the matter of a request for Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) (DSL(V)) that seemed grounded in conflict with staff people.

Successful follow-up from committee members with the less than 10 remaining ministry personnel who were well overdue in their filing of their annual declaration of criminal charges.

### Remedial Committee

The Remedial Committee meets twice monthly (or more frequently if necessary, at the call of the chair). All the reports from the investigators and reviewers concerning ministry personnel come to the Remedial Committee for adjudication of findings and proposal of remedy if appropriate. They meet with the respondent for their response to the report and subsequently invite feedback on the next steps. They meet with the respondent again to determine successful completion of the directed program if one was ordered.

### Observations

The Effectiveness Support Committees established to support the learning of a particular ministry personnel in a directed program are working well. Training resources are prepared.

The rise in Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention and Response complaints points to a lack of understanding on behalf of some leaders and congregants about respectful relationships and civility in congregational life.

Remedial Committee is choosing to request a formal hearing for the name of a ministry personnel as a last resort and trying to resolve matters other ways. The Board of Vocation approved the changes to appendix A of the *Office of Vocation: Structure and Responsibilities* resource to increase the options for resolution available to the Remedial Committee.

### V. CONCERNS RAISED ABOUT MINISTRY PERSONNEL JANUARY 2019–DECEMBER 2021

Cases (Type)	Number	Outcomes
Inherited from Presbyteries and Conferences	7	6 resolved—2 through MOAs for DSL(V) and 4 through successful completion of directed program. 1 in process, awaiting adjudication of human rights complaint against London Conference and United Church of Canada.
Reviews	9, including one administrative leave hearing—MP on administrative leave	4 successful completion of directed program. 1 successful completion of directed program to be determined in January 2022. 1 Memorandum of Agreement for full retirement. 1 found effective. 1 review in process.
Investigations	12 workplace harassment	4 unfounded, no further action on report. 3 successful completion of directed program. 2 directed programs in process. 1 MOA for DSL(V) 1 report adjudicated in January 2022. 1 investigation in process.

	5 ethical breaches	1 resolved with Minutes of Settlement. 1 resolved with restored good standing and mental health care in place through MOA. 1 no further action once mandatory training was completed. 1 unfounded allegation. 1 to be adjudicated in February 2022.
<b>Criminal Charge</b>	1	Formal Hearing established.

**VI. BOARD OF VOCATION: DISCONTINUED SERVICE LIST AND READMISSION**

The Office of Vocation is responsible for administering and maintaining the following lists: a) the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary); b) the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary); and c) the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List (*The Manual* E.2.9). Readmission is the process by which people who were previously ministry personnel within The United Church of Canada and are on the Discontinued Service List are restored to good standing and service.

A net loss of 12 ministry personnel.

**Ministry Personnel Readmitted to the Order of Ministry or Placed on the Discontinued Service List**

<b>Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List</b> By their request.	<b>Discontinued Service List (Voluntary)</b> By their request.	<b>Discontinued Service List (Voluntary)</b> Serving another denomination.	<b>Discontinued Service List (Voluntary)</b> through Memorandum of Agreement.	<b>Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary)</b>	<b>Re-admission – removed from DSL</b>
2	5	3	3	1	2

**Theological Reflection on the Ministry of Episcopate in the United Church**

The ministry of episcopate (governance, oversight, authority, guardianship) is one of the historic three-fold ministries that evolved within the early church communities and became engrained in the developing structure of church governance. The ecclesial power entrusted to the episcopate varies among churches, and there is no one model or definition that fits all. The influence, power, and importance of the episcopate, as well as the place in which it resides, has varied in history and presently varies in the many churches of Christ throughout the world.

The most significant divergence occurred in the 16th century between ecclesial traditions that retained a historic, personal episcopate and those that developed conciliar models of oversight, vesting the functions of episcopate within elected bodies that have a revolving leadership (such as The United Church of Canada).

The World Council of Churches, in a recent paper, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision Faith and Order and the Renewal of the Churches*, makes a strong case for the exercise of episcopate regardless of church structure:

*The Church, as the body of Christ and the eschatological people of God, is built up by the Holy Spirit through a diversity of gifts or ministries. This diversity calls for a ministry of coordination so that these gifts may enrich the whole Church, its unity and mission. The faithful exercise of the ministry of episkopé under the Gospel by persons chosen and set aside for such ministry is a requirement of fundamental importance for the Church's life and mission. (The Church: Towards a Common Vision: WCC Publishing, 2013)*

Because the functions of episcopate are crucial to being church, it is worth understanding its presence in our own denomination. Further, because the laying on of hands at a service of ordination, commissioning, or recognition is not just a sign of the presence of the Spirit but also a sign of the apostolic nature of ministry and its historic continuance, the place of episcopate in this ritual must be clear and well-articulated.

### **The Split Episcopate in the United Church**

Since its formation in 1925 the United Church's episcopal responsibilities have been located not in the person of a bishop but in the various courts of the church, i.e., the session, the presbytery, the Conference, and the General Council chaired by the Moderator. The session was responsible for oversight and administration of baptism, confirmation, and membership. The presbytery performed the ministry of episcopate on the church's behalf, being responsible for oversight of both the care and supervision of local congregations and the support and discipline of ministry personnel. The Conferences provided oversight by ensuring that ordinands, commissionands, those being recognized, and those being admitted were in "essential agreement" with doctrine, and in carrying out ordinations, commissions, and recognitions through the laying on of hands. The General Council had oversight for the continuity of doctrine.

However, at the 43rd General Council in 2018, the church took a radical new approach to the ministry of episcopate by splitting the episcopal function between two newly created bodies, 16 regional councils and the National Indigenous Council, and the Office of Vocation, a new entity within the national denomination structure. This split episcopate was officially launched on January 1, 2019.

The Office of Vocation now has responsibility for the episcopal function of oversight of clergy, specifically: supporting the processes for the discernment and training of ministry personnel, the determination of their fitness/readiness for accreditation, the fulfillment of continuing education standards, and the formal processes for oversight and discipline of ministry personnel.

In many ways this oversight is fulfilled in a conciliar fashion by the Board of Vocation, a body of elected members (lay and ordered) that has oversight over the Office of Vocation itself. The



committees that report to this Board do the work of credentialing, admitting clergy from other denominations, and determining remedial plans for clergy and putting clergy on the discontinued service list. In regard to the oversight and discipline of ministry personnel, the Board of Vocation has specific responsibility for establishing a Formal Hearing Committee or an Appeal Committee.

The seven Candidacy Boards, which act as commissions of the Board of Vocation, determine the fitness and readiness of those who feel called to be ministers. This includes determining whether they are in “essential agreement” with the doctrines contained in the Basis of Union and see those doctrinal statements as in substance agreeable to the teachings of scripture. This fulfills the episcopal function of ensuring the historic succession of the Christian faith.

Although the United Church continues to function in a conciliar manner, some of the episcopal functions carried out by the Office of Vocation are represented in a person, the Ministers for the Office of Vocation. These seven positions are the face of the Office of Vocation providing oversight in the regions. Though they have limited and shared authority they are nonetheless symbols of the work of the episcopate in the regions.

The other side of the split episcopate are the regions of the church. These 16 bodies, along with the National Indigenous Council, fulfill their episcopal function by oversight of communities of faith. The President (or equivalent) of each region, or the Presiding Elder of the National Indigenous Council, who is installed by a laying-on of hands, fulfills the personal aspects of the episcopate by acting as the presider at all meetings of the regions. The oversight function that the President (or equivalent) represents is carried out by the various committees of each region. The membership of each region is made up of all clergy within their bounds and elected members from each community of faith in the region.

## UNITED PROPERTY RESOURCE CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: Tim Blair, CEO - UPRC/Kindred Works

### Report

This report consists of an overview, followed by more detailed comments in several key areas including platform, pipeline and social, environmental and governance responsibility.

### Overview

The United Church of Canada (“UCC”) created United Property Resource Corporation (“UPRC”) as a separate for-profit corporation, which was incorporated on July 17, 2019.

UPRC is continuing to build capacity to develop and manage properties on behalf of its shareholder, the UCC, when missionally appropriate and financially viable. This service is provided at the request of UCC Communities of Faith, Regional Councils, and other UCC entities.

UPRC respects the polity and governance structure of property within the denomination. UPRC will not hold title to, or any interest in, the property being developed. The beneficial owner of the property remains the local community of faith or Regional Council.

When UPRC was established, it became committed to incorporate UCC’s principles through its operations. This includes, without limitation:

- ensuring continued availability of space for worship and Christian faith formation for UCC Communities of Faith;
- providing affordable housing in Canada;
- tailoring facilities and spaces in the development and redevelopment of UCC church properties to meet community needs, especially the needs of community members who face structural barriers to full inclusion;
- creating environments that are accessible for all people;
- environmental sustainability;
- a commitment to right relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people, and to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- a commitment to anticolonialism and antiracism in all respects.

In addition, UCC and UPRC have made a joint commitment in cooperation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (“CMHC”) Innovation Fund to build 5,000 affordable units by 2037. To achieve this target, CMHC has made a \$20 million credit facility available to UPRC to fund pre-development expenses for affordable housing. As a condition of the Innovation Fund loan, UCC capitalized UPRC through a further loan and equity commitment.

To achieve this commitment of 5,000 affordable units, UPRC is focusing on the construction of new rental housing that targets one third of units at below market rents. UPRC works with local

public and non-profit partners to increase the number of affordable rental housing opportunities available and/or achieve deeper levels of affordability at each site.

This mixed income model creates much needed attainable housing, while also providing an ongoing income stream and strengthening the balance sheet of UCC Communities of Faith or Regional Councils to assist ministry and mission in long-term. This will allow communities of faith the opportunity to continue to deliver impact in their neighbourhoods as they have for generations.

Where missionally appropriate and financially viable UPRC will support Communities of Faith and Regional Councils on space for faith formation and tailor facilities to meet community needs.

### **Platform**

UPRC is establishing a vertically integrated development and asset management platform through its subsidiary Kindred Works ([kindredworks.ca](http://kindredworks.ca)). This will enable UPRC to manage real estate throughout the project life cycle: development, construction, asset management, finance, and property management. UPRC will provide a return on investment to UCC through dividends from fees earned which is anticipated to begin in 2025.

UPRC's business model puts industry expertise to work to build more secure and flourishing communities. UPRC is staffed with a team of real estate professionals and industry experts, including municipal planners, financial analysts, development managers, engagement specialists and accountants.

To aid in this venture UPRC needs to work with strategic, value aligned and skilled partners including public partners such CMHC, housing providers such as Woodgreen and Nishnawbe Homes, along with private partners such as KPMB Architects.

Our partners share an equal commitment to affordable housing, community building, sustainability through research and implementation. The KPMB Lab is a practical example for how private partner relationships help strengthen UPRC's commitment towards sustainability. UPRC's commitment to first nations reconciliation with our Indigenous Partners at Two Row Architects and Chandos Construction (Indigenous lead) demonstrates the importance to align with valued partners. Together we have the opportunity and ability to succeed and promote the common good for the next 100 years.

### **Active Development Pipeline**

UPRC leverages the scale of the UCC's portfolio to be an advocate and innovator. The UPRC program benefits from being able to leverage the scope of many sites across Canada, the similarities in sites and the long-time frame of the development program that together provide a unique opportunity to establish repeatable processes, to develop systems that facilitate continuous learning and to create efficiencies across a portfolio enabling consistent delivery of socially, environmentally, and financially sustainable projects.

UPRC has a pipeline of over 67 projects representing 4,300 total units; 26 of these projects are in active pre-development representing 2,544 total units. An additional 41 projects are undergoing initial feasibility studies.

To date, UPRC has submitted eight municipal applications totalling 547 total units, with an additional 11 submitted by end of 2022 representing 1,250 total units. The projects that are furthest along with applications submitted include:

- St. Luke's UC (Toronto) 100 units
- St. James UC (Waterdown) 41 units
- Queenswood UC (Orleans) 81 units
- Wilmar Heights UC (Toronto) 20 units
- Regent Park (Orillia) 48 units
- Church of the Master (Scarborough) 115 units
- Wexford Heights (Toronto) 100 units
- Westminster UC (St. Catherine's) 39 units

UPRC will continue to expand its projects beyond Ontario with projects in Saint John, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Nova Scotia in 2022/2023.

UPRC expects five projects to receive municipal approvals in 2022 representing 293 total units, and eight projects representing 970 total units approved in 2023. UPRC expects site work to commence on four projects in 2022.

UPRC active construction pipeline for the near-term is focused on gentle densification typology. These projects are designed to augment existing, usually suburban, neighbourhoods by filling in spaces or undeveloped areas and helping to bridge the needs of new and established residents. These projects are comprised of a combination of two- or three-story townhomes and three-story flats where the ground floor units are universal design and barrier-free access. This building typology represents a less expensive construction cost and is viable under current inflationary market conditions. These projects also have an easier municipal approval process. UPRC pipeline of gentle densification includes 13 active projects and 33 in the pipeline. This approach will also allow UPRC to build balance sheet and track record while reducing project specific risks by starting with smaller projects.

In Q3 of 2021 UPRC engaged Turner and Townsend to support the selection of Construction Management services for the design and construction of the gentle densification typology across multiple sites, which was awarded to Chandos Construction in Q4 2022.

UPRC will take a portfolio approach to development to manage the overall number of projects under development. In addition, the municipal approval process may take longer based on the complexity of certain sites (colonial-built heritage) or the local municipality approval process. This may result in properties held for future development. While these projects are being held, they can continue to serve the community.

Should projects not be viable for development, or no long-term use for mission or community, UPRC will support the sale of the property.

Further explanation of UPRC typologies and active pipeline can be found at [kindredworks.ca/projects](https://kindredworks.ca/projects).

### Project Examples

#### Westminster United Church, St. Catharine's, Ontario



An example of our suburban gentle densification typology, a total of 39 units spread across three-storey walk-up units. The primary church building is to be retained, while the addition that houses a gym is planned to be removed.

The pre-application meeting was held in December 2021. The development requires a Site Plan application, which was submitted in April 2022. Initial responses from staff were very positive. We have had followup conversations with the local Councillor Littleton, who is very supportive of the project. Project requires a Site Plan Approval application. The relevant applications have been submitted with site work anticipated to start this year.

#### Wexford United Church, Toronto, Ontario



An example of our heritage urban site developments, the project consists of a mixture of a mid-rise building, three-storey townhouses, the retention of an existing heritage chapel, and improved community/faith space. The proposal consists of the heritage chapel being retained and is improved with community space.

The Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment were submitted in early 2022. Since the application has been public there have been numerous supportive comments online from the public.

The development requires an Official Plan Amendment, a Zoning By-law Amendment, and a Site Plan Approval application. The first set of submissions were submitted early 2022 with full approval anticipated in November 2024

#### Queenswood United Church, Ottawa, Ontario



An example of our suburban gentle densification typology, a total of 81 units spread across a mixture of two-/three-storey townhouses and three-storey walk-up units. The church is planned to be retained in its current location.

The development requires a Zoning By-law Amendment and a Site Plan application, which was submitted in January 2022. Initial responses from staff were very positive.

Councillor Luloff, the local councillor, remains very receptive and positive about the project. We have received the first set of comments from Ottawa's planning staff which were largely very positive and supportive.

#### Governance

The Board of UPRC provides governance over UPRC and will implement its governance model with clearly documented terms of reference. The Board has three primary committees: Purpose & Governance, Audit, and Nominating.

The Board provides strategic business oversight and direction, monitors risk and assesses the financial performance of UPRC. In fulfilling this role, the Board will regularly consider UPRC's adherence to the strategic plan and its goals to ensure that UPRC continues to be responsive to the changing business environment. The Board will also consider Enterprise Risk Management to identify opportunities and to develop strategies for mitigating risks. The Board also oversees and is legally responsible for corporate governance. UPRC's personnel are required to act ethically, honestly, and professionally. Directors sign confidentiality and inform of any conflicts of interest situations.



**Purpose & Governance Committee:** The Board established the Purpose and Governance Committee to develop UPRC’s practices and policies to ensure that the Corporation complies with statutory, regulatory, administrative, and legal standards of corporate governance.

**Audit Committee:** The Audit Committee oversees UPRC’s financial controls, financial reporting, and monitors UPRC compliance with accounting, risk management and regulatory requirements. The Audit Committee recommends external auditors for appointment by the Board. The members of the Audit Committee are financially experienced. The Audit Committee also reviews conflict of interest situations and provides approvals on those transactions where appropriate.

**Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee will evaluate the qualifications, qualities, skills, and other expertise required to be a Director of UPRC and develop criteria to be considered in selecting nominees for director. The Committee will identify, and screen individuals qualified to become members of the Board and make nominee recommendations to the Board. The Committee will develop a process for the assessment of effectiveness of the Board and its committees; and oversee the conduct of this annual assessment. The Committee will develop and oversee UPRC orientation program for new Directors; and periodically review and update such programs as reasonably necessary.

### **Social and Environmental Responsibility**

UPRC is committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. UPRC’s impact strategy includes developing a unique methodology to measure the impact of its projects, integrate impact strategy in our projects and become a thought leader in the field of social and environmental impact. UPRC is striving to meet ambitious goals across the portfolio of projects.

UPRC is committed towards right relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people through the ongoing support of equity seeking groups including housing and employment.

UPRC projects target one third of the units to be below market, with the remaining units being market-rate rentals. This increases the overall supply of both affordable and market-rate rentals, to further improve the affordability of neighborhoods, improve income diversity and equity.

### **Stated Targets**

- ***34,000 people housed in new homes over the next 15 years***
- ***1/3 of the homes to be available at below market rents***

Universal design is important to UPRC projects to ensure space is accessible, usable, and convenient for everyone regardless of age or ability. This means all UPRC buildings will ensure the design and structure of public environment can be understood, accessed, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people. UPRC is also committed to a high number of individual units that meet universal design guidelines.

**Stated Target:**

- ***30% of our homes will be Universal Design, accessible for all***

UPRC is developing a methodology to measure and report the benefits and Social Return on Investment (SROI) derived from UPRC's activities. In addition to reflecting the values and mission of the UCC, our methodology will capture impact dimensions related to cross-cultural social inclusion and cohesion, improved household and individual financial security, community capacity empowerment, job creation, and the implementation of environmentally sustainable technologies that will inform our successful execution. The methodology will provide verifiable measures which will be used to help further mobilize impact investment from funders and include provisions regarding effective communication with all beneficiaries and stakeholders on the social benefits achieved.

The methodology will be supported with research conducted by experts and well-established organizations. UPRC's SROI analysis follows general best practices from the Canadian federal government on cost benefit analysis (CBA), specifically from Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS's) Canadian Cost-Benefit Analysis Guide.

**Stated Target:**

- ***\$4 social return on investment (SROI) for every dollar we spend on a project***

As a developer of sustainable communities, UPRC is aiming to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in all our projects. This ensures that we are not contributing to further warming and exacerbating environmental concerns. UPRC's projects aspire to be carbon neutral considering the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) standard for future building performance. This includes energy and atmosphere requirements to 2030 targets that align with Zero Carbon Building Standards and Passive House Certification. UPRC projects will also target sustainability benefits including zero on-site carbon, integrating nature with plants and green roofs, thermal resilience, and where possible building with mass timber.

**Stated Targets:**

- ***80% less carbon in construction than today's industry standard by 2023***
- ***65% less energy per year than today's industry standard***
- ***0% on site carbon from operations***

UPRC recognizes it needs to do more and will strive to be a net positive company by 2030. UPRC recognizes it is also important to consider who is building the buildings by setting social procurement goals that will include all aspects of its operations. This includes the prioritization of economic partnerships with Indigenous-owned business.

**Stated Targets:**

- ***80% of our project costs with local labour and businesses***
- ***10% of labour hours on our projects to be with equity seeking groups***



UPRC will track and report transparently on progress to the above stated targets. UPRC strives to create a revered business culture of excellence for our committed leadership in delivering long-term financially sustainable land development projects that unite corporate social responsibility, environmental and energy use sustainability, and responsiveness towards community and nationwide challenges. The scale of the UPRC mandate presents a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate a new standard and set of best practices for both the public and private land development sectors.

## **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

**Origin: The Nominations Committee, Executive of the General Council**

### **The Work of This Term**

“Who do you say that I am?” asks Jesus. It is a question of identity. The Nominations Committee, in its work to support the General Council and its Executive, has tried to assure that our identity as a church is visible. Our work is to recommend members for committees and task groups and to find people to represent the United Church of Canada to various partner organizations. Where other courts or groups are authorized to recommend or to appoint members to committees of the General Council, the Nominations Committee compiles these recommendations into a coordinated report. In doing that work, the Nominations Committee has sought to fulfil our commitments to hearing those voices that are often silenced.

The majority of the Nominations Committee’s work is on behalf of the Executive. This is the first triennium, following the reorganization of the church, so we sometimes found ourselves creating new processes to invite nominees and discern recommendations. We met 17 times, three in person and the balance online. When we were in person, we were blessed by the presence of Elder Donna Kennedy who offered wisdom and reflection.

Helping to establish the Board of Vocation and providing suggestions for its various committees was our first major piece of work. The Board of Vocation has invited the Nominations Committee’s participation in recommending appointments to all of its committees for the next triennium. To that end, we invited cross-pollination, welcoming a member of the Board of Vocation to sit on the Nominations Committee.

In the course of the extended term, the Nominations Committee also considered appointments to the Manual Committee, the Just Peace Task Group, the World Council of Churches, the selection committee for a new General Secretary, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Centennial Committee, Category H commissioners to GC44, the members of the GC44 Equity Support Team, and we affirmed the work of appointing specialists who guide the work of managing the United Church pension and finance functions.

In offering its recommendations, the Nominations Committee follows the related guidelines and polices set by the Executive of the General Council, uses spiritual discernment practices, and is committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Full Participation**

The Nominations Committee invested significant time exploring its role in helping the church more faithfully live into its commitments to be an equitable and anti-racist church. To that end, with the Board of Vocation, the Nominations Committee participated in a workshop on diversity with Adele Halliday (Anti-Racism and Equity Lead). We explored how to connect more effectively with the Intercultural Church networks, and how to remove barriers to participation

in the national church structure. Initiatives such as Leadership Counts are beginning to provide the church with more information on the diversity of our elected leadership and the places where they serve, to better inform our equity, diversity, and full-participation commitments.

In its discernment, the Nominations Committee considers diversity with regards to geography, gender identity, and ministry stream, as well as the myriad ways that our lives, cultures, and lived experiences make each of us unique. In addition, the committee upholds the church's commitments to the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; those who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+, Indigenous, racialized, or francophone; people active in French ministries; those who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from marginalized communities not named here. This is a part of the United Church's commitments to equity and self-determination, as well as eliminating barriers and working toward the full participation of all people.

The following statistics are one way of viewing the diversity present in the 185 appointments that will take effect at the rise of the 44th General Council, including the General Council committees, the Executive, the Board of Vocation (its committees and candidacy boards), and the Anti-Racism Common Table. Approximately 35 vacancies remain within these committees, some designated for the participation of people with specific identities, ministry streams, or regional councils.

#### **Equity-Commitment Identities**

- Indigenous – 14 (8%)
- Racialized – 43 (23%)
- Francophone/French Ministries – 9 (5%)
- Primary Language other than English or French – 17 (9%)
- Two Spirit, LGBTQ+ – 30 (16%)
- People with Disabilities – 13 (7%)
- Young Adults – 4 (2%)

*People with one or more equity identity – 90 (48%)*

#### **Gender Identity**

- Female (cis or trans) – 105 (57%)
- Male (cis or trans) – 78 (42%)
- Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming – 2 (1%)

#### **Lay People and Streams of Ministry**

- Lay people – 53 (29%)
- Designated Lay Ministers – 10 (5%)
- Diaconal Ministers – 14 (8%)
- Ordained Ministers – 105 (57%)
- Candidates – 3 (2%)

Reflecting on our time together, the Nominations Committee invites the church to consider how the lay people of the church can be supported and invited into greater participation in the national committees. It is a challenge to work towards equity, if there are few lay people among those who offer themselves to serve.

Who do you say that I am? It is our prayer that by engaging with the members of committees and task groups, the church will see the face of Christ, in all of its glorious diversity.

### **Appreciation for Those Who Have Served**

The Nominations Committee offers gratitude to those who served as members of the General Council committees, the Executive, and the Board of Vocation during this past term – and offers particular appreciation for all of the ways that they creatively navigated their way through this pandemic and graciously served for a longer term than expected.

#### **Audit Committee**

Miriam Bowlby, Randall Hobbs, John Hurst, Steven Lowden, Robin Pilkey (chairperson), Andrew Spears

#### **Executive of the 43rd General Council**

Mitchell Anderson, Sharon Aylsworth, Richard Bott (Moderator), Kathy Brett, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Jordan Cantwell (Past Moderator), Katie Curtis, Samuel Dansokho, Paul Douglas Walfall, Lawrence Doyle, Debra Hinksman, Jane McDonald, Ha Na Park, Timothy Reaburn, Deborah Richards, Arlyce Schiebout, Janet Sigurdson

#### **Judicial Committee**

James Blanchard, David Crawford-Smith, Catherine Gaw, Diana Ginn, Leslyn Gombakomba, Kathleen McCallum, Margaret McKechney (chairperson), Stuart Whitley

#### **Nominations Committee**

YongSeok Baek, Kathy Brett, Cathie Cunningham, Samuel Dansokho, Janet Gear, Catherine Hamilton (chairperson), Abiel Khalema, Alwin Maben, Lynella Reid-James, Pat Tooley

#### **The Manual Committee**

Linda Anderson, Margaret Bain, Fred Braman, Catherine Grant, Beth Moore, Mary-Beth Moriarity (chairperson), Leigh Sinclair

#### **Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee**

Jamie Bradshaw, Deborah Elliot, Alison Etter (Interim Chairperson), Daniel Hayward, Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Isaac Kamta, Andrew Macpherson, Dyane Matthews, Lloyd Nyarota, Andrew O'Neill, Michelle Owens, Lawrence Sankey, Ryan Slifka, Collin Smith, Brian Thorpe

#### **Board of Vocation**

Eileen Antone, Patricia Baker, Jean Bethune, Sandra Brooks, Mary-Jo Eckert Tracy, Christine-Marie Gladu, Mark Green, Hewitt Holmes, Sungmin Jung, Moses Kanhai, Debra Kigar, Andrew

Lairenge, Grace Eun Kyung Lee, Andrew Kun Young Lee, Alwin Maben, Natasha Pearen, Darrell Reine, Norman Seli (chairperson), Darla Sloan, Judith Zarubick

### **In Remembrance**

We remember with gratitude the lives and service of those appointed General Council members who passed away during this term:

- Margaret Bain – The Manual Committee
- Frank Evans – Real Property and Capital Plan Working Group, Healing Programs Working Group
- Dianne Hope – The Admission Board
- Maxine McVey – Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue
- Yvette Swan – Atlantic Candidacy Board

Faithfully submitted by Cathy Hamilton, chairperson, on behalf of the Nominations Committee.

### **Recommendations**

[NOM 1 APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE](#)

[NOM 2 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL](#)

## 2022 ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of General Council, the Audit Committee has carried out its assigned duties from 2019 through 2022, adjusting for pandemic-related constraints. The audit committee focuses on:

- the quality of the financial information that is presented in the audited financial statements, which are published in the Year Book and on the church website;
- the selection, remuneration, and preservation of the independence of the auditor, who has been the firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (“PwC”) since 2009; and
- monitoring overall risk management mechanisms and internal financial controls.

The committee is chaired by Robin Pilkey, CPA, CA, ICD.D; and five members appointed by the 43rd General Council. They are: Rev. Miriam A. Bowlby, BA (HONS), M.DIV, MBA-SSE; Randall Hobbs; John Hurst; Steven Lowden, CPA, CA; Andrew Spears, MPPM. Pension Board Chair Marcus Robertson, BSc (Hons), MSc, FSA, FCIA; and Pension Board member Dave Gilliland, BMath, FSA, FCIA, CFA, MAAA, CERA also served on this committee. Staff support for the committee has been provided by the General Secretary Michael Blair, Chief Financial Officer Erik Mathiesen, Controller Harry Li, and Mary Worrall. The committee meets by electronic means, and for the last three years the external audit itself has been conducted remotely.

Each year, the Audit Committee:

- approves the audit plans and fees proposed by PwC;
- receives the audit reports at completion;
- recommends approval of the audited financial statements of the National Accounts of The United Church of Canada, which include KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiative, by the General Council Executive or Sub-Executive;
- recommends approval of the audited financial report of the Fund of the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada to the Pension Board; and
- updates workplans and terms of reference documentation as needed.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the entire 2021 fiscal year audit was again conducted with auditors and finance staff working remotely. Looking ahead, we anticipate that the existing audit process will continue to become more technology-based to support evolving structural changes, such as the implementation of shared accounting services for some regions to achieve economies of scale. There will also be ongoing efforts to make church financial information more transparent and accessible.

The Committee has engaged the ongoing refinement of an overall risk management framework for church operations to support a more comprehensive approach to risk assessment and mitigation. A particular focus has been the church’s investment in information technology (IT) system solutions and related security. Cyber risk insurance has been obtained for broader

church operations including an umbrella program for congregations for 2021–2022. The committee also receives updates on operational and reputational risk management efforts.

As planned, the Audit Committee did conduct a review of audit service providers through a Request for Proposal process in April and May 2022. Four well-known audit firms responded, including incumbent PwC. Each was interviewed by management through the due diligence period and a balanced scorecard was used to ensure a consistent evaluation.

The Audit Committee recommends the appointment of KPMG for the 2022 fiscal year audits and likely for some years into the future.

In recommending the appointment, the committee considered:

- cost savings arising from a lower bid;
- the content and quality of the submitted proposal;
- the auditors' understanding of reporting issues affecting the not-for-profit sector;
- the auditors' knowledge, understanding and experience with similar non-profits and multi employer pension plans and foundations;
- the reputation of the assigned audit partner and the firm's evident commitment to the non-profit sector;
- potential synergies arising from the fact the United Property Resource Corporation a.k.a. Kindred Works had selected KPMG for its audit services through a thorough and separate RFP process; and
- that changing auditors periodically is increasingly considered a best practice because it brings new perspectives.

## HOPE AND ABUNDANCE

### Report from Pacific Mountain Regional Council

Three anticipated outcomes guide every decision, every conversation, every action in the Pacific Mountain Region. It's a lovely trinity, really, and like the Holy Trinity, these outcomes are in relationship, one to the other, and then to the three. The question posed with every move is "how will this decision lead to **healthy communities of faith and ministries, effective leadership, and faithful public witness**? These three outcomes have been at play for nearly the entire time the church on the western side of the Rocky Mountains has operated under policy governance.

Over those years, one or another of those outcomes has taken centre stage as governors and staff have sought ways to strengthen the church's work in that area. And yet the three outcomes dance together to help the church proclaim the renewing gospel of Jesus Christ with hope and perseverance. We believe in fact, that healthy communities of faith and ministries, empowered by effective leadership are in and of themselves faithful public witnesses to the gospel.

As the former Conference morphed into Region 1 and then the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, adding Whitehorse and Banff to church oversight (and then losing Banff again to Chinook Winds Regional Council), it made sense to the governors of the region to focus resources more intentionally toward creating and sustaining healthy communities of faith and ministries, believing that when congregations and pastoral charges and all those places which activate and sustain Christian discipleship are healthy, the whole church is healthy—from the General Council to the smallest gathering of faithful followers. Governors of the region also believe that when communities of faith are healthy, the cities, towns and villages in which they serve are healthier, more resilient, more generous in welcoming the stranger. Can there be a stronger or more faithful public witness than this core value, this core belief?

So rather than continuing to tell the story of membership decline and church closure, the region invites every community, ministry, and outreach program to see itself as a player in an unfolding story of health. This is not to say the communities of faith will not close, it is to ask the same strategic question "how does this closure contribute to **healthy communities of faith and ministries, effective leadership, and faithful public witness**?"

For the past two years, the region has allocated significant leadership and resources to, and setting goals and outcomes for, three priorities.

The first is a priority that circles around identity. Who are we as church in the Pacific Mountain Region? Questions have emerged about what must be done for the region to be anti-racist. A process of education and discernment has been undertaken, that led PMRC to be recognized as an Affirming Ministry of The United Church of Canada; a celebration of what is both an accomplishment and a beginning will occur in June of 2022. The region continues to partner with First Nations and PMRC Indigenous Ministries to be a reconciling church even with the



dark legacy of having operated five residential schools in the history of the church in the region. How does the church surrender its colonial past and help empower healthy communities of faith and ministries?

The second priority is healthy communities of faith. What is health? Where should healthy communities be? What does it mean now, to be in covenant relationship with communities of faith seeking to be places of Christian formation and discipleship, and faithful public witness? Who will determine health? By what criteria? How does one church closure lead to empowering new ministry, or strengthen existing ministry?

The third priority is the long game. Recognizing that the whole church has paid scant attention to the Christian formation of children and youth, young adults and their families – ministry with those in the “first third” of their lives—Pacific Mountain Regional Council is allocating significant resources and intention to changing this demographic. While the holy mystery of God can be encountered anywhere, discipleship response is shaped in community. And faith is formed, in community. Healthy communities of faith and ministries are fundamentally intergenerational.

All of this is animated by a generous and committed staff team, led by Executive Minister Treena Duncan, whose talent and gifts, unflappable grace, and unfailing good humour shape the regional culture. All the staff are remarkable in what they bring to the region’s ministry—their creativity, patience, tenacity, and gracious willingness to serve.

Financially, the body of the region’s work is supported by significant bequests and investment income, a regional allocation, as well as allowances through the national church’s new funding system. Together with the region’s property portfolio which is a major plank in consideration of mission strategy, the region is well-positioned to sustain, and find new ways, to proclaim the gospel with hope and abundance.

There is a side bar of note in the work of Pacific Mountain Regional Council. With deep gratitude for a legacy gift from Trinity United Church in Vancouver, “Engaging the Spirit” is a program which has generously funded new church ideas in the region. The term “church plant” is not part of our denomination’s lexicon, but it surely conjures the image—planting seeds that may someday grow. “Weird Church,” “Wild Church,” “Abby Church,” “West Side Community” are just some of the names that point to the church catching up to where the Spirit has already been working in the region.

To write of all of this and not mention the seismic impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on everyone in the region would be to deny what has been a common experience across the church. In fact, these past two years can be described as *kairos* time – time before COVID-19 and time after COVID-19. Who we are, how we do church, and what is our purpose have all come under scrutiny.

But, like the refiner's fire that turns a clump of rock into shining gold, what can be seen in the deep fatigue of a pandemic is resilience, strong faith, people who love each other, and a generous God empowering it all in grace.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. S. Blair Odney  
President, PMRC

## NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

**Origin: Northern Spirit Regional Council**

### **Geographic Location**

Northern Spirit Regional Council encompasses the northern portion of the former Alberta and Northwest Conference's bounds. It includes all of Northern Alberta north of Hwy 13, the Peace Valley portion of Northern BC, and the Northwest Territories. This vast geography makes Northern Spirit the largest geographical regional council; however, we also have the smallest number of communities of faith.

### **Celebrations & Challenges**

Northern Spirit's transition commission and Executive have worked hard to rethink how we function to best serve the needs of our communities of faith while also working within our financial and volunteer capacity. Due to our large geography this is not always easy. We are always in need of Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to complement our active Designated Lay Ministers, Commissioned Ministers, Ordained Ministers, as well as many Retired Ministers who continue to serve the church in a variety of ways. Our committees to Support Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, Lay Leadership, and our Pastoral Relations Commission work together to support the communities of faith, lay leaders and ministry personnel who serve our regional council.

Northern Spirit has many isolated communities of faith that have communication challenges due to limited Internet and cellular coverage. This provides challenges to ensure there is adequate communication and support for ministry personnel and communities of faith. We have learned from our former presbyteries the need for keeping in touch and using old and new technology to maintain connections however we can. We have begun working with Rural Connect, initially starting with two or three congregations to assess.

Pastoral relations [training workshops](#) earlier in 2022 were another resource offered; the annual Celebration of Ministry service, hosted by a congregation and livestreamed to the region, is a connection highlight, despite the grief of not being able to gather face to face. Weekly meetings for ministry personnel have been a support in the midst of COVID stress, along with extra tri-region meetings for lay people. The weekly newsletter and Facebook group have been another connecting point.

### **Right Relations/Commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action**

Northern Spirit shares the [Being Good Relations Network](#) with Chinook Winds Regional Council, offering cross-regional and single-region work, including early attempts to establish self-supporting Being Good Relations Clusters as another way of upholding congregational commitments to right relations. The Remembering the Children Society in Red Deer, connections with Friendship Centres, local Elders' groups, and above all, relationships with Indigenous communities of faith (hampered by COVID) are all part of the circle of relationships on which the network relies. In addition to significant annual days like September 30, October 4, and June 21, the network focused on [asking church members to speak against the draft](#)

[Alberta K-12 curriculum](#), particularly the proposed social studies curriculum and its whitewashed view of Canadian history. In March, the regional council was invited, along with the National Indigenous Council, [to a ceremony that honoured survivors](#) and marked the gift of the former Ashmont United Church building to the Acimowin Opaspiw Society on Saddle Lake Cree Nation.

### **Affirming and Anti racism**

Northern Spirit is currently participating in the process to become an [Affirming Regional Council](#), working through a dedicated task group that has held consultation times during annual meeting, and has organized or supported education spaces focused on Affirming ministry check-ins, Jewish scriptural understandings of gender diversity, Two Spirit identities, Affirming theologies of Jesus, and more.

The region is continuing to work at being and becoming intercultural, through education and inclusive decision-making processes, and involvement in the Western Intercultural Ministries Network and its events. We are also in the process of setting up an anti-racism committee to help us live into honouring our commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination, in addition to the [Wait, Is This Racist? workshop series](#) held with Living Skies and Prairie to Pine.

### **Networks and Clusters**

Northern Spirit has [some networks and clusters](#); however, this part of the ministry of the church in our regional council continues to be a struggle, particularly for clusters, whose self-organizing nature is a challenge, particularly during COVID. Northern Spirit shares the Being Good Relations Network with Chinook Winds. It is an active member of the [Western Intercultural Ministries Network](#), assisting with several “Coffee/Chai” public conversations for the wider church. The region has active representation on or participation in national groups such as the Guaranteed Livable Income Network, Climate Justice/For the Love of Creation, United Church Women, KAIROS, and more. We are continuing to seek new ways to encourage the ministry of networks and clusters, [including a homepage to share news](#).

### **Staff**

The staff complement who resource Northern Spirit are: Earl Reaburn, Pastoral Relations Minister; Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support; and Leanne Templeton, Archivist, who also serves Chinook Winds. Northern Spirit also shares staff with Living Skies and Prairie to Pine: Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister; Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator & the Program Administrator to the Executive Minister (currently vacant).

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

## CHINOOK WINDS REGION REPORT

### Origin: Chinook Winds Regional Council

In 2018, General Council 43 created a Commission for the newly established Region 3 of The United Church of Canada. The Commission members were as follows:

Doug Goodwin	Executive Minister
Mauricio Araujo	Assistant to the Executive Minister
Kathy Yamashita	President of Alberta and Northwest Conference
Helen Reed	Coronation Presbytery officer
Sue Brodrick	Calgary Presbytery officer
Bob Wallace	South Alberta Presbytery officer
Tammy Allen	Red Deer Presbytery officer
Ray Goodship	Foothills Presbytery officer
Russell Burns	Maskwacis First Nation
Darrel Beaver	Stoney Nakoda First Nation

Region 3 was made up the southern portion of Alberta between Highway 13 to the border with the USA. Unlike many other regions which transferred operations from former Conference offices, Region 3 had to create everything new. The Commission met regularly until May 15, 2019 to complete the mandate of establishing the new region. In that time frame, the Commission accomplished the following tasks:

- Selected a name – Chinook Winds Region
- Approved 2019 Mission and Support grants
- Approved 2019 Budget
- Set date and venue for the inaugural general meeting of the region
- Determined the Chinook Winds Regional Executive Council would consist of 11 elected members
- Named signing authorities for financial and legal contracts
- Signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Pacific Mountain Region regarding the sharing of the Executive Minister
- Created a staff position to take care of Community of Faith and Property Matters
- Created a staff position to take care of Personnel Matters
- Created a staff position for Communication Matters
- Leased and opened the Chinook Winds Regional office in Okotoks United Church
- Appointed a Treasurer and set up a bank account
- Approved a Governance Model for the Chinook Winds Region
  - Upon strong recommendation from Doug Goodwin, the Commission selected Policy Governance. Using this model will permit the incoming Regional Executive Committee to create the overarching vision that guides the region in its work. The Executive Minister will operationalize the work, relying on paid accountable and capable staff.

The region met in Lethbridge in June 2019 for its first general meeting. The region's Executive was elected as follows:

Helen Reed – Presiding Officer  
Vicki McPhee  
David Pollard  
Bill Moore  
John Snow  
Kevin Dorma  
Bob Wallace  
Francis Liu  
Alwin Maben

At the annual meeting, it was moved and carried that Chinook Winds Region begin the discernment process for becoming an Affirming region of The United Church of Canada.

The Executive met three times between June 2019–March 2020. Priorities were explored and determined. A working group was established to create the region's policies. The dates and location for second annual gathering of the region was set.

In mid-March 2020, the provincial Government of Alberta set in place a number of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included work from home orders and severely limited the number of people permitted to attend worship services. The Executive Minister very quickly communicated with the Executive and the region with summaries of expectations, legal requirements, and offer of support to communities of faith. The Executive began to meet monthly, via Zoom, to best support the Executive Minister and region in the difficulties of pivoting and navigating through the unexpected challenges of living and worshipping through a pandemic.

The Executive Minister and Pastoral Relations Minister initiated regular Town Hall Meetings, via Zoom. These Town Halls served to offer comfort and encouragement to leaders, ordered and lay, of Chinook Winds as well as sharing vital pandemic information. Ministry-only online gatherings were created as well as theme-specific Town Halls. Because the region had met only once in person before the pandemic, these online gatherings allowed for individuals in the region to meet and get to know one another.

The planned in-person meeting of the region, scheduled for June 2020, was cancelled. The annual meeting was reimagined as an online gathering, held in September 2020. Bishop Yvette Flunder was the keynote speaker. At that meeting, a working group was established to being the Affirm process on behalf of the region. A Celebration of Ministry worship service was held and livestreamed. John Snow was ordained in partnership with the National Indigenous Church. John Snow, Bob Wallace, and Helen Reed resigned from the Executive (with great thanks to Helen on her excellent leadership). Gloria Snow and Joanne Anquist were elected to the Executive.

The Executive continued to meet regularly via Zoom. Vicki McPhee was chosen to be Presiding Officer. Dan Hotchkiss, author of *Governance and Ministry*, was contracted to assist with the development of the region's polices. The policy working group met with Dan a number of times as they worked on the polices. As the 2021 budget was considered, the Executive decided to zero out the assessments for communities of faith for 2021. It was recognized that the region did not have much for financial reserves, however with the stress of the pandemic and with buildings closed to in-person worship, it was agreed that assessments would be set to 0%.

The Executive set the date for 2021 general meeting of the region to take place via Zoom in early May. Jeff Chu was the keynote speaker for the meeting. The region heard from the Executive, met the region's staff and from the Affirm working group. New members were elected to the Executive, being made up of the following people:

Vicki McPhee – Presiding Officer  
Bill Moore  
David Pollard  
Kevin Dorma  
Joanne Anquist  
Gloria Snow  
Deborah Springer  
Francis Liu  
Kathryn Yamishita  
Anne Yates-Laberge

Under the guidance of the Executive Minister, Chinook Winds Region entered into partnerships with Pacific Mountain Region—sharing staff and programming with LeaderShift and First Third Ministries. We appreciate these shared opportunities to expand leadership training and ministry for children, youth, and young adults in our region.

Region-supported gatherings of geography-based cluster groups were initiated. Representatives from communities of faith have met via Zoom with facilitation offered by region staff members. The clusters are encouraging and informative opportunities together to lift up best practices and share resources.

The policy working group finalized the polices for the region and presented them for review to the Executive. The polices were shared with the region at the annual meeting in 2022. It is understood that the role of the Executive is to regularly review and update the polices.

As the 2022 Budget was considered, the Executive decided to reinstate the assessment by the region but limited it to 50% of the previous assessment. With employment grants from the Government of Canada winding down, it is understood that full assessments in 2022 may be a hardship for many communities of faith.

The 2022 annual meeting date was set. It was decided that the meeting would be a hybrid gathering, in-person with an online option. Over 100 people attended in person and another 70 attended virtually. The region met for three days in Red Deer.

After giving thanks to Bill Moore, David Pollard, Gloria Snow, Deborah Springer, and Francis Liu for their work on Executive, new members were elected to the Executive, now being made up of the following people:

Vicki McPhee – Presiding Officer  
Kevin Dorma  
Joanne Anquist  
Shauna Getz  
Elaine Taylor-Kerr  
Marlene Lightning  
Allan Buckingham  
Kathryn Yamishita  
Trevor Potter  
Anne Yates-Laberge

The Affirming Working Group brought the motion forward that Chinook Winds Region become an affirming region of The United Church of Canada. The motion was passed with a resounding 98% of people voting in favour of the motion. The meeting concluded with a celebration of ministry worship service during which Kim Holmes-Younger was ordained and Rachel Nadon was commissioned.



## LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

Origin: Living Skies Regional Council

### Geographic Location

Living Skies Regional Council is The United Church of Canada in the treaty territories of Saskatchewan.

### Celebrations & Challenges

Since Living Skies is the same geography as the former Saskatchewan Conference, it has been a challenge to do things in a new way. Presbyteries were not perfect, but served as a vital communication link for the church in the many small rural communities of Saskatchewan. Living Skies has carried some traditions of the former Conference forward into its way of being while trying not to just do everything the same as before.

Living Skies' transition commission and Executive have worked hard to rethink how we function to best serve the needs of our communities of faith while also working within our financial and volunteer capacity. Due to our large geography this is not always easy. We are always in need of Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to complement our active Designated Lay Ministers, Commissioned Ministers, Ordained Ministers, as well as many Retired Ministers who continue to serve the church in a variety of ways. Our committees to Support Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, Lay Leadership, and our Pastoral Relations Commission work together to support the communities of faith, lay leaders, and ministry personnel who serve our regional council. Weekly meetings have been one key point of community, and we strive to link people to the many national opportunities available.

Living Skies has many isolated communities of faith that have communication challenges due to limited Internet and cellular coverage. This provides challenges to ensure there is adequate communication and support for ministry personnel and communities of faith. We have learned from our former presbyteries the need for keeping in touch and using old and new technology to maintain connection. Recent work has included our first two Rural Connect hubs, and up to five satellites in rural communities. Our Celebration of Ministries services have been movable feasts through the province and across the Internet.

### Education and Engagement with Outreach Ministries and Partners

Gatherings online have been another key to getting through COVID and isolation. Some examples: The [Practically Prophetic series](#) has run for two years, shared with St. Andrew's College and focused on practical and sometimes difficult aspects of ministry. For the second COVID year running, we offered an [Advent concert](#) featuring music and readings from around the regional council. In January 2022 we celebrated [Seollal, Korean Lunar New Year, at an intercultural event](#). A snow and ice competition shared with Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine surfaced lots of intergenerational creativity and no northern/Prairie frostbite. A Lenten study was shared between the regional council and St. Andrew's. The regional council was very honoured this June to be invited to an in-person, outdoor [traditional feast held by Regina Outreach Native Ministry](#). And we saw a longed-for return to in-person Pride events in the

summer of 2022, with extensive United Church participation in community parades and events large and small.

### **Affirming**

After considerable work, the regional council was able to launch a task group to guide the regional council through the Affirming process. The group has sponsored two public events, and an Affirming check-in, and is making a video to introduce and animate the draft Vision Statement. PIE Day was a highlight, as people shared recipes for dessert and Affirming strategies over Zoom, as were the Pride events mentioned above. The regional council's Planning for Pride event sparked rich conversation and strategies about Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ pride and allyship in a rural context.

### **Youth and Young Adult**

As many reading this can attest, youth, children, and camping ministry in COVID carry extra dilemmas. Several long-awaited confirmation retreats and rallies were postponed, and camps carried heavy burdens of ever-changing plans and COVID adaptations. However, spring and summer 2022 saw a [successful return to events](#). And a look at our [YAYAC pages](#) will show the resourcing and connecting work that have persisted.

### **Mission-Supported Ministries**

Living Skies has done extensive work with the [13 mission grant-supported ministries and partners within our boundaries](#), working with EDGE Network to offer support for improved funding capacity and external communications. Whether hospital chaplaincies or prison ministries, anti poverty advocacy or camps, these ministries have worked very hard and creatively to come through COVID with their mission, key people, and spirits intact—and thriving. We are grateful for their practical reminder that ministry encompasses the entire community.

### **Justice**

Efforts to spark a Justice Committee have been slow, given how overcommitted most of the leadership is. Advocacy led by communities of faith and outreach ministries has, however, included a petition to the province to ban conversion “therapy”; letters protesting very regressive changes to provincial income assistance; and a petition calling on the province to fund harm reduction sites. As mentioned above, there is active regional council participation in a number of national United Church and ecumenical networks. Right relations work is in strong need of a structure, and, like other justice work, has relied on congregants stepping forward to support United presence at an annual feast remembering the children (Okanese First Nation); a survivors' and Elders' group on Cote First Nation that is seeking to renew language and culture; and a decolonization committee sponsored by KAIROS Prairies North that has offered a number of regional council-wide learning spaces.

### **Networks and Clusters**

Living Skies has some [networks and clusters](#); however, this part of the ministry of the church in our regional council continues to be a struggle, particularly for clusters, whose self-organizing

nature is a challenge, especially during COVID. Living Skies is an active member of the [Western Intercultural Ministries Network](#), assisting with several “Coffee/Chai” public conversations for the wider church. The regional council has active representation on or participation in national groups such as the Guaranteed Livable Income Network, Climate Justice/For the Love of Creation, United Church Women, KAIROS, and more. We are continuing to seek new ways to encourage the ministry of networks and clusters, [including a homepage to share news](#).

**Staff**

The staff complement who resource Living Skies are: Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister; Bev Diebert, Administrative Support; and Madeleine McLuhan-Myers, Archivist. Living Skies also shares staff with Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine: Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister; Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator & the Program Administrator to the Executive Minister (currently vacant).

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

## PRAIRIE TO PINE REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

**Origin: Prairie to Pine Regional Council**

### Geographic Location

Prairie to Pine Regional Council is comprised of the pines of Northwestern Ontario and Northern Manitoba and the prairies of Southern Manitoba and encompasses all of the central time zone.

### Celebrations & Challenges

Prairie to Pine celebrates that we are an [Affirming Regional Council](#) and are continuing to work at being and becoming intercultural through education and inclusive decision-making processes. Our [Equity and Diversity committee](#) did a lot of work to help us become Affirming and are currently finding ways to help us live into honouring our commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

The Prairie to Pine Transition Commission and Executive have worked hard to rethink how we function to best serve the needs of our communities of faith while also working within our financial and volunteer capacity. Due to our large geography and large number of perpetual vacancies in communities of faith, this is not always easy, despite the best efforts of a very active and creative Nominating Committee. We are always in need of Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Licenced Lay Worship Leaders to complement our active Designated Lay Ministers, Commissioned Ministers, and Ordained Ministers, as well as many Retired Ministers who continue to serve the church in a variety of ways.

Our committees to Support Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel, and Lay Leadership, and our Pastoral Relations Commission work together to support the communities of faith, lay leaders and ministry personnel who serve our regional council. One initiative recommended by the Pastoral Relations Commission and adopted by the regional council is an obligation for communities of faith who wish to reduce their paid hours of ministry to first collaborate with surrounding communities of faith, and demonstrate this collaboration. We have also begun working with Rural Connect, initially starting with two or three congregations to assess.

Despite these struggles, we held together through COVID, helped by a lot of local innovation, a newsletter list of over 1,000 subscribers, and regular online gatherings, meetings, and worship.

Prairie to Pine Regional Council is blessed with Keewatin Circle within its boundaries, which is comprised of 22 Indigenous communities of faith in Northern Manitoba. We are blessed by the wisdom of the Elders and traditional teachings as we navigate a path of truth and reconciliation. These communities have unique needs and challenges due to their remote location. Many communities are only accessible by airplane or for a short part of the year by winter ice roads. Often Internet and cell service are unreliable or non-existent which adds additional communication challenges. We continue to work together with the National Indigenous Council and Indigenous Ministries and Justice to ensure these communities of faith

receive the support they need to continue their ministry, and long for a return to in-person connections in 2023.

We also have a strong [Young Adults and Youth Committee](#), whose members span the entire regional council. The [many programs they lead](#) rotate a number of key gatherings amongst communities of faith; they are also beginning to re-connect with Keewatin youth, and take leadership at our regional annual meeting.

Following the confirmation of unmarked burials in Kamloops in 2021, the region is working to [renew right relations and TRC Calls to Action commitments](#), through more focus on local education and engagement; a [renewed land acknowledgement](#); more focus on the important work being done locally at the site of the former Brandon IRS, treaty gatherings in Winnipeg, ongoing local connections in NW Ontario, and preparations for a possible circle with survivors.

### **Networks and Clusters**

Prairie to Pine has [some networks and clusters](#); however, this part of the ministry of the church in our regional council continues to be a struggle, particularly for clusters, whose self-organizing nature is a challenge, particularly during COVID. Some clusters focus on right relations/TRC Calls to Action, being Affirming, and support for pastoral charges or those in pastoral ministry. Prairie to Pine is an active member of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network, and has active representation on or participation in national groups such as the Guaranteed Livable Income Network, Climate Justice/For the Love of Creation, Korean Rainbow United, the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel, United Church Women, KAIROS, and more. We are continuing to seek new ways to encourage the ministry of networks and clusters, [including a homepage to share news](#).

### **Staff**

The [staff complement](#) who resource Prairie to Pine are: Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister; Twila McNair, Youth and Young Adult Minister; Cherry Abad, Administrative Support; and Erin Acland, Keeper of the Archives. Prairie to Pine also shares staff with Living Skies and Northern Spirit: Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister; Julie Graham, Justice and Communications Minister; Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator & the Program Administrator to the Executive Minister (currently vacant).

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

## ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

### Origin: Canadian Shield Regional Council

It has been an exciting and challenging time between 2018 and 2022 as the Canadian Shield Regional Council transformed from three parts of the church who had been neighbours but not connected directly by presbytery or Conference level since Union in 1925. This new northern region continues to move from introducing ourselves to becoming partners in ministry. The regional council has moved from a regional transition team with two staff people and a handful of committed volunteers, to our current Executive and staff. The transition team supported the creation of regional policy and eventually two regional commissions, the Support to Communities of Faith Commission and the Pastoral Relations Commission. The Executive also created a number of support teams like property and finance. The transition also supported the creation of our first regional budget and office space for the regional council.

The Canadian Shield Regional Council, which geographically is very large, with boundaries from Val-d'Or Quebec in the east to Thunder Bay in the west (1,060 km), faces significant challenges and opportunities around support of the vast regional council. There is challenge in terms of time and resources for meeting in person or having volunteers and staff support the regional council in person. The regional council has depended a lot on connecting via video conferencing, mostly Zoom. The distance also creates a challenge meeting with staff in person, with staff living throughout the entire regional council. The geography has also created opportunity for creativity in ministry. We have a number of communities of faith who connect via two-way video conferencing on Sunday mornings. Folks will share worship and leadership between communities of faith. For example, St John's in Marathon, Ontario, shares worship with Grace United in Hornepayne, Ontario, a two-hour drive apart. Also, pastoral charge supervisors support communities of faith many hours apart in new and creative ways.

Another challenge and blessing within Canadian Shield Regional Council is that approximately 40 percent of our communities of faith are lay-led and will continue to be lay-led in the future, without paid ministry personnel. Many of these communities of faith are healthy active congregations with strong lay leader worship, supported by Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, retired supply, and connecting to other communities of faith live on Sunday mornings through two-way video link. The Canadian Shield Regional Council has shifted and adapted as worshipping communities to support ministry opportunities now and in the future.

One of the challenges of the Canadian Shield Regional Council is filling Called positions within the regional council. Often full-time (and part-time) called positions can remain open for a number of months or over a year or more. The Canadian Shield Regional Council offers wonderful ministry opportunities with many healthy communities of faith that offer a more manageable cost of living in relation to many other parts of Canada. The regional council Executive has been working towards formally promoting Canadian Shield Regional Council within the broader church as a place to consider for long-term ministry.

Our regional meeting theme for this year is *Tending Our Nets*. This has been a challenging third/fourth year for the regional council, communities of faith, and The United Church of Canada. We continue to walk through the pandemic together and hopefully we will soon move to a post-pandemic chapter. Staff and volunteers have worked countless hours, preparing, changing, experimenting, and succeeding in continuing as church in new and creative ways. As an Executive, we have heard stories of sacrifice, perseverance, hope, success, and also deep fatigue. We have also heard stories of worry, stress, frustration, and struggle. As a region, as community, we give thanks; we continue to be on a long journey together; we celebrate the resilience of our churches and the expression of the Gospel in many new and creative ways. Our pandemic experience raises many questions about how we approach ministry, how we serve each other, and finally our role as a church in society.

Although this past year many of our communities of faith, outreach ministries, and our two camps have struggled with meeting in person, our ministry has continued in many new and creative ways! Folks have used their phones, mail, video (Zoom/YouTube) for church. Many communities of faith have returned to offering in-person worship. We have continued a ministry of caring and support and we have continued in new and creative ways. Volunteers, music leaders, ministry personnel, camp staff, outreach staff, congregational support staff have all worked tirelessly.

As a regional council, the region has hosted townhall meetings for both ministry personnel and lay leaders for support, updates, and education. Our website continues to be a key tool for communication within our regional council. Many local and a few regional networks and local groups have also met to connect, learn, challenge, listen, and work together.

The United Church of Canada is working towards becoming an anti-racist institution. For the United Church it means encouraging the General Council Office, regional council offices, and communities of faith, and even Canadian society, to pause and reflect. The United Church is offering training, learning opportunities, and discussion groups as part of a strategy of becoming an anti-racist church. Practically, the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council staff have joined together on a one-year journey of reflecting, learning, re-learning history, theological reflection, and discussion on how to become an anti-racist church and work towards right relationship. Staff from both regions continue to meet together bi-weekly to talk, learn, challenge, pray, reflect, and discuss on a path toward becoming an anti-racist church.

Both regional councils have encouraged equity conversations at the Executive level, commission, and committee levels of the church. The regional council continues to lift up our commitment to equity across our work. We are beginning to live into our new pattern of equity leads being named by each commission. Recently the Canadian Shield Regional Council celebrated becoming an Affirming Region!!!! We continue our journey towards living into right relations.

Regional council Executive, commissions, and working teams are involved in a wide variety of ministry focusing on justice work, support to communities of faith and ministry personnel, granting, and youth.

As we struggle to become a new regional council in the face of a world pandemic, we celebrate God's grace. We celebrate the resilience of our communities of faith and the resilience of our many communities across the Canadian Shield Regional Council.

Canadian Shield Regional Council Proposals include:

- Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel



## ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

Origin: President of ARWRC

### Geographic Location

The Antler River Watershed Region encompasses southwestern Ontario and includes communities of faith located in six counties. The region is pleased to serve alongside the Indigenous ministries of Kettle Point United Church, Moraviantown United Church, Oneida United Church, St. Clair United Church, and Walpole Island United Church.

### Statement of Purpose

Antler River Watershed Regional Council aspires to live into its purpose, “Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith.” This statement is both a communication tool and a standard against which to measure the work of the regional council. This statement was shaped by Oneida Elder the Rev. Grafton Antone recalling the Haudenosaunee creation story of Turtle Island (the Indigenous name for North America). Antler River Watershed Regional Council is the southernmost region of Canada and, as such, it holds the rest of the shell.

### Administration and Staffing

Administered and staffed by the same regional council staff as Horseshoe Falls Regional Council and Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, Antler River Watershed Regional Council (ARWRC) is part of a grouping known as the “tri-regions.” Although the three regional councils benefit from what they have in common regarding administration and staffing, each regional council is unique in the way it which it fulfils its mission and lives into its statement of purpose.

### Affirming Regional Council

Thanks to the leadership of the Tri-Regional Affirming Network, the tri regions participated in a shared Service of Celebration in June 2021 recognizing their designation as Affirming Regional Councils.

### Governance Structure

Three commissions help enable the region to realize its purpose.

**The Mission and Discipleship Commission** carries responsibility for providing information, education, and opportunities for communities of faith and their members to deepen faith and strengthen service and witness. This commission provides both training and development opportunities and offers informed and timely responses to enable communities of faith to respond to emerging social and political situations. The commission also encourages and upholds six United Church camps within the region.

**The Human Resources Commission** carries responsibility for the formation and nurturing of healthy pastoral relationships as well as the equipping and licensing of lay worship leaders. Due to the sensitive nature of its work, all members of this commission are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

**The Covenant Commission** carries responsibility for the relationship between communities of faith and the region and their partnership on matters requiring a decision by both the community of faith and the regional council, other than the pastoral relationship.

Articulation of ministry and mission, the use of financial and property resources, local governance, ensuring the overall health and well-being of communities of faith, including changes in their life cycle, and dealing with real property are part of this commission's mandate.

The commissions are resourced by regional council staff and are accountable to the Executive through a representative of the commission who also serves as a member of the Executive.

### **Racial Justice and Indigenous Justice**

The Regional Council Executive is increasingly aware of the need to undertake its work through the framework and lens of anti-racism and the decolonizing of time. Indigenous greetings at the beginning of regional council meetings, for example, take as long as they take and are not constrained by a time limit to accommodate the agenda schedule.

In the spring of 2021, the Executive participated in a United in Learning online Racial Justice Training event spread over four sessions. It was helpful, insightful, and time well spent. Commission representatives were encouraged to lead conversations about this at their meetings.

Spending time with His Honour Murray Sinclair was a deeply moving experience. This event was held just hours after it was announced that the graves of 215 children had been discovered on the site of the former Kamloops Residential School.

Two significant justice sessions were part of the region's spring 2021 meeting. One session focused on racial justice. The other session focused on listening to Indigenous voices. Both sessions had a profound effect as they helped meeting attendees better understand the issues at hand and commit to embracing diversity and practising inclusivity and equity.

In June 2021 tragedy struck a Muslim family in London, Ontario, when four of five family members out for a walk were intentionally killed by the driver of a truck. This hate crime was denounced by an outpouring of support by the larger community for the Muslim community. Among the letters of condolence received by the members and friends of the London Muslim Mosque were ones from Moderator Right Rev. Richard Bott and the President of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council. A multi-faith march in London was organized as a show of support. The regional council spring meeting agenda was adjusted, last minute, so that people could participate in the march, a march that realized over 10,000 participants.

### **Reconciliation Focus**

Beyond a land acknowledgement at the beginning of meetings, the region has grown in its understanding of reconciliation and its commitment to same. A new phrase, "reconciliation focus" was introduced at the fall 2021 meeting. The territorial land acknowledgement still

occurred. Meeting attendees were also invited to name an Indigenous person or persons who have influenced them. With the help of regional staff, these names were transformed into a word cloud. Attendees were also invited to name Indigenous artists, musicians, and authors and to name the Indigenous community nearest them, even if it is not in the same region. The regional council has been blessed to have at the beginning of its spring and fall meetings greetings from a member or members of one of the five Indigenous communities within its bounds. The Fairfield Museum and the land surrounding it was, after many, many years of being owned by The United Church of Canada transferred to the Delaware First Nation, Moraviantown. Chief Denise Stonefish attended a session of the fall meeting to acknowledge this transfer. Making space at regional council meetings to deepen relationships with Indigenous communities has been mutually beneficial and enriching.

### **Celebration of New Ministry Worship Service**

Postponed from the 2021 spring meeting, the regional council was delighted to welcome diaconal ministry candidate Karlene Kimber into the Order of Ministry during a livestreamed worship service at the fall meeting. The Rev. Michael Blair, General Council Secretary, was the guest speaker on this occasion. The sacrament of communion was celebrated.

### **Grant Applications**

The region consolidated funds received from preceding bodies according to purpose. These resources were then advertised for the first round of grant applications in the fall of 2021. The next grant application deadline is April 1, 2022.

### **GC 44 Proposals**

At its fall meeting, six GC44 proposals were received and carried by the region. These were then submitted to the General Council in anticipation of the GC44 meeting in 2022.

### **Challenges**

The regional council has fewer volunteers than before the structural change to collaborate with communities of faith on the profiles, property matters, and during times of change. Recruiting people to serve on the Executive, as commission members, and as General Council commissioners is another challenge. There seems to be a lack of engagement and connection with people throughout the region. Engaging smaller communities of faith without ministry personnel to learn their needs is another challenge. Supporting regional staff during leaves and adapting and accommodating accordingly is a shared learning experience.

### **Theme: Keep Calm and Rock On**

This has been the theme of the regional council since the spring of 2021. It is based on Matthew 16:13–18, when Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Simon Bar Jona answers, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” In response, Jesus says, “Blessed are you.... I will call you Peter, meaning rock, and on this rock, I will build my church.” As we, the communities of faith within the Antler River Watershed Regional Council continue to fulfill the mission and ministry of the church in a time such as this, it is well that we hold fast to our faith “upholding and encouraging” one another as we “Keep Calm and Rock On!”

Respectfully Submitted by  
Rev. Jane Van Patter, (pronouns she/her)  
President, Antler River Watershed Regional Council

## WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT

### Origin: President of WOW RC

Hello from Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, aka WOW. We are located in mid-western Ontario, consisting of parts of four former presbyteries and three former Conferences. This configuration has allowed us to truly create something new within WOW, trying to take the best of the previous entities and learning from each other.

We are an affirming regional council whose purpose statement is “Connecting, Supporting, Transforming.” Our geographical location has allowed us to share resources, mainly in the way of paid regional council staff, with Antler River Watershed and Horseshoe Falls. This arrangement has allowed all three regions to have staff specialized in social justice, faith formation, right relations, and ministry pastoral support. We have enjoyed working with our neighbours on larger events like hosting the Honourable Murry Sinclair for a speaking event.

As a regional council we are working towards the goal of being an anti-racist church by having justice training for all of our members of the Executive as well as all three of our commissions. We hope that our work in this area will help us to realize the privilege we have and how to best conduct the work of the region in a way that is truly inclusive for all.

Our region has three United Church camps and multiple chaplaincies in both hospitals and at university campuses. WOW is proud of the work of the church outside the walls of our buildings.

Just like everyone else, COVID has changed how we do things. Our regional council members have transitioned very well to online meetings. As a regional council we have moved to a system of both a spring and fall meeting. We have found this allows us more time to have educational pieces and community building at our meetings when we cannot be physically together.

Thank you to all of the regions of The United Church of Canada for all the work that you do.

## HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT TO GC44

### Origin: President of HFRC

Hello from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. Our area is an oddly shaped trapezoid in southern Ontario with four points. It is a diverse region made up of four former presbyteries, and three former Conferences, encompassing farmland, towns, villages, bedroom communities, and cities such as Hamilton, and parts of Mississauga. To the southwest is the small town of Cultus on the shores of Lake Erie. To the southeast are Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. To the north is Appleton in Mississauga. And to the northwest of this point is Georgetown.

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is an affirming one. Our purpose statement is “Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith.” We chose these active verbs not as descriptors, but as a sign of our commitment to do—to be engaged, and to be in partnership with communities of faith.

Our geographical location in southern Ontario has allowed us to share resources with Western Ontario Waterways and Antler River Watershed Regional Councils. For example, we share staff specialized in social justice, faith formation, and right relations. Together, we also employ a chaplain who offers pastoral support for our ministers. Although we have each adapted the practice of holding two meetings a year for each region, one in the spring and one in the fall, instead of one annual meeting, we do also meet together. We have shared the expense of hiring The Honourable Murray Sinclair for a shared speaking event, shared best practices at occasional tri-Executive meetings, and invited United Church members and adherents in all three regions to many learning events, such as book clubs and webinars.

As a regional council we are working towards the goal of being an anti-racist church. All members of our Executive and our three commissions were invited to take part in racial justice training this past winter. In the fall, we hosted a discussion series on issues around justice and anti-Black racism. This spring, we hosted another discussion series on justice and Indigenous issues. We hope that our work in this area will help us better understand privilege and inspire us to do the work of the region in a way that is inclusive and accepting of diversity.

Our region has two United Church camps, Ryerson and Cave Springs. We support chaplaincies at Brock and McMaster Universities. And, we are pleased to have Wesley Urban Ministries in Hamilton, and Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre in Paris, as well as two resource centres, Grand River Books and the Hamilton Resource Centre, as corporations.

The theme for our region over the past two years has been “Be Bold, Be Brave.” Our president chose this theme so that we could take a trauma-informed approach to the bewildering pace of change in our church structure and in society at large that has taken place over the past few years. We have not shied away from the loneliness and anxiety of this time. And yet, we have also looked constantly for signs of resurrection in spite of the trauma so that together our ministers and communities of faith might find strength and inspiration. We are coming to

understand the deep spirituality undergirding the belief that “We are a resurrection people” not just when times are good, but also in times of intense disappointment and suffering.

This has been a difficult time. And yet, it has been a period of intense growth for many, in which the fruits of the Spirit have been made manifest in surprising ways. Thank you to all of the regional councils of The United Church of Canada for all the work that you do and all the ways that the Spirit is working in you.

## ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

### Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

*“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 1 Cor 12:7*

Our regional council meeting theme for this year is *For the Common Good*. This has been a challenging third/fourth year for the regional council, communities of faith, and The United Church of Canada. We continue to walk through the pandemic together, and hopefully we will soon move to a post-pandemic chapter. Staff and volunteers have worked countless hours preparing, changing, experimenting, and succeeding in continuing as church in new and creative ways. As an Executive, we have heard stories of sacrifice, perseverance, hope, success, and also deep fatigue. We have also heard stories of worry, stress, frustration, and struggle. As a region, as community, we give thanks; we continue to be on a long journey together; we celebrate the resilience of our churches and the expression of the gospel in many new and creative ways. Our pandemic experience raises many questions about how we approach ministry, how we serve each other, and finally, our role as a church in society.

Between 2018 and 2022, our regional council has moved from a regional transition team with two staff people and a handful of committed volunteers, to our current Executive and staff. The transition team supported the creation of regional policy, and eventually four regional commissions: the Community of Faith Commission, the Social and Ecological Justice Commission, the Intercultural Diversity Commission, and the Pastoral Relations Commission. The transition also supported the creation of our first regional budget, including a four- to five-year projected budget and office space for the regional council.

Although in this past year many of our communities of faith, outreach ministries, and camps have struggled with meeting in person, our ministry has continued in many new and creative ways! Folks have used their phones, mail, video (Zoom/YouTube) for church. Many communities of faith have returned to offering in-person worship. We have continued a ministry of caring and support, and we have continued in new and creative ways. Volunteers, music leaders, ministry personnel, camp staff, outreach staff, and congregational support staff have all worked tirelessly. However, the stress of the pandemic has had an impact on many communities of faith and regional ministries.

As a regional council, the region has hosted townhall meetings for both ministry personnel and lay leaders for support, updates, and education. Our website continues to be a key tool for communication within our regional council. Many local, and a few regional, networks and local groups have also met to connect, learn, challenge, listen, and work together.

Our regional council Executive meets monthly (with the exception of the summer) and does the work of the regional council when our region is not meeting (C.3.1.1). Often the Executive has a very full agenda that includes oversight of the regional commissions, regional finances, regional policy, regional meeting, emerging work, and the Executive Minister and staff.



The regional council Executive and the Communities of Faith Commission have worked closely with the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) towards developing property to create income either for communities of faith (through the commission) or the regional council (through the Executive). Currently UPRC is supporting the regional council with a number of proposed projects.

The United Church of Canada is working towards becoming an anti-racist institution. For the United Church it means encouraging the General Council Office, regional council offices, communities of faith, and even Canadian society to pause and reflect. The United Church is offering training, learning opportunities, and discussion groups as part of a strategy of becoming an anti-racist church. Practically, the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council staff have joined together on a one-year journey of reflecting, learning, re-learning history, theological reflection, and discussion on how to become an anti-racist church and work towards right relationship. Staff from both regions continue to meet together bi-weekly to talk, learn, challenge, pray, reflect, and discuss on a path towards becoming an anti-racist church.

Both regional councils have encouraged equity conversations at the Executive, commission, and committee levels of the church. The regional council continues to lift up our commitment to equity across our work. We are beginning to live into our new pattern of equity leads being named by each commission. It has been a little over one year since Shining Waters Regional Council celebrated becoming an Affirming region!!!! We continue our journey towards living into right relations.

Regional council, through its commissions, is involved in a wide variety of ministry focusing on justice work, support to communities of faith and ministry personnel, and support and conversation focusing on intercultural and diverse communities. Regional council also supports camping through traditional camps and a regional-led camp in the summer.

At transition, the regional council continued to support a number of new ministries, including a United Church French congregation. We also continue to support community ministry and outreach throughout the entire regional council either through direct or indirect support of the regional council and also through many communities of faith.

We celebrate our partnerships with, and support from, many incorporated ministries, including Toronto United Church Council and the United Property Resource Corporation.

Shining Waters Regional Council proposals include:

- Care of the Church's Marginalized
- Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use and Harm Reduction
- Jurisdiction of Clergy
- Ministry Personnel Salary Equity
- Raising Our Voice for Human Rights
- Review of New Structure

- Senior GCO and Regional Staff Performance Reviews
- Vocational Process Accountability

## **SNAPSHOT OF THE FIRST FOUR YEARS**

### **Origin: East Central Ontario Regional Council**

#### **Who Are We?**

The East Central Ontario Regional Council is composed of the following communities of faith of the former Living Waters Presbytery of the former Toronto Conference: Trinity Pastoral Charge-Uxbridge, Sandford-Zephyr Pastoral Charge, Goodwood Pastoral Charge, and Epsom-Utica Pastoral Charge; all pastoral charges in the former presbyteries of the former Bay of Quinte Conference: Four Winds, Hills and Shores, Lakeridge, Kawartha Highlands, Kente, and Shining Waters; and several other entities in a covenantal relationship with the ECORC that gather to explore faith, worship, and service.

The logo, created by Karen Wilson, our Communications staff, captures the beauty of our region by including water, beautiful tall trees, rocks, and sunshine, and since we are grounded by the word of God, it all is built upon the pages of the Bible. You will also see that it shows that we are inclusive of all people. And if you look closely, you will see a bridge over the water—the bridge has two ends. The entry point of crossing the bridge is a “mystery of godliness.” The other side of the bridge where one exits is a hymn—1 Timothy 3:14–16 Spiritual Bridges.

#### **What We Do**

Vision: Strengthened by God’s grace and refreshed by the Spirit, we follow the way of Jesus in healing our world. Our mission statement has been crafted poetically, and not as long as the Song of Faith, but our agendas are constructed around the words as a way of holding ourselves accountable.

The ECORC’s executive body is known as the Assembly of Elders, and the presiding officer of the Assembly of Elders is known as the Speaker. What might formerly have been call committees are known as leadership teams, and working sub-groups of the leadership teams are forums.

The Assembly of Elders receives the reports and recommended actions of the leadership teams of the regional council. The Assembly of Elders reviews the work as it relates to the direction of the regional council and is in keeping with the policies and procedures. If all is in order, the Assembly concurs and approves the recommended actions.

The Assembly of Elders may be likened to a representative body of the whole regional council between gatherings. Much of the work is routine. The Assembly of Elders gives approval to the recommendations of the Covenant Support Team, which include changes in pastoral relationships and the appointments of liaisons and pastoral charge supervisors. Mission grants brought forward from the Formation, Justice and Nurture Team are affirmed; likewise from the Mission through Property and Finance Team, we are apprised of maintenance and building projects as well as plans for disbursement of surplus properties following building closures.

When the work of the teams overlaps, when a team needs direction from the regional council, or when the team wants to push the regional council in a new direction, the Assembly of Elders

plays a larger role. In these circumstances, and if it can, the Assembly of Elders decides for the regional council, and if it can't or shouldn't, the work is brought to the full gathering of the regional council. This has happened at either the fall gathering, which includes approving budgets, setting priorities, and relicensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, or in the spring, when we receive all annual reports and celebrate other occasions in the life of our regional council. In between, we have dedicated many evenings mid-week to learning opportunities, with presentations and small groups on Aoom, learning and developing new relationships as we discussed, questioned, shared, and pondered...no decisions, just a chance to hear something new.

### **What We Have Been Doing**

With the Formation Justice and Nurture Team and its many forums, the mission focus of the regional council is furthered. We have not let the COVID pandemic slow our energies or enthusiasm and held a wonderful celebration when becoming an Affirming Regional Council after lots of conversation and education. Recognizing further work to do, a policy regarding anti-racism training for all in leadership roles within the regional council and congregations was confirmed at the spring meeting of the regional council.

### **Our Staff and Volunteers**

We are blessed in abundance with energy and enthusiasm for finding ways to stay connected, to honour our heritage, and yet find new ways of being. This is only possible because of the commitment of so many volunteers working with a small but dedicated staff team.

### **Concerns**

The decline in many communities is concerning, and the combination of congregations that are vacant or getting by with part-time appointments to create the potential to call full-time ministry is desirable. Congregations are being encouraged to self-determine but with care to not undermine the viability and opportunities of another.

COVID has forced us to learn how to communicate in new ways, how to stay connected, and where there are huge Internet challenges within our geographic bounds.

We recognize ourselves as a ministry in process...

## SNAPSHOT OF THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

### Origin: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

#### Who Are We?

The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council of The United Church of Canada supports more than 200 communities of faith in a region that stretches north of the Ottawa Valley and south to the St. Lawrence River. The joining of two former Montreal and Ottawa Conference presbyteries with two former Bay of Quinte Conference presbyteries has been a blessing, forcing us to review, revise, and let go, or find different ways of being as relationships have developed with new neighbours.

Geographically, the region is large, extending east to Hawkesbury, Ontario, and Chelsea in western Quebec, west to Denbigh, south to the St. Lawrence River, and north to Nânâdônok. We gratefully acknowledge the traditional unceded lands of Indigenous Peoples on which our buildings and ministries have been built.

The EOORC's population is diverse, with a mix of rural, urban, and small-town dwellers coming from the far reaches of eastern Ontario and western Quebec, the cosmopolitan city of Ottawa, and many towns along the St. Lawrence River all the way to Gananoque. We proudly serve a sizable population of Francophone speakers and a Chinese United Church in Ottawa. We continue to add to the number of [affirming ministries](#) within the region.

The EOORC logo symbolizes the natural beauty in the EOORC: the ubiquitous maple tree, the three main rivers (St. Lawrence, Ottawa, and Rideau), and the green landscape of forests and fields that run through the entire area of Eastern Ontario and Outaouais. The golden cross represents the sun and a guiding light for EOORC members.

#### What We Do

The EOORC upholds [the beliefs of The United Church of Canada](#). Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, our mission is to offer compassion and love to those in need, to welcome newcomers into our community, and to help people grow in their relationship with God.

A pattern for three regional council gatherings a year is working well, with the February gathering focused on education and information rather than voting, so an open invitation can be extended to all who are interested. At the formal meetings (spring and fall), communities of faith send elected representatives to vote on the business decisions that affect us all, such as the election of the General Council 44 commissioners, Executive and team nominations, licensing new Licenced Lay Worship Leaders each fall, and approval of budgets. Recognition of retirees, retired churches, and those called home are also celebrated, even when there are no new ministries.

#### What We Have Been Doing

As the world has struggled to adapt to a new normal, so have we in Eastern Ontario Outaouais. We have learned to pivot around challenging situations, be creative with new forms of

technology, and made funding available to help communities of faith continue as best each one was able to operate, given all the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive has met monthly on Zoom (except for the summer) under the leadership of Bronwen Harman and the Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro as Presidents. There have been more communities of faith determining their future, evaluating how to be faithful to the gospel by repurposing their church buildings to provide financial resources for a shrinking but faithful congregation. Other churches are in discussion with the United Property Resource Corporation (recently renamed Kindred Works) about how best to use space and provide income. In compliance with the policy regarding proceeds from the sale of property, there have been donations given to support other local ministries and the wider community of the United Church, for which we are deeply grateful.

Networks and youth ministry, including support for three camps, have always been high priorities, and again, the joining with new neighbours has kicked up the level of passion to new heights.

### **Our Staff and Volunteers**

We are blessed with amazing dedicated people who work tirelessly on their various passions to ensure that ministry is happening—pastoral relations needs being met, stewardship, youth and young adult leadership, UCW, finances, property, Living into Right Relationships, and Affirming—and we continue to encourage clusters and networks. There is room for everyone to learn, share, and grow together.

### **Concerns**

Communication continues to be a challenge, and we are aware of the number of communities of faith without ministry personnel, and therefore the need to ensure that each one has elected a regional council lay representative who will receive the information. There are regular updates to the website, a large mailing list for the newsletter, and Facebook groups, but all of this relying on technology for people to engage at the other end. We still rely on all those receiving to pass along messages to others so that hopefully everyone has access, in some way, to the information.

## **SNAPSHOT OF THE FIRST FOUR YEARS**

### **Origin: Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council**

#### **Who Are We?**

Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council incorporates communities of faith and outreach ministries from the former Consistoire Laurentien and Consistoire du Quebec Presbytery, which includes almost all the ministries of The United Church of Canada in the province of Quebec. The western edge of the regional council curves to follow the Ontario border near Grenville, reaching out to the south along the Quebec–US border of New York/Vermont and stretching up both sides of the St. Lawrence River, northward and eastward past Quebec City and Sept-Îles to Harrington Harbour.

The multilingual nature of our regional council is an integral part of our identity. In addition to English and French, the primary languages spoken in communities of faith across the region include Mohawk, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese (who also use Urdu in worship), Armenian, Hungarian, and Korean.

The Nakonha:ka logo created by our Communications staff Judy Coffin illustrates the people of the land celebrating the rising sun of a new day in the eastern sky. The image also represents hope and possibility, rooted in the age-old blessing of the land and the community, supporting each other.

#### **What We Do**

How we came to be known as Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council:

We asked for suggestions for the new name during the fall, with the decision to be made at the last presbytery meetings at which time everyone had a secret ballot vote. Four names were presented, and Nakonha:ka was sent in by our Mohawk congregation in Kanesatake (Oka). Elder Satewas Gabriel has for many years welcomed us to the land as part of the opening worship for the Conference Annual General Meeting.

We have two Mohawk communities of faith in our new regional council, and although there are people from many other nations living in the area, none of them have churches. The United Church of Canada added the Mohawk words “All my relations” to the crest a number of years ago in recognition that they were the first Indigenous nation to join The United Church of Canada.

The word Nakonha:ka is reference to “the people of the east, the people of the rising sun,” and there are no Mohawk communities in Canada farther east than Quebec.

#### **What We Have Been Doing**

We have struggled to create a new identity and way of being, but as a very small group in a large geographic area who were already used to working together, change has been challenging. Our former Conference was used to Internet meetings, so learning Zoom was not a

huge challenge for many, but there have been other ways that we have tried to change so that we would feel new and different.

We went from having committees to leadership teams, trying to rally new membership. From regularly scheduled presbytery meetings, we adopted a governance policy that calls us to meet as a full regional council three times a year, two meetings online and one in-person, and are attempting to live into this policy. It seemed awkward at first, but with time and openness we hope that we will find this pattern to be helpful in carrying out our call and ministry.

“I have learnt and re-learnt so much about the suffering of Indigenous peoples and our call to reconciliation. I would like to thank our Elder Robert Patton from Kahnawake for his willingness to journey as a leader from the beginnings of this regional council. I am so grateful for his openness and patience as we do our best to ensure that reconciliation and right relations are built into the foundation of our new structure. I would like to thank Lisa Byer-de Wever for her dedication and persistence; she continues to create space where we can all learn and be moved to transformation. Through my learnings from these teachers, I grew uncomfortable with the way we acknowledge the land when we meet as a regional council. I asked the Living into Right Relations Leadership Circle for help, and they responded with an engaging and thought-provoking workshop, sharing the video on our website so that communities of faith throughout this regional council can engage, listen, learn, and be transformed. I am grateful for my learnings and recommit myself to the work of reconciliation; as a descendant of 16th-century colonizers, I condemn the Doctrine of Discovery as a false ideology and a tool of oppression, void of the compassion and mercy of Creator. May Nakonha:ka continue the journey of reconciliation into right relations with all of creation.

Over the past year I have learned more about how change takes time, and that little changes can make a big difference. It takes more than a couple years to develop and live into new norms, and it takes many hearts to transform a system. We have done our best to give room for our becoming. Leadership teams, networks, and clusters continue to sort out rights and responsibilities despite the added struggle brought by the pandemic. We continue to trust the process and have adopted the practice of having an equity team or officer at every meeting of the regional council and the Executive. My hope is that committees and teams will feel empowered to carry out the work they are called to, while receiving the support needed from the regional council, so that we can all live out the vision of God’s Dream.

This coming year we will focus on the new Call and Vision of The United Church of Canada: Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice. As we imagine the next year, I wish to share with you some of my reflections on how we have already begun to live out the hope in this Call.”

—Words from President Rev. Linda Buchanan

### **Our Staff and Volunteers**

We are blessed with awesome people who work on their various passions to ensure that ministry is happening—pastoral relations, youth and young adult leadership, UCW, property



and finance, Living into Right Relationships—and we continue to encourage clusters and networks.

### **Concerns**

The crisis brought by the COVID-19 virus has been experienced by many as an apocalypse, revealing the reality of struggle and suffering on God's green earth. For so many of us, the realities of injustice are becoming more clear, and the interconnectedness of this suffering impossible to ignore. As a regional council, we have tried to adapt and serve with compassion and hope, building relationships and community in peace and love. We are still learning, we are still at the beginning, and we continue to trust in what we have begun.

## SNAPSHOT OF FIRST FOUR YEARS

### Origin: Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

#### Who Are We?

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council is comprised of three provinces: the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec, the province of Prince Edward Island, and the province of New Brunswick. Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region consults with, guides, and supports communities of faith and other ministries in building trusting, respectful, affirming relationships that embody the Creator's presence within the world in which we live.

#### What We Do

##### The Beginning

Time has passed quickly since General Council 43 voted to proceed with a three-council system, a new structure for the church, and a new way of being "church." At our first annual meeting we joined with Region 15, splitting the Executive Minister's time between the separate business meetings, and joining together for a Memorial Service and time with Youth Forum and the Celebration of Ministry Service on Sunday morning.

During our business meeting, we presented a draft governance document for approval so that we would have a framework for our beginning. It was understood that the structure would need to be open to amendments as each committee began its work. After a year of working, it was recommended that the committees take time to review their terms of reference, and two or three committees recommended changes to their terms. As each was approved, our governance document was amended and revised on our council's website.

During the region's first year of existence, our President had an idea of a logo, and with the help of her talented cousin Will, presented a drawing to the Executive for suggestions. A choice was made for recommendation to the Annual Meeting and accepted.

##### What We Have Been Doing

The Maritime Conference was an Affirming Conference, and within 2020 we began again the process of becoming an Affirming Region, as the designation could not be transferred. In the spring of 2021, we voted by a margin of 98 percent to become an Affirming Region. We received our certificate last fall! Our region's logo was updated to reflect the Affirm designation.

During the planning for the 2021 Annual General Meeting, the Executive approved the recommendation of the Planning Committee to purchase pottery to gift the candidates and admissions ministers for their Celebration of Ministry. The northern light designs are very beautiful and will continue to be gifted each year, to remember a special day in the lives of their service to their future faith communities within The United Church of Canada. The region also commissioned a medal with the region's logo on one side and *"Thank you for your service*

♡” with a heart on the other side to present to our retirees/jubilarians and those ministers leaving the region.

We held our first Annual General Meeting in 2019 in person, but the AGMs in 2020 and 2021 were held “COVID-style”—in other words, virtually. While we were able to continue meeting and accomplished reporting to the communities of faith, we did miss being together. We are grateful, however, for the technology and the new learning that came from a virtual meeting.

During these two years, we held the status quo with President Audrey Lounder remaining as President instead of the normal one-year term. We were grateful for her leadership to provide continuity during so many unknowns—the shutdowns, circuit breakers, and restrictions in our communities as we all felt the impact of the pandemic. Audrey took the lead, with the assistance of others, in preparation of five video services to be used by communities of faith for Sunday services to provide their minister with a day off.

Many found preparing for online services very difficult because of lack of computer/video skills and/or the additional workload it involved, and for those congregants who had no computer or computer skills. Family members assisted those without by loaning iPads or older computers with a “little training” to lend a hand so as many as possible could join online. In some communities of faith, printed sermons were also delivered to those who could not join virtually. Communities of faith held a virtual “coffee time” following the online service for those able to join for a social time and to stay connected. Our communities of faith have worked hard to make sure that their ministry continued through the difficulties of the pandemic. We are very grateful to our ministry personnel and lay leaders who had gone above and beyond the call.

With the help of the President, who had gatherings of clusters in geographical areas, we have developed our core values, mission, and vision statements for the region. The statements were then revised as we began to work towards our Affirm status. These statements can be found on our website.

### **Our Staff and Volunteers**

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters (FSLDW) is blessed with a staff complement of shared and regional staff. A special thank you to all of our staff for their work and dedication over the past three years. As we all know, volunteers are the heart of any organization, and the region is no exception. The call to discipleship is strong in our regional council, and there are many people who have offered their gifts, time, and talent to its ministry. We could not live into our call without each and every one of us working together.

### **Concerns**

Some people have shared that, under the new structure, they do not feel as connected to the region as they did under the four-court system. We have a weekly announcement program to share regional information with the members. We are also developing a newsletter focusing on engaging people in the communities of faith with one another. These are a couple of communication tools to help in rebuilding relationships across the region.

Since the first meeting of the region in 2019, we have been talking about hosting a kitchen party. With all that has happened these last three years, I am sure everyone will agree that we are looking forward to celebrating our second in-person annual meeting with a **Newfoundland Kitchen Party!** What a day that will be!

Through all of this, in the silence of reflection, the Creator's presence is felt among us as we continue to work for the good of all in the Creator's name and stay connected, amen and amen.

Thank you. Miigwetch. Merci.

Sheila Gallant, President  
Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

## REPORT FOR GENERAL COUNCIL 44

### Origin: Regional Council 15 (Bermuda & Nova Scotia)

#### Who Are We?

We are the peoples of the lands mostly surrounded by water and blessed in many cases with fertile land that support us in our daily needs. It gives us sustenance, joy, and so many opportunities. We are faith communities that care deeply for those we know and those we may never meet. We do this through our call to serve others that need support, guidance, caring, and most of all, love. The love that Jesus bestows on us, and members of our communities of faith, offers us the opportunity to spread that love in any way we can.

#### What We Do

##### The Beginning

This is the first report living within the new structure of The United Church of Canada. We are sure that many of the regional reports will contain similar information on how we have grown, and continue to grow and evolve, as we navigate what the structure means to not only the United Church but also the regions and the communities of faith (CoF). Deep in our hearts, the structure has not changed who we are or what we are called to do, but the processes and learning what works best for those that faithfully follow is new to all of us.

We want to start by thanking our Transition Team, which did so much work in trying to prepare us to be successful. The work on developing a governance structure to start us off helped us to be able to move forward during the first months under our new structure. That work continues to evolve as we learn what works and what doesn't work. We also want to thank the individuals who stepped up to hold positions within the region as we took baby steps forward. We held each other and shared with each other as we grew and became more confident in how we can move forward.

Region 15 shares positions with Region 14, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters (FSLDW), and Region 16, First Dawn Eastern Edge (FDEE). We are fortunate to have Faith March-MacCuish as our Executive Minister. She works tirelessly to help us focus on those tasks we need to keep on our radar, as well as ministering to all of those who support the region through their tireless efforts as volunteers, as well as support to our staff. A special thank you to all of our staff. Over the past few years we have said goodbye to some staff and welcome to others. Catherine Stuart is the regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults, taking over from Lauren King. Sherpherd Munikwa is our new regional Minister for Justice, Mission and Outreach, as Laura Hunter left this position in 2021. David Hewitt is our Regional Minister for Pastoral Relations, Support to Ministry Personnel, and the Communities of Faith. Sarah Wallace, our Archivist, who keeps our history and all our records. Our wonderful support staff, Jennifer Whittemore, Office Manager; Jennifer Taylor, Assistant to the Executive Minister; and Tracey Rose, Administrative Assistant.

We are also fortunate to have Andrew Richardson, the Minister for the Office of Vocation, who is responsible for Ministry Formation, Education and Discipline. Roger Janes is our Stewardship

& Special Gifts support person for the Atlantic Region, who supports the Philanthropy Unit of the General Council and our communities of faith.

Thank you to our support staff and our volunteers; we could not do the work we are called to do without each and every one of us working together.

### **The Work We Do**

As a region we needed to apply to CRA for a charitable number as we transitioned to the new structure. For the first year and some into 2020, our transactions were channelled through FSLDW. Certainly, this offered some difficulties for our administrative staff, but also didn't allow our Division of Finance and Administration to fully work on our policies on investments, grants, and processes for granting with respect to the region. We will congratulate the group for the work they have done subsequently about ethical investing and preparing an investment policy that holds the values of the United Church and the region with respect to ethical, green, and socially conscious investing.

As a region we have many rural communities with an aging population. Some of these smaller churches have had to close, and buildings had to be sold or demolished. The Property Committee needed to navigate all the permutations and have prepared a Property Handbook for Communities of Faith. Many of our committees, along with the Regional Minister, have been working to assist the congregations to look at their future, be creative in their call, and develop cooperative and pilot ministries. It is our hope that all of our congregations are able to have vibrant ministries. The work of all of our committees is indispensable, and we want to thank them for that valuable piece of work that will continue to be of use well into the future.

Bermuda had a long-standing relationship with Maritime Conference, but with the new structure, it offered the opportunity to reassess that relationship and to offer opportunities to build a better understanding between Bermuda, Regional Council 15, and the United Church. This work was overseen by a task group that consisted of Janet Sollows, Faith March-MacCuish, Michael Blair, Adrian Hartnett-Beasley, Herbert Siggins, and Jacki Zuill. Late in 2021, the individual congregations in Bermuda voted on whether to be in relationship with the United Church. We are delighted to see that they have agreed, and the final piece will be before General Council 44 to approve the memorandum of understanding. We look forward to that final step so we can then continue to grow our relationship with Bermuda and perhaps finally develop a name for our region.

The region has developed a strategic plan. Realizing that we cannot be everything to everyone, as much as we may want, we do not have the financial or human resources to accomplish everything. Therefore, the strategic plan allows us to focus our energies on what we can do. The focus is three pillars: Discipleship, Mission, and Leadership. The divisions, committees, Executive, staff, and members of the region are working to animate the three pillars in our work and ministry.

We are in the initial planning stage of the possible start of an Institute for Health, Joy and Excellence across the three eastern regions. We are excited by the possibility.

Regional Council 15 has developed an Association of Ministers, which is now fully incorporated with the province of Nova Scotia, and is developing its mandate and membership. They began as a committee of the regional council, and are now launching as an independent association.

### **COVID-19**

We cannot report without mentioning COVID. In March of 2020, we were all devastated to see us shut down our communities of faith to protect everyone. As difficult as it was, it offered opportunities to be innovative and adventurous as we delved into the world of remote gathering. I am so proud of our communities of faith that have been able to find ways of communicating and worshipping while we continue to ride the roller coaster that is COVID. The use of technology has allowed us to grow our congregations in ways we never thought possible before and to welcome new faces via Zoom or YouTube. We applaud every community of faith, and the region, that despite being challenged by what COVID has placed before us, we have learned new skills, developed new methods of communication, and continue to do the work that we are called to do. Thank you to everyone for continuing to be church.

Through our Justice, Mission and Outreach network and committees, the following remain a strong focus:

- Racial justice
- Refugee sponsorship
- Right relations and the call to be the church
- Just peace for Palestine and Israel
- Mental health education and advocacy
- Climate justice

We continue to appreciate our ecumenical connections. This is particularly more important during these times when we can't be together in the same space. As a region, we will continue to support, to the best of our abilities, the needs of our communities of faith and pray that our future is bright, faithful, caring, bold, and brave.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane McDonald & Janet Sollows  
President & Past President, Region 15

## **REPORT FOR GENERAL COUNCIL 44**

### **Origin: First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council**

#### **Who We Are**

I bring you greetings and Epiphany blessings from our most easterly region of The United Church of Canada, First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council. In our beginning, we were known as Region 16. In our earliest days, a time of discernment led us to our identity-framing name, a reflection of the gift of our geography. The name First Dawn Eastern Edge speaks to us of the place where the sun rises first (First Dawn) and of course being the province with the longest shoreline in Canada, projecting out into the North Atlantic, we see ourselves as being the Eastern Edge. We acknowledge that we are on ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut.

In 2018, we engaged in a Comprehensive Review process to discern the workings of our Newfoundland and Labrador Conference. We adopted a district structure in 1993 because of our great number of bays and rural pastoral charges, with a complex highway system of both paved and unpaved roads connecting us. We mourned the loss of our beloved presbyteries that cared for us until that time, for 25 years to the end of the Comprehensive Review. With the findings and restructuring that followed, our Conference reformed into our regional council; with a single regional office and staff, our committees became teams, and our divisions continue to faithfully provide leadership with a few shifts in focus and names. We want to thank the Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, our Executive Minister, for continuing to lead our region through this transition and the years leading up to today.

I had the privilege of being elected as President in 2019, at the end of the first year of the transition. Mindful of neighbours who care for us with everything from cups of tea for a helping conversation to Sunday dinners, to hard-working health care workers, fish harvesters, and growers, to new extended families arriving from war-torn nations, our mosaic is expanding, I chose the theme Presence and Hope. As we struggle to grow our population, which continues to be the provincially-shrinking one in Canada, we maintain our optimism. It has kept us smiling and growing for thousands of years.

Our pastoral charges, now down to 87 from 90, continue to live out our faith in God as Spirit-filled followers of Christ with dedicated volunteers. Our changing demographics are reshaping the viability of our congregations, while the resilience of our communities and incorporated ministries through all the changes continues to be inspiring.

#### **What We Have Been Doing**

With the COVID-19 pandemic, a year that I envisioned would bring some travelling around the region, public health guidelines brought restrictions. As provincial health policies have kept our COVID-19 case numbers low, we decided to do our part by holding our 2020 Regional (Annual)



meeting in October, a few months later than May, while beginning to build a stronger virtual network so that we could meet remotely. By May 14–16, 2021, we were able to hold a full-length, virtual Annual Meeting, complete with a traditional kitchen party. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive since our 2020 and 2021 meetings, as we keep learning the new technology and grow our virtual connections. Of course, we long for the day when we can gather again, in person, to share food, stories of our faith, and enjoy being a people who truly celebrate God's presence in community.

First Dawn Eastern Edge formed a Regional Affirm Team, reflecting our need to keep learning to be welcoming of all, including people of all races, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender expressions, economic statuses, abilities, or any other differences that have led to marginalization or oppression.

The designated lay ministers of the regional council have asked for us to meet with them to discuss how we can support their ministry and hear their concerns. A small team has been named to begin the conversation. While COVID has slowed us down, this is still a priority of the regional Executive.

The theme focus of our past three years have been Behold, I make all things New-2019, Presence and Hope-2020, and now Presence and Hope: Health and Wellness-2021. Mindful of how the pandemic has challenged many facets of our health, we are focusing this year on the health and wellness of the individual person and the health and wellness of our communities of faith.

Thank you to the Rev. Peggy Johnson, who kept the role of President for an extra year to help provide stability through the pandemic. The Rev. Nancy-Mojica Fisher will be installed in May as our third regional President, and we wish her well. I look forward to continuing to serve the regional church in a shifting capacity, and I look forward to returning to the Pouch Cove-Bauline Pastoral Charge. It has been, thus far, a humbling and strengthening time in my ministry to serve in the leadership role of President.

Again, I thank our regional council staff, divisions, teams, incorporated ministries, and our communities of faith, the grassroots from where all of our faithful servants' works are borne. Blessings to the General Council, our Moderator, regional Presidents and Elders, and all our relations as we celebrate what God calls us to do.

May God bless our journey into GC44 and our future. May God's Presence and Hope be our peace.

Rev. Grant Stuckless President (2021–22)