

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

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

of the

43RD GENERAL COUNCIL 2018

July 21–27, 2018
Oshawa, Ontario



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., BD.,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

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

(May 1, 2015, to March 31, 2018)

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
Newfoundland and Labrador Conference			
Bowering, William Robert Bladen	Jun. 04, 1931	1959	Oct. 16, 2015
Gard, George Charles	Sep. 20, 1933	1970	Jun. 13, 2016
Newbury, Roger Neil	Apr. 4, 1933	1966	Jul. 27, 2017
Pottle, Elsie E.	Sep. 12, 1938	1996	Dec. 4, 2016
Pye, Frank Wing	Nov. 25, 1937	1965	Sep. 1, 2017
Ralph, Melvin Realto	Feb. 16, 1934	1962	May 29, 2016
Snook, Benjamin Albert	Jun. 20, 1942	1998	Apr. 27, 2016
Swain, Hector	Mar. 21, 1929	1957	Jan. 27, 2017
Maritime Conference			
Anderson, Alastair Scott	Jan. 16, 1952	1993	Mar. 28, 2016
Burns, Russell Fraser	Aug. 23, 1925	1959	Feb. 23, 2016
Clark, John Alexander (Sandy) Bishop	Jan. 8, 1939	1999	Nov. 6, 2017
Clarke, Raymond Stewart	Aug. 25, 1930	1954	Jan. 19, 2018
Crooks, Robert Alexander (Bob)	Mar. 7, 1931	1958	Apr. 5, 2015
Francis, Ray Augustine	Jun. 29, 1936	1960	Feb. 27, 2018
Fraser, James Alexander	Dec. 20, 1927	1957	Feb. 4, 2018
Fraser, Nancy Keith	Nov. 4, 1939	1965	Jun. 6, 2016
Hay, Eldon Roy	Dec. 15, 1931	1957	Sep. 17, 2017
Lyons, Willard Bruce	Oct. 9, 1925	1974	Dec. 10, 2017
MacDonald, James Allistar	Apr. 17, 1932	1956	Apr. 25, 2015
MacDonald, John Charles (Jackie)	Oct. 19, 1930	1970	Jul. 1, 2015
MacKenzie, Hugh Gilmour	Oct. 1, 1925	1950	Sep. 15, 2017
MacLean, George Henderson	Nov. 22, 1925	1948	Jul. 19, 2015
Maund, Ronald I.	Apr. 21, 1942	1968	Jan. 30, 2018
Mitton, Everett Wayne	May 30, 1941	1991	Mar. 9, 2016
Moriarty, Eugene Victor (Vic)	Jul. 23, 1916	1943	Aug. 22, 2015
Newhook, Russel Herbert	Mar. 13, 1936	1972	May 18, 2016
O’Brien, Marion Joyce	Oct. 8, 1927	1993	Feb. 4, 2017
Paterson, Charles Alexander	Oct. 21, 1948	2007	Jan. 12, 2017
Patterson, John	Jun. 20, 1943	1978	May 25, 2015

Randall, William Lawrence (Bill)	Jan. 19, 1919	1941	Mar. 21, 2017
Rector, Clinton Maynard	Nov. 24, 1935	1970	Feb. 25, 2017
Tarrant, James Edward Sauv� “Bud”	Mar. 24, 1931	1963	Dec. 23, 2017
Van Gulick, John Arthur	Jun. 1, 1945	1979	Sep. 15, 2015
Whitney, Norman John	Jul. 24, 1925	1964	Jan. 6, 2016

Montreal and Ottawa Conference

Bai, Han-Gook	Feb. 25, 1929	1978	Jul. 10, 2016
Barlow, Jeffrey	Dec. 31, 1931	2007	Oct. 21, 2015
Carnegie, Douglas James	Jan. 20, 1930	1958	Feb. 2, 2016
Frioud, Jacqueline	Dec. 15, 1952	2001	Apr. 1, 2017
Heard, Douglas Wallace	Mar. 20, 1940	1965	Aug. 21, 2017
Humble, Robert Clifford	Dec. 5, 1954	1981	Jul. 14, 2017
MacDonald, Angus John	Jul. 24, 1924	1952	Oct. 22, 2015
Newman, Melvin Chown	Jun. 15, 1922	1951	Jul. 12, 2015
Purdon, Robert Burn	Jan. 25, 1941	1965	Feb. 10, 2017
Skoutajan, Hanns Felix	Mar. 13, 1929	1956	Dec. 10, 2015
Spicer, Charles Ernest	Jan. 1, 1943	1971	Sep. 3, 2017
Tomita, George Shotaro	Sep. 13, 1921	1976	Jan. 15, 2017
Van Ginhoven, Huibert C.J.	May 1, 1926	1978	Dec. 13, 2017
Watson, John Ralph	May 5, 1926	1951	Mar. 6, 2016
Zarifian, John Avedis	Nov. 7, 1926	1959	Dec. 11, 2017

Bay of Quinte Conference

Alston, Harold James	Jul. 12, 1952	1976	Dec. 14, 2016
Begbie, J. Michael Goldwin	Jul. 27, 1953	1980	Apr. 2, 2016
Bresnahan, William Albert	Sep. 23, 1948	1991	Nov. 14, 2017
Churchill, Allen Douglas	Aug. 30, 1935	1964	Dec. 15, 2017
Clappison, Frederick Albert	Feb. 28, 1928	1966	Nov. 15, 2015
Condie, Robert Neil	Jan. 29, 1935	1977	Mar. 10, 2018
Cox, Wilbert Clarence	Apr. 23, 1940	1965	May 10, 2015
Cullen, William James “Jim”	Dec. 1, 1942	1967	Mar. 23, 2016
Currie, Douglas Keith	Aug. 16, 1947	1990	Jan. 6, 2018
Davis, Dale Frederick	Aug. 19, 1928	1978	Jan. 25, 2017
Day, Barry Bruce	Apr. 30, 1934	1958	Mar. 9, 2017
Edmondson, Frederick Roy	Jun. 1, 1925	1963	Nov. 23, 2017
Evans, Clifford	Sep. 13, 1922	1961	Jul. 29, 2015
Fillier, Bobby Wilson	Oct. 3, 1947	1974	Nov. 28, 2016
Fleming, Mark Walter Athol	Oct. 8, 1940	1996	Apr. 28, 2017
Haley, Ernest Allison Clarke	Mar. 19, 1929	1956	Dec. 28, 2017
Huntly, Roy Cyril	Jul. 17, 1930	1959	Aug. 20, 2016
Irvine, Hazel Margaret Sankey	Aug. 23, 1931	1989	May 3, 2015
Mitchell, Wesley George	Dec. 3, 1921	1966	May 26, 2016
Paul, Gerald Walton	Jun. 26, 1926	1957	Oct. 27, 2017

Pogue, Barry Russell	Feb. 21, 1931	1956	May 28, 2017
Potter, David William	Apr. 29, 1926	1956	Dec. 08, 2016
Reed, John Newton	May 18, 1924	1953	Nov. 12, 2016
Schamerhorn, Norman Edward	Jun. 17, 1933	1963	Dec. 4, 2017

Toronto Conference

Anderson, John Findlay	Oct. 4, 1925	1953	Jun. 2, 2016
Bayliss, Frederick Milton	Dec. 21, 1928	1958	Sep. 27, 2016
Burgess, Gordon Earl	Dec. 14, 1926	1951	Aug. 10, 2015
Coles, Alexander Clydes	Dec. 27, 1928	1956	Oct. 12, 2015
Cousens, John Raymond	Jul. 3, 1932	1958	Dec. 26, 2016
Curtin, Margaret Elspeth Lynne	Sep. 1, 1941	1969	Dec. 22, 2016
Hines, William Jonathon	Oct. 7, 1942	1977	Sep. 29, 2016
Hume, William Gordon	Dec. 12, 1925	1950	Aug. 11, 2017
Lee, Sang Chul	Feb. 29, 1924	1954	Jan. 28, 2017
Logan, John Allan (Al)	Mar. 1, 1927	1952	Dec. 31, 2016
Matsugu, Kenneth Kunio	Jun. 14, 1928	1961	Sep. 27, 2017
McKim, Audrey Patricia	Apr. 28, 1926	1954	Sep. 26, 2017
Morris, John Ferguson Gray	Jan. 9, 1920	1943	Apr. 11, 2016
Morrison, Lillian Grace	Aug. 3, 1929	1986	Apr. 15, 2015
Murata, Benjamin Toyo-Tsune	Jun. 7, 1927	1958	Jan. 27, 2016
Nodwell, Robert Gordon	Mar. 25, 1928	1956	Aug. 13, 2017
Park, JungHee	Nov. 29, 1964	2005	Jan. 31, 2016
Poulter, Charles Frederick Theodore	Mar. 3, 1920	1949	Nov. 27, 2017
Powell, Donald Clifford	Mar. 21, 1940	1964	Jul. 7, 2016
Raymont, Robert Lossing	Nov. 1, 1932	1963	Nov. 11, 2016
Rickard, Daisy Rosalin	Jan. 21, 1925	1973	Sep. 25, 2015
Rumball, Robert Leslie	Oct. 2, 1929	1957	Jun. 1, 2016
Snow, Etta M.	Jan. 21, 1927	1952	Mar. 29, 2016
Varey, John Douglas	May 29, 1941	1986	Aug. 30, 2016
Wood, Victor Alfred	Jun. 19, 1920	1952	Jun. 13, 2016

Hamilton Conference

Breithaupt, Herbert Caskey	Feb. 22, 1927	1959	Feb. 16, 2017
Campbell-Geddes, Margaret I.	Aug. 24, 1929	1981	May 3, 2016
Crabtree, Jean Margaret	Jun. 28, 1935	1971	Jun. 15, 2016
Deas, Donald Alan	Sep. 19, 1925	1959	Nov. 14, 2015
Dunseith, Terry Wayne	Jan. 21, 1960	1994	Nov. 8, 2016
Edmonds, Leslie C.	Jan. 21, 1928	1959	Oct. 27, 2015
Fitch, Cheryl Ann	Apr. 14, 1957	2006	Jan. 4, 2017
Geddes, Clare Alexander	Apr. 11, 1931	1959	Nov. 12, 2015
Gruppe, Hans R.	May 5, 1921	1950	Jan. 20, 2018
Hamilton, Mary Climie	Nov. 19, 1927	1993	Mar. 6, 2018
Hannah, Marjorie Lois	May 2, 1923	1957	Jul. 18, 2015

Hawkins, Douglas James	Jun. 10, 1923	1953	Jan. 24, 2017
Haynes, William Allison	Nov. 18, 1931	1965	Apr. 6, 2016
Headley, Norman Edgar	Jan. 22, 1945	1973	Feb. 20, 2017
Horning, Enid Mae	Nov. 19, 1927	1954	Sep. 22, 2015
Kersey, Edward (Ted) James	Nov. 13, 1923	1952	Feb. 1, 2017
Lynk, Ian Lauchlin	Mar. 4, 1936	1960	Mar. 19, 2018
Moore, Earl Douglas	Aug. 1, 1928	1971	Apr. 18, 2015
Murphy, Harvey Keith	Dec. 29, 1931	1961	Nov. 2, 2016
Parr, Maxwell Jewitt	May 17, 1922	1947	Jul. 19, 2016
Rose, Melvin Llewelyn	Feb. 24, 1951	1976	Jun. 14, 2017
Schweitzer, Marion Gertrude Kelly	Oct. 23, 1922	1980	Dec. 4, 2016
Shupe, Jean Elizabeth (Betty)	Jan. 9, 1931	1987	Jan. 18, 2018
Sim, George Alexander	Oct. 18, 1919	1961	Mar. 16, 2017
Smeaton, Ronald Colquhoun (Ron)	Jul. 12, 1935	1963	Aug. 3, 2015
Story, Jay Roy Fallis	Jan. 29, 1924	1953	Jun. 7, 2016
Strome, Glen R.	Oct. 24, 1928	1955	Sep. 3, 2015
Wagner, Robert Rudolph	Sep. 24, 1924	1949	Jun. 13, 2016
Weller, James Charles	Oct. 5, 1932	1967	Feb. 2, 2016

London Conference

Bouwmeester, Bernard (Ben) Mari	Oct. 8, 1927	1970	Dec. 22, 2016
David, Baalchand	May 18, 1928	1983	Jan. 7, 2016
Ferrier, Mark William Stephen	Apr. 23, 1962	1988	May 20, 2016
Hargreaves, Roston (Ross) Edwin	Jun. 7, 1921		Aug. 10, 2015
Leard, Mary Olivia	Jan. 18, 1947	1985	Jan. 28, 2018
Macpherson, Glen (Mac) Edgar	Feb. 5, 1926	1956	Oct. 22, 2017
Mannell, Donald Scott	Mar. 8, 1925	1957	May 10, 2016
McDonald, Stanley Carl	Jun. 5, 1930	1968	Feb. 8, 2016
Moore, Harley Jack	Aug. 18, 1923	1966	Sep. 29, 2015
Ross-Rowse, Margaret Ann	Nov. 18, 1950	1977	Dec. 21, 2016
Scott, Charles James	May 9, 1924	1948	Apr. 8, 2017
Spencer, Donald Roland "Don"	Jun. 19, 1929	1959	May 28, 2015
Story, Douglas Robert Gemmill	Aug. 11, 1924	1958	Aug. 7, 2016
Varghese, Palakalparampil John	Dec. 17, 1932	1983	Dec. 6, 2016
White, Donald Malcolm	Jul. 24, 1932	1965	Mar. 9, 2016
Williamson, David Allan	Oct. 8, 1946	1971	Feb. 12, 2018
Wonfor, Herbert (Herb) Wallace	Nov. 6, 1924	1952	Sep. 3, 2015

Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Anderson, Stewart John	May 24, 1928	1971	Jun. 19, 2017
Cook, Barbara Isabelle	Mar. 28, 1930	1984	Oct. 26, 2017
Frazer, Elaine Agnes	May 29, 1937	1960	Dec. 6, 2017
Gibbons, Walter LeRoy	Nov. 14, 1944	1976	Feb. 20, 2018
Hubbard, Frederick Copeland	Jul. 2, 1926	1951	Oct. 17, 2017

Loucks, Georgina Frances Enid	Apr. 17, 1935	1992	Mar. 15, 2016
McMurtry, James Douglas	Oct. 8, 1919	1944	Dec. 14, 2016
Milton, Charles Allan	Jul. 31, 1922	1963	Oct. 14, 2016
Murray, Linda Elizabeth Hodges	Mar. 28, 1948	1978	Jan. 14, 2018
Saville, Gordon Charles	Apr. 20, 1954	1985	Feb. 23, 2018
Wilson, Donald Ian	Feb. 5, 1933	1962	Mar. 4, 2017

Saskatchewan Conference

Benjamin, Harold (Howie) George	Sep. 7, 1931	1969	Aug. 3, 2015
Bray, John Trethewey	Feb. 12, 1923	1947	Aug. 28, 2016
Chapman, William Alvin	May 6, 1927	1957	May 22, 2015
Clarke, Harvey Colin	Dec. 9, 1925	1949	Jun. 11, 2017
Corby, Gerrard David	Jul. 20, 1933	1990	Jul. 5, 2017
Davis, Sharon Lynne	May 10, 1946	1970	Jul. 26, 2017
Eskdale, David Arthur	May 5, 1940	1978	Aug. 29, 2017
Fletcher, Ronald James	Mar. 18, 1946	1976	Oct. 24, 2015
Gaspar, Alexander	Mar. 11, 1932	1982	Jan. 26, 2018
Hurd, Linsell A.	Nov. 21, 1939	1992	Mar. 7, 2018
Kernen, Willa Alberta	Aug. 7, 1926	1977	Dec. 7, 2015
Leitch, Donald Serviss	Mar. 27, 1933	1959	May 27, 2015
Manning, Susan "Sue" Marilyn	Apr. 8, 1947	1988	Jul. 5, 2015
Rees, William J. Phillips	Nov. 3, 1923	1947	Aug. 26, 2015
Robertson, Stewart Dean	Jun. 7, 1923	1953	Jul. 16, 2017
Sellars, Sandra May	Apr. 25, 1950	2007	Oct. 15, 2015
Shier, Martha Gudrun Margareta	Dec. 13, 1937	1993	Apr. 9, 2017
Stevens, Wendell Arthur	Mar. 30, 1928	1952	Jan. 28, 2017
Thompson, Robert James	Feb. 19, 1939	1962	May 1, 2017
Trembley, James Andrew	May 23, 1927	1957	Apr. 13, 2017
West, Alison Couser Dickson	Jun. 2, 1937	1990	Mar. 5, 2016

Alberta and Northwest Conference

Bell, Sydney	Oct. 20, 1924	1956	Dec. 8, 2017
Burgess, William Edward (Bill)	Oct. 24, 1922	1948	Aug. 18, 2015
Butler, George Robbins	Dec. 1, 1920	1967	Feb. 4, 2016
Carr, Douglas Bonar	Feb. 28, 1921	1945	Mar. 6, 2016
Flanagan, Kenneth Reginald	Dec. 05, 1941	1997	Oct. 26, 2017
Godley, Trevor "Barry"	Apr. 30, 1942	1968	Aug. 21, 2015
Hetherington, Robert Eade	Aug. 6, 1943	1967	May 24, 2015
Hickman, Charles Bean	Nov. 10, 1919	1944	Dec. 9, 2017
Hoekstra, John F.	Apr. 27, 1925	1958	Mar. 25, 2018
Hutchinson, Gerald Middleton	Mar. 23, 1914	1943	Apr. 14, 2015
Jeffrey, Ronald Everett	Jun. 25, 1952	1980	Apr. 7, 2015
Johnston, Kevin Edwin	Mar. 13, 1959	2005	Apr. 13, 2016
Kolber, Ted Stanley	May 5, 1931	1957	Jun. 19, 2017

Liphuysen, Hank C.	May 19, 1933	1993	Feb. 2, 2016
Martin, Harold Thomas	Apr. 7, 1927	1955	Jan. 20, 2017
Mayberry, William John	Jul. 19, 1931	1959	Dec. 27, 2015
McPhee, Ruth Caroline	Sep. 22, 1920	1954	May 25, 2016
Moules, John William	Jul. 13, 1925	1951	Jun. 1, 2017
Pool, Mina Gladys	May 17, 1920	1971	May 27, 2016
Reid, Delores Grace	Mar. 3, 1937	1983	Apr. 10, 2016
Roberts, James (Jim) William	Mar. 12, 1920	1955	May 1, 2015
Sharpe, Wilma Pearl	Sep. 13, 1920	1960	Jan. 22, 2018
Stewart, Donal Roney “Don”	Apr. 5, 1927	1978	Apr. 28, 2017
Wallace, Gerald Christopher	Oct. 29, 1937	1988	Nov. 18, 2017

British Columbia Conference

Anderson, Arthur Murray	Jul. 6, 1934	1959	Feb. 19, 2017
Atkinson, Ronald (Ron) Calvin	Apr. 28, 1933	1962	Jun. 25, 2017
Avery, Ainslie Ibbs	Sep. 10, 1925	1953	May 27, 2016
Bell, John Benjamin	Aug. 10, 1932	1969	Jun. 11, 2016
Billington, Alan Roy	Jan. 31, 1927	1961	Sep. 30, 2017
Black, Joanne	Apr. 28, 1931	1987	Jun. 5, 2015
Bristow, Edmund R.	Nov. 11, 1938	1967	Jan. 31, 2018
Brown, Reginald Harvey	Jul. 10, 1928	1956	Jan. 06, 2017
Bryant, Cullene Evelyn	Jul. 11, 1941	1965	Apr. 23, 2017
Butler, E. Laura	May 17, 1920	1943	May 22, 2017
Connor, Campbell	Dec. 1, 1931	1967	Jan. 13, 2017
Davidson, John Martin	Nov. 12, 1929	1961	Aug. 29, 2017
Gouws, John Colchester	Jul. 19, 1935	1965	May 7, 2016
Graves, Douglas Bertram	Dec. 13, 1944	1969	Mar. 23, 2016
Hobbs, Helen Gertrude	Nov. 2, 1943	1992	May 6, 2016
Jackson, Glenn Clifford	Apr. 7, 1940	1965	Apr. 29, 2015
Jackson, Donald Barney	Aug. 17, 1920	1966	Apr. 23, 2015
Kirk, James Darr	Oct. 9, 1934	1957	Feb. 23, 2017
Macdonald, Kenneth Ian	Mar. 28, 1945	1971	Mar. 6, 2016
MacKay, Harold Lindsay	Jan. 26, 1932	1957	Oct. 18, 2015
MacLean, John Piercey	Jul. 26, 1926	1951	Apr. 18, 2016
Manson, Alexander Macleod	May 13, 1920	1946	Sep. 16, 2015
McInnes, Stewart James	Jan. 20, 1934	1974	Mar. 3, 2017
O’Neill, John William	Jun. 5, 1932	1957	Dec. 24, 2015
Pollock, Ann Elizabeth	Jan. 24, 1952	1983	Jul. 18, 2016
Price, William Joseph	May 12, 1926	1962	Sep. 13, 2016
Reid, Alexander (Sandy) Gould	May 21, 1926	1950	Jan. 22, 2017
Rowles, Sidney Williams	Sep. 2, 1934	1962	May 10, 2017
Simms, Thomas Maxwell	Jan. 27, 1936	1965	May 13, 2017
Simpson, Lyall Andrew Charles	Oct. 20, 1926	1957	Nov. 4, 2015
Skey, Mervyn Stephen Widnell	Jul. 2, 1942	1971	Mar. 13, 2017

Sly, Douglas Montague	Jan. 4, 1931	1960	Aug. 9, 2015
Smith, Lyman Eveleigh	Mar. 29, 1918	1941	Jul. 11, 2016
Stiven, Robert	Jun. 4, 1935	1967	Mar. 17, 2017
Swanson-Henry, Audrey Marie	Nov. 18, 1944	2001	May 2, 2016
Whitford, George	Apr. 11, 1921	1962	Dec. 21, 2015
Manitou Conference			
MacLean, Rollande Blanche	Jun. 26, 1947	2003	Mar. 19, 2016
Snell, R. Keith	May 8, 1933	1996	Mar. 14, 2018
All Native Circle Conference			
Jacques, Alan Bruce	Oct. 14, 1955	1988	May 18, 2016
Kakegamic, Solly	Oct. 20, 1943		Aug. 8, 2016
Rice, Aileen T.	Feb. 14, 1931	1992	Feb. 7, 2018

Attendees at the 43rd General Council 2018

MODERATORS AT THE 43RD GENERAL COUNCIL 2018

	Years Served	General Council
Dr. Marion S. Best	1994–1997	Fergus, ON
The Very Rev. Marion Parady	2000–2003	Toronto, ON
The Very Rev. David W. Giuliano	2006–2009	Thunder Bay, ON
Mardi Tindal	2009–2012	Kelowna, BC
The Very Rev. Gary Paterson	2012–2015	Corner Brook, NL

GUESTS AT THE 43RD GENERAL COUNCIL

Global Ecumenical Delegation

THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

Zambia: Rev. Dr. Mulambya Peggy Kabonde

Founded in 1965, the United Church of Zambia is a united and uniting church formed by a union of four, denominations established by missionaries in the late 1800s and early 1900s. UCZ is Zambia's largest Protestant church. The United Church of Zambia has been at the forefront of providing quality education; theological training for its leadership; providing health services in rural Zambia; training in agriculture; and development programs for the people across the country. The United Church of Canada has been partnered with UCZ since it first began.

About Peggy Kabonde

Rev. Dr. Kabonde is the first woman to be appointed General Secretary of the United Church of Zambia. Formerly Chaplain to the University of Zambia and an executive member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Peggy is the United Church of Zambia's first woman theology graduate, and is currently working on her doctorate on Female Ordination. She has been a member of the Circle of African Women Theologians since its inception in 1989 and has in the past worked to coordinate gender justice issues with the Council for World Mission (CWM) Africa region.

WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

Global Ecumenical: Necta Montes

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. They encourage a culture of democracy to mobilize youth to become proactive in society, promoting positive change through dialogue and action between different traditions and cultures. 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 Necta Montes

Necta Montes was appointed as the federation’s Secretary General in January 2016. She also served as the regional secretary for WSCF-Asia Pacific for many years. She had been involved with the ecumenical youth and student ministry work of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and was former general secretary of SCM Philippines and the Philippine Christian Youth Federation. Montes says about her work with WSCF, “I have no doubt that as [a] generation of young and committed SCMs take part in God’s work for justice and peace in different parts and context of the world, WSCF’s legacy of building ecumenical leaders will continue.”

CREAS**Argentina: Horacio Mesones**

Founded in 2000 CREAS—Regional Ecumenical Advisory and Service Centre is a regional network of professionals that offers training and consulting relating to planning, monitoring, evaluation, resource mobilisation, communications and cooperation between churches, faith based organizations, nongovernmental organizations and specialized offices of the governments in Latin America and the Caribbean. CREAS has been a global partner of the United Church since 2000.

About Horacio Mesones

Horacio Mesones is the current Coordinator for Training and Advisory Services at CREAS and will shortly be taking on the role of Executive Director. A Methodist from Uruguay and presently living in Argentina, Mesones served as the Regional Secretary for the WSCF—Latin America & Caribbean. He is a past president of the WSCF and is also a member of the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry of The United Church of Canada.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES**Philippines: Bishop Reuel Marigza**

“A transformed church and society towards an abundant and meaningful life for all.” The United Church of Christ in the Philippines has been a model of bold, prophetic witness. Believing the church exists for mission, the UCCP equips its members to engage in active ministry with the whole community, with a particular focus on human rights, democracy, just and lasting peace, and economic and ecological justice. The UCCP is a Protestant mainline group with around a million members and 2,218 pastors in 3,112 congregations. The United Church of Canada and United Church of Christ in the Philippines have a long history of relationship and cooperation.

About Reuel Marigza

Bishop Reuel Norman O. Marigza is the past General Secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). The General Secretary serves as Bishop, Church Administrator and beloved Pastor among pastors. His ministry has had a life-long impact on young people.

Living out the prophetic calling in his defense of human rights and civil liberties Bp. Marigza has led provided strong leadership to UCCP and its human rights work. The UCCP has formally filed cases of human rights violations committed against UCCP members. Prior to his election as General Secretary of UCCP, Bp. Marigza taught at the Divinity School of Silliman University.

KAIROS CANADA**Toronto, Canada: Jennifer Henry**

KAIROS 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 Jennifer Henry

Jennifer Henry is the current Executive Director of KAIROS Canada. She has worked for KAIROS and its predecessor coalitions for almost 20 years.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**Republic of Korea: Rev. Jae Cheon Lee**

The Presbyterian Church in Korea was established in 1907, and divided in 1953, with those advocating a more liberal theology forming the PROK. The PROK upholds dialogue, action, diversity, and reconciliation. It reaches out to the minjung—the oppressed, exploited, and despised: homeless teenagers, sex workers, orphans, the elderly, the disabled, and the unemployed. The United Church has been a PROK partner since 1955. The two churches work together closely in justice and peace issues.

About Jae Cheon Lee

Rev. Jae Cheon Lee is the newly elected General Secretary of the PROK.

CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL**China: Rev. BaoPing Kan**

After the rise to power in 1949 of the Communist Party Protestant Christians set out to build an autonomous Chinese church by creating the Three-Self Movement in 1950, with these three principles: self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation. While Christianity was outlawed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1979). In 1979 the government officially restored the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and The China Christian Council (CCC) was founded the following year.

Protestant Christianity in China is post-denominational: in the CCC denominations no longer exist and believers worship together. The China Christian Council oversees Protestant

communities' work in ministry education, women's ministries, administration, international relations, and the printing and distribution of Bibles, hymnals, and Christian literature. The United Church of Canada's partnership with the Chinese churches began in the 1880s when the uniting churches started sending missionaries to China.

About BaoPing Kan

Rev. BaoPing Kan is the vice president and general secretary of China Christian Council responsible for three major departments: overseas relations, social service, and theological education. Rev. Bao Ping Kan is also one of the elected members of the World Council of Churches' Central Committees.

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES

Kenya: Venerable John Gichimu

Rooted in the African philosophy of *ubuntu*—a person is a person through others—the Organization of African Instituted Churches works for the recognition, inclusion, and empowerment of some of the continent's most marginalized people.

The OAIC is an association of Christian churches that incorporate and express their faith through Indigenous African spiritual traditions. Members of these churches often live in extreme poverty and are excluded from the social, political, and ecclesial mainstream.

Founded in Cairo in 1978 with its current headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, the OAIC represents the visions, hopes, and frustrations of oppressed Indigenous faith communities as they work for the gospel transformation of Africa. OAIC helps leadership decolonize African Christianity by renewing and re-visioning Christianity according to African spirituality. The United Church of Canada has been partnered with OAIC since 1987.

About John Gichimu

John Njeru Gichimu is an Archdeacon of African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), which was founded in 1920s in Kenya during the Gikuyu nationalist movements. The AIPCA is categorized as a nationalist or Ethiopian church—those churches that were founded as part of a broader movement which saw recovering ownership of their church and their country from the hands of foreigners as part of their divine calling. He is the Coordinator Programme for Theology and Ministerial Formation at the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) the continental umbrella body for African Independent Churches (AICs) founded in Cairo in 1978. He joined OAIC in 1995. An African Independent Church is a church that acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord, and which has either separated by secession from a mission church or an existing African independent church, or has been founded as an independent entity under African initiative and leadership.

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Hanover, Germany: Rev. Philip Peacock

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is a communion of Presbyterian, United and Uniting, Reformed, Congregational, and Waldensian churches called together in Christ to

promote the renewal and the unity of the church and participate in God's transformation of the world. Believing that Christian faith is based on responding to both the spiritual needs and the economic and social rights of all people, WCRC has identified three core callings:

1. To promote justice in the economy, the earth, and all of God's creation, and to work for peace and reconciliation in the world
2. To renew a passion among Reformed Christians for God's mission in a spirit of partnership and unity
3. To promote the full participation of women and youth in all aspects of the church's life

The United Church of Canada is a member of the WCRC.

About Philip Peacock

Rev. Philip Peacock is the Executive Secretary for Justice and Witness

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Geneva, Switzerland: Rev. Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an ecumenical movement bringing together churches, denominations, and church fellowships from 140 countries and territories throughout the world. Founded in 1948, churches in the fellowship of the WCC pursue a vision of ecumenism that seeks visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship by:

1. Promoting a common witness in work for mission and evangelism
2. Engaging in Christian service by meeting human need
3. Breaking down barriers between people
4. Upholding justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

The United Church of Canada is a member of the World Council of Churches.

About Isabel Phiri

Isabel Apawo Phiri is the Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches responsible for Public Witness and Diakonia.

METHODIST CHURCH, GHANA

Ghana: Rev. William Mpere-Gyekye

The United Church of Canada is in partnership with the Methodist Church Ghana to support ministry and mission in the Canadian context. The partnership is in part of the World Methodist Council's initiation that no Methodist Church should establish Methodist societies in communities where there are existing Methodist Churches without consultation. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Ghana Calvary Methodist United Church in Toronto is an Associate Member congregation of The United Church of Canada. It is hoped that over time the other seven Ghana Methodist Congregations might come under the MOU.

About William Mpere-Gyekye

William Mpere-Gyekye (B.A., MAR; Th.M) is an ordained Minister of the Methodist Church Ghana. He was commissioned into the Ministry in June 1990 and after serving three years of

probation was ordained in August 1993. William Agyei Mpere-Gyekye has served variously in the Methodist Church Ghana as a school chaplain, a parish minister and an administrator. Recently, he has served as the General Director for Ministries and Director for Ordained Ministry; Supervising Missions Coordinator (SMC) for the North America Mission of the Methodist Church Ghana and since October 2016 to date as the Bishop's Deputy for the North America Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA USA and Canada: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Garbin, Rev. Paul Tch , Rev. Terri Hord Owens

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada traces its beginnings to the work of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone in the United States during the 1800s; beginning in the 1811 congregations were also established in the Maritimes, and in Ontario in the 1830s. Early Disciples sought unity among Christians by restoring the faith and practices of the earliest churches described in the New Testament. Today, the identity statement of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) states: "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." With about 3,300 congregations, (about 20 in Canada), the vision of the church is to be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.

About Jennifer Garbin

Jennifer Garbin is the Regional Minister for Canada for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). As Regional Minister, Jen oversees the life and work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) across Canada and is passionate about ecumenism. She is most interested in creating opportunities for innovative ministry in our changing context, and seeking ways to eliminate denominational barriers for more efficient and effective ministry across Canada.

About Paul Tch 

Paul S. Tch  has served the Council on Christian Unity (CCU), which functions as the office for ecumenical and interfaith affairs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, as president since April 1, 2016. In his role and ministry with the CCU, he offers leadership as the ecumenical officer for the Disciples of Christ, representing our church in local, national and international efforts in giving expression to the unity of the church and our oneness in Christ. Also, he provides theological grounds and resources to congregations and members for various interfaith engagements of the Disciples while he represents the Disciples at diverse interfaith dialogues through the NCCUSA and the WCC.

Before he was called to this position, he had completed a six-year term on the CCU Board, including two as chair. He had served various local congregations as pastor in California and Kentucky, and he had also served as the moderator-elect of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada for two years while serving a local church.

About Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens

Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens was elected General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada in July 2017. She is the first person of colour and second woman to lead the denomination. A descendant of one of the oldest African-American free colonies in Indiana and a Disciple since young adulthood, Rev. Owens was dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School and pastor of First Christian Church of Downers Grove, IL, prior to her election.

Rev. Owens is widely sought after as a preacher, speaker and workshop facilitator. Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and the mentoring of young adults.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, USA

USA: Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson

The United Church of Christ (UCC), USA, is a distinct and diverse community of Christians that come together as one church to join faith and action. 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 extravagant welcome, and a church where “they may all be one” (John 17:21).

Under one collective identity, The United Church of Christ, USA, is a welcoming, justice-minded Christian community raising their VOICES for an alternate vision:

- Where God is all-loving and inclusive
- Where the Church of Jesus Christ welcomes and accepts everyone as they are
- Where your mind is nourished as much as your soul
- Where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary
- Where together we grow a just and peaceful world

About Karen Georgia Thompson

Karen Georgia Thompson serves as Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in the National setting of the United Church of Christ. Before taking up that role Karen Georgia served in the national setting as Minister for Racial Justice with Justice and Witness Ministries. Before joining the national staff, Karen Georgia served in the Florida Conference United Church of Christ as a Pastor and on the Conference staff. She provided key leadership to the national initiative “Sacred Conversations on Race.”

Ordained in 1999, Karen Georgia has a broad range of professional experiences throughout the structures of the United Church of Christ, USA. She is a key participant in the dialogue on full communion between the United Church of Christ, USA, and The United Church of Canada.

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Toronto, Canada: Peter Noteboom

The Canadian Council of Churches is the broadest and most inclusive ecumenical body in the world, now representing 25 denominations of Anglican; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern

Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox; Protestant; and Catholic traditions. Together we represent more than 85 percent of the Christians in Canada promoting theological reflection, study, and action among 22 Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox member churches.

The United Church of Canada is a member of the Canadian Council of Churches.

About Peter Noteboom

Peter Noteboom was appointed by the Governing Board of The Canadian Council of Churches to a five-year term as General Secretary beginning in June 2018. First appointed in the role of Associate Secretary, Justice and Peace in 1999, he has supported the members of the Council in their work on a wide range of topics related to justice and peace, biotechnology and the life sciences.

Active in his home church, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, Peter has volunteered in leadership roles on the Boards of several church and non-governmental organizations. He has a post-graduate diploma on Dialogue and Negotiation from Simon Fraser University, has done post-graduate studies on Christian Political Theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, has a Master of Arts degree in European Studies from the Catholic University of Leuven, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and business administration from Dordt College, Iowa.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Vancouver, BC: Lynne McNaughton

As a partner in the worldwide Anglican Communion, The Anglican Church of Canada values a heritage of biblical faith, reason, liturgy, tradition, bishops and synods, and the rich variety of life in community. Since February 2003, representatives of the Anglican and United Churches in Canada have been engaged in a dialogue to understand each other better; to encourage and strengthen shared ministry and mission, and to foster other circles of dialogue, regionally and locally, between the two churches. At present the dialogue is exploring what steps can be taken toward mutual exchange of ministries between our two churches.

About Lynne McNaughton

A life-long Anglican, with a United Church father and Anglican mother, Lynne grew up in northern Alberta, in a household that assumed, in the sixties and seventies, that Anglicans and Uniteds would one day join! Summers in small towns meant shared worship. She graduated from Vancouver School of Theology in 1986 and was ordained in Vancouver, where she has served as priest ever since. She was on faculty at VST as Director of Anglican Formation and Assistant Professor of Spirituality from 1995 to 2008, when she returned to parish ministry. She serves as priest at St. Clement's Anglican in North Vancouver. She is currently Deputy Prolocutor (Latin for "speaker," or as her Trekkie daughter calls her, Deputy *Locutus*) for the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada She is the Anglican co-chair (enjoying working with the United Church co-chair Sandra Beardsall and a great team) in the current Anglican United Church dialogue. She has been a member of that dialogue since 2011.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**Toronto, Canada: Stephen Kendall**

The roots of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are Scottish but include the work and witness of French Huguenots (Protestant) settlers who came to Canada in the 1600s. Today, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has about 950 congregations with members coming from many national and racial backgrounds. The church's mission statement affirms: "Relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the love and good news of Jesus Christ through our words and actions. As a reformed church, we rely on the truth and inspiration of Scriptures for God's guidance into the future—a future that we approach with wonder and anticipation, knowing God is with us. As worshiping communities joyfully celebrating the sacraments, we are supported, strengthened and equipped to share the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ."

About Stephen Kendall

Stephen Kendall has served as Clerk of the General Assembly since 1998. This ministry focuses on church governance and ecumenical and interfaith relations. Stephen has been part of the journey of healing and reconciliation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples through the corporate discovery of the church's role in the legacy of residential schools, the discussions leading to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and now the implementation of the Calls to Action.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**Pastor André Lavergne**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), with 525 congregations, is the major Canadian representative of the traditions of the Lutheran Reformation. The ELCIC came into being in 1986 through the merger of two predecessor bodies. The church states: "The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments and through service in Christ's name." The church has identified four current strategic goals. The ELCIC will practice courageous innovation; nurture reconciled relationships; nurture one body working together; nurture empowered disciples." The ELCIC is in a full-communion relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada and offers a strong ecumenical witness with The United Church of Canada and other partners in the Canadian and World Councils of Churches.

About André Lavergne

André Lavergne, CWA, is representing Bishop Susan Johnson at General Council. Pastor Lavergne is a promoter of dialogical, receptive and relational ecumenism together with growing interfaith engagement in Canada. While he served in parish ministry for some 35 years, Pastor Lavergne has also worked in the areas of liturgy and worship, serving on various synodical, national and international church bodies and as the ELCIC's worship officer. He is currently Assistant to the National Bishop for ecumenical and interfaith matters and provides staff support to the ELCIC's theological commission, the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (FOD).

FOD is currently concerned with orders of ministry in the service of a nimbler church, together with a more able laity and more robust diaconate.

CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Peterborough, Ontario: Bishop Daniel Miehm

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.

About Daniel Miehm

Born and raised in Kitchener, Ontario, Daniel Miehm served as a priest of the Diocese of Hamilton for twenty-four years. He was educated at the University of Waterloo, St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto and the Angelicum University in Rome. After ordination to the priesthood in 1989, he served in a variety of ministries, but mainly as pastor of several parishes. He was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton in 2013 and installed as the Bishop of Peterborough in 2017. The Catholic Diocese of Peterborough covers a large territory to the east and north of Toronto, much of it referred to as "cottage country."

On a national level, Bishop Miehm is the Canadian Bishops' liaison to Canadian Catholic Campus Ministries and chairs an active Interfaith group, the Hindu-Catholic Dialogue. Provincially, he is involved in several committees for the Bishops of Ontario, including liturgy, education and ecumenism.

INTERFAITH PARTNER

About Maha Othman

Dr. Maha Othman is a physician, research scientist, educator, and mentor. She graduated from Medical school and obtained her Master's degree in clinical pathology at Mansoura University in Egypt. She continued research and earned her Doctorate degree (Ph.D.) in Pathology from Southampton University in UK. She is currently a Professor and a Researcher at the School of Medicine, Queen's University and the School of Baccalaureate Nursing St. Lawrence College, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Maha has been actively participating in community work through a variety of volunteering activities over the past 15 years in Kingston. Some of these activities are with Keys Job Center, Syrian refugees, Kingston Community Health Centre, the United Church and the Islamic Society of Kingston. As an international medical graduate, who has travelled, studied, worked, and lived in several countries, Maha appreciates the integral role of women in different cultures, interfaith activities and in serving the community at different levels. She believes some of the secrets of success are: to be passionate about what you do, be inclusive, seek avenues for collaborations and networking, and make the best of your abilities.

Commissioners to the 43rd General Council 2018

Ex Officio

Cantwell, Jordan

Paterson, Gary

Sanders, Nora

Ex Officio Total: 3

Alberta & Northwest

Ex Officio

Brodrick, Susan

Williams, Donalee

Yamashita, Kathryn

Ministry Personnel

Aerhart, Britt

Allan, Tammy

Cox, Deanna

Gregg, Blaine

Hunter, Linda

Kennedy, Joan

Maben, Alwin

MacLean, Catherine

Pollard, David

Shin, YoonOk

Sparks, Stephen

Speer, Murray

Lay

Baron, Georgina

Cartwright, Alison

Goin, Gaie

Goodwin, Barbara-Lynn

Johnson, Hugh

Moore, Katharine

Reboul, Hunter

Shearer, Mary

Stewart, Lorraine

Tessier, Grace

Wright, Margery

Wright, Paul

Conference Total: 27

All Native Circle

Ex Officio

Hart, Nelson

Lightning, Marlene

Saulteaux, Bernice

Ministry Personnel

Beaver, Susan

Moore, Lawrence

Sigurdson, Janet

Sinclair, Allan

Spence, Agnes - X

Wright, Robert

Lay

Cunningham, Cathie

Deiter Thomas, Gabriel

Hunter-Spence, Jimmy

Jacobs, Elaine

McKay, Nicky

Standingready, Lorna

Conference Total: 15

Bay of Quinte

Ex Officio

Evenden, Judith

Heath, Kimberly

Thompson, Norma

Ministry Personnel

Arnill, Mark

Bell, Morgan

Black, Kristiane

Hobden, Mary-Jane

Kellogg, Elaine

King, David

McLeod, Sheryl

McNally, Ryan

Reed, Paul

Roberts, Shelley

Spicer, Stevan

Stride, Wanda

VanHeuvelen, Mary Anne

Lay

Culverson, Penny

Fletcher, JoAnne

Goss, Robert

Harman, Bronwen

Harms-Potter, Judith

Hogan, Sue

Hutton, Sue

MacDonald, Daniel

MacDonald, Sharon

Sheaves, Bill

Smart, Tom

Sutherland, Nancy

Vollmer, Rachel

Conference Total: 29

British Columbia

Ex Officio

Brownmiller, Graham

Macdonald, A. Jean

Olson, Jay

Ministry Personnel

Appenheimer, Stuart

Ashdown, Lorraine

Autio, Kirstin

Bott, Richard

Bowman, Tim

Brown, Ingrid

Donnelly, Christopher

Fillier, Bob

Nixon, Sandra

Powell, Greg

Walker, Nancy

Lay

Angus, Jim

Creighton, Hugh

Dudley, Jody
 Fairley, Lesley
 Fillier, Rebecca
 Martens, Lauren
 Martin, Carol
 McDonald, Janet
 McNeilly, Erica
 Moffat, Jesse
 Richards, Deborah
Conference Total: 25

Hamilton

Ex Officio

Laforet, Deborah
 Reaburn, Tim
 Wilson, Sybil

Ministry Personnel

Baker, Brenna
 Canning, Jennifer
 Cottrell, Micol
 Gibson, Marcie
 Hinksman, Deb
 Leffler, Heather
 LeSage, Étienne
 Mitchell, G. Pirie
 Mock, Alison
 Paradela, Christina
 Playfair, Allison
 Shantz, Kim
 Smith, Ted
 Thomas, Bill
 White, Greg
 Wood-Thomas, Cheryl

Lay

Addison, Rosemary
 Bedford, Mae
 Boyd, Marion
 Gohn, Lillian
 Hayman, Ralph
 Hennigar, Carol
 Hurst, John
 Laforet, Evan

Laleva, Lora
 Lindsay, Matthew – X
 Matthews, Dyane
 Parr, Donna – X
 Stewart Savage, Cathie
 Wyatt, Mike
Conference Total: 33

London

Ex Officio

Brown, Wendy
 Payne, Joyce
 Wright, Doug
Ministry Personnel

Allan, Andrea
 Bennett, Lloyd
 Dillon, Mary
 Down, Michelle
 Larmond, Cathy
 Lyttle-Forbes, Sadekie
 Madimbu, Erasmus
 Marshall, Mark
 Marui, Kenji
 Noble, Wendy
 O’Leary, Laurie
 Sherman, Robin
 Wagner, Carey

Lay

Caslick, Gary Brent
 Hall, Louise
 Lindsay, Matthew
 MacGregor, Ian
 MacGregor, Sarah
 Marshall, Marilla
 McMillan, Charles
 Walker, Margaret
 White, Charlotte
 Whiting, David
 Whitton, Pat
 Wohlers, Brie
 Wygiera, Tracy
Conference Total: 29

Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario

Ex Officio

DeLisle, Kenneth
 Sanderson, Wayne
 Stewart, Anna

Ministry Personnel

Britton, Marlene
 Bruer, Sarah
 Denton, Mona
 Neufeld, Doug
 Oussoren, John
 Park, Ha Na
 Platt, Kathleen
 Shepherd, Loraine MacKenzie
 Taylor, Rolanda
 Yang, Taeil

Lay

Bird, Pat
 Blaikie Whitecloud, Tessa
 Bott, George
 Buchanan, Linda
 Forsythe, Navan
 Meggison, Coral
 Pokotylo, Marilyn Gaye
 Price, Cyndi
 Renwick, Nancy
 Swain, Ila
Conference Total: 23

Manitou

Ex Officio

Brownlee, Janice
 Smith, Kathie
 Todd, Erin

Ministry Personnel

Désilets, Cindy
 McVey, Maxine
 Roberts, Gord
 Saffrey, Linda
 Steadman, Bill
 Walker, Stewart

Lay

Barbeiro, Isabella
Brownlee, Eric
Clarke, Dave
Haddow, Peter
Lindquist, Susan
Nott, Barbara

Conference Total: 15

Maritime**Ex Officio**

Gallant, Sheila
Handcock, Sean
Walker, Pauline

Ministry Personnel

Bartlett, Ross
Benjamin Cameron, Bethe
Berube, Steve
Bruce, Lloyd
Churchill, Gloria
Corrigan, Nancy
Etter, Alison
Gaskin, Rose-Hannah
Hart, David
MacDonald, Catherine
Nelson, Penny
Phillips, Nick
Richardson, Andrew
Roy, John
Smith, Carol
Stuart, Catherine
Webber-Cook, Jim
White, Susan
Woods, Tom

Lay

Aikens, Elizabeth
Barfoot, Gillian
Douglass, Kimberley
Easter, Roland
Grant, Kyle

Grant, Valerie
Gray, Elaine
Gunn, Sharon
Martin, Maxwell
Maxner, Aryanna
Morrison, Elizabeth
O’Hearn, Jason
Orlando, Tony
Quirk, Mary
Schaerer, Claudia
Sollows, Janet
Sollows, Steen
Sumpter, Mary
Thomson, Mary

Conference Total: 41

Montreal & Ottawa**Ex Officio**

Allen, Jim
Beattie, Elaine
Hamilton, Cathy
Ministry Personnel
Baldwin, Mead
Burns, Erin
Copeland, Brian
Dansokho, Samuel Vauvert
Dietrich, Phyllis
Lukacs, Eric
Manga, Marie Claude
McClure, Heather
Paterson, Blair
Schiebout, Arlyce

Lay

Braman, Fred
Godbout, Stéphane
Grenon, Marc
McIntosh, Helen
Moir, L. E.
Mullin, Selina

Parnell, Kevin
Patterson, David
Reynolds, Barbara
Sandy-Scott, Natalya
Suddaby, Linda
Tchuani Jiembou, Carno
Conference Total: 25

Newfoundland & Labrador**Ex Officio**

Brown, Jean
Gale, Paula
Johnson, Peggy

Ministry Personnel

Bowlby, Miriam
Flint, Gordon
Goy-Flint, Lynda
Lowden, Wendy
Moores, Alice
Munikwa, Sherpherd

Lay

Burt, Glennis
Butt, Eileen
Button, Danny
Evely, Erica
Munikwa, Grace
Sheppard, Hannah
Stratton, Marion
West, Roy

Conference Total: 17

Saskatchewan**Ex Officio**

Anderson, Cathy
Curtis, Brenda
Morton, Bonnie

Ministry Personnel

Frostad, Julie
Gairns, Allan

Gerhard, Tricia
James-Cavan, Kathleen
Kim-Cragg, David
Maitland, Brian
Mee, Brian
Reed, Susan
Smith, Deborah
Thomas, Pamela

Lay

Anderson, Mitchell
Curtis, Katie
Gunningham, Linda
Hayes, Robert
Hecker, Andrew
Jones, Jeri-Lee
Pollock, Bill
Sarauer, Kathryn

Conference Total: 21

Toronto**Ex Officio**

Brown, Audrey – X
McKibbin, Jim
Seli, Norm

Ministry Personnel

Brathwaite, Brigid Maya
Choe, Richard
Cunningham, Elizabeth
Eagle, Susan
Forrester, Nicholas
Gordon, Emily
Jones, Janet
McGee, Kristal
Parker, Neil
Ravenscroft, James
Rieder, Barry
Rodgers, Patti
Schneider, Debra

Seo, Dong-Chun
ter Kuile, Martha
Lay
Aylsworth, Sharon
Ayupan, Jingle
Baker-Graf, Hedy
Bennett, Carole
Donley, Charles
Krauter, Margaret
Leyton-Brown, David
MacLennan, Angus
O'Connell, Cynthia
Phillips, Colin
Reid-James, Lynella
Stenson, Melodie
Vermeer-Korittko, Cassie
Wetelainen, Sarah Jane
Wood, Martha

Conference Total: 33

Overseas Personnel

Witmer, Robert

Overseas Total: 1

Chairs of Permanent Committees

Cornelius, Brian
Kigar, Debra
Kostichuk, Beverly
Montour, George – X
Royal-Duczek, Mary
Sankey, Lawrence

Chairs Total: 6

Additional Executive Members

Beaudry, Nicole
Bigirimana, Félix – X
Burns, Russel
Doyle, Lawrence
Hayward, Daniel
Jung, Sungmin
Legault, Aidan
Spies, Miriam

Additional Total: 8

Grand Total: 345

X – Commissioners who were unable to attend and were not replaced by alternates

Letter of Welcome

Dear Friends,

“Risking Faith, Daring Hope”—the theme for General Council 43 reminds us that faithful discipleship is challenging. It calls for courage, risk, openness to new possibilities. But even more than that, it invites us to trust in God’s faithfulness, to dare to believe that God is present and working among us to bring about new life.

As we prepare for this General Council, we are all aware that our church is in the midst of significant change. Many of us are experiencing a sense of loss, even as we feel hopeful for the future. As we move from what was, to what will be, so much is uncertain, not yet knowable.

This is nothing new. It has always been so for those who are led by the Spirit. John’s gospel reminds us: “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

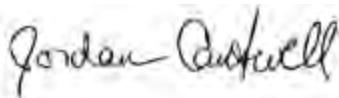
Trusting this wild Spirit to blow us into the unknown is both thrilling and terrifying all at once! Don’t be surprised to encounter some anxiety—in yourself and others—as we gather in Oshawa. At the same time, be prepared for your heart, mind and soul to be unexpectedly moved by the boundary-breaking wisdom of the Spirit.

This General Council will be asked to embrace a vision for a new kind of relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in our church—one rooted in mutuality, equity and respect. We will also celebrate many milestones in the life of the United Church. As we acknowledge where we have come from, and dream together possibilities for the future, we will be confronted, humbled and inspired by stories of hurt, resilience, transformation and grace.

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Commissioner to General Council 43 at this exciting and challenging time in the life of our church. As you make your way through the extensive reading material in preparation for the meeting, know that the contribution you will make at this gathering to our common future is vital. There will be much work for us to do, and many opportunities to celebrate, worship, laugh, build relationships, re-connect, and give thanks for the gift of our life together.

This year a Festival of Faith will be held alongside the business meeting, providing even more opportunities for Commissioners and non-Commissioners from across the church to share ideas about ministry and celebrate our faith.

Travelling mercies, and we’ll see you in Oshawa in July.



Rt. Rev. Jordan Cantwell
Moderator



Nora Sanders
General Secretary

Draft Agenda

	Day 1 Sat. July 21	Day 2 Sun. July 22	Day 3 Mon. July 23
7:00 a.m.		Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30 a.m.		8:00 a.m. Alvin Dixon Run	Morning Worship
9:00 a.m.	Welcome to the Land/Arrivals	9:45 a.m. Gathering at Edge of the Woods 10:00 a.m. Opening Worship	Listening Session 2 Moderator Nominee Speeches 1 (Plenary)
10:30 a.m.			Break/Moving
11:00 a.m.			Listening Session 3 (Breakout x5)
12:30 p.m.		Lunch	Lunch
2:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m. Business Process Q&A Orientation (Optional) 2:00 p.m. Table Host Orientation	Listening Session 1 (Breakout x3)	Business Session Moderator Nominee Speeches 2 (Plenary)
3:30 p.m.	Ceremony of Speaking Stones (Teaching Lodge)	Break/Moving	Break/Moving
4:00 p.m.	Business Session (Mandatory for Commissioners) Information & Welcome Background & Listening	(Moderator Nominations Close) Business Session Opening & Consent Motions/Remit Enactments/ Calls to the Church/ Moderator Nominees/ Table Group Discussion/(Plenary)	Discussion Session 1 (15 Small Groups)
6:00 p.m.	Supper	Supper	Supper
7:30 p.m.	9:00 p.m. Welcome Party	Indigenous Hosted Evening	Iridesce/Affirm United Hosted Evening

Day 4 Tues. July 24	Day 5 Wed. July 25	Day 6 Thurs. July 26	Day 7 Fri. July 27
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Morning Worship
Decision Session 1 (Plenary)	Decision Session 2 (Plenary)	Decision Session 3 Moderator Voting (Plenary)	Decision Session 4 (Plenary)
Break/Moving	Break/Moving	Break/Moving	Break/Moving
Discussion Session 2 (15 Small Groups)	Discussion Session 4 (15 Small Groups)	Listening Session Moderator Voting continued (Plenary)	Decision Session 5 (Plenary)
Lunch	12:00 p.m. Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Listening Session 4 (Breakout x5)	Afternoon Off	Discussion Session 5 (15 Small Groups)	Decision Session 6 (Plenary)
Break/Moving		Break/Moving	Break/Moving
Discussion Session 3 (15 Small Groups)		Discussion Session 6 (15 Small Groups)	Final Decision Making Session (Plenary)
Supper		Supper	Supper
Sunset Celebration Conference Gatherings	Coffee House/Open Mic (Bring your own instrument)	Youth Hosted Evening on the Apologies	Closing Worship

Theme and Logo for the 43rd General Council

THEME

The theme for the 43rd General Council is *Risking Faith, Daring Hope*.

Risking and daring—these are strong action words that call forth our courage and our trust in God. In times of fear, when we may be tempted to retreat into the familiar, comfortable, and “safe,” we are called to a faith that takes risks, that dares to hope in a future we cannot yet see. This hope is not passive, but rather propels us to stretch beyond our assumed limits, to risk profound transformation for the sake of our own healing and the healing of the world.

LOGO

The dove—a symbol of faith, love, and peace—soars in the midst of a blue wave, representing the many challenges that threaten to overwhelm us.

The wave can also be seen as a tide of positive change. We move forward with the wave, determined to meet challenges with strength drawn from our faith.

The dove passes through the wave and is warmed by the sun, a symbol of all life that gives us hope.

The four languages seen in some versions of the logo are Ojibwe, English, French, and Mohawk.



Risking Faith
Daring Hope



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
AMC	Aboriginal Ministries Council
ANCC	All Native Circle Conference
ANW	Alberta and Northwest Conference
AOTS	As One That Serves (Men's Ministries)
ARCH	Archives
AVEL	Audio Visual Education Library
BC	British Columbia Conference
BQ	Bay of Quinte Conference
CAYT	Children and Young Teens Program at General Council
CCC	Canadian Council of Churches
CESS	Conference Executive Secretary(ies)/Speaker
CIM	Communities in Mission/Communautés et ministères
COC	Community of Concern
CRTG	Comprehensive Review Task Group
DM	Diaconal Ministry
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EM	Ethnic Ministries Unit
ES	Emerging Spirit
FIN	Finance
GC	General Council
GC43PC	General Council 43 Planning Committee
GCE	Executive of the General Council
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
HAM	Hamilton Conference
IJRS	Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools Committee
ITS	Information Technology Services Unit
LM	Lay Ministry
LON	London Conference
M&O	Montreal and Ottawa Conference
M&S	Mission and Service
MAC	Moderator's Advisory Committee

MAL	Member(s) at Large
MAR	Maritime Conference
ME	Ministry and Employment Unit
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MEPS	Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
MNWO	Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
MOD	Moderator
MP	Ministry Personnel
MTU	Manitou Conference
MV	More Voices United
N&L/NL	Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
NWO	National Women's Organization
OM	Ordered Ministry
OMGS	The Offices of the Moderator and General Secretary
OMNI	Omnibus
PAR	Pre-Authorized Remittance
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
ROP	Record of Proceedings
SK	Saskatchewan Conference
SPK	Speaker
TICIF	Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee
TOR	Toronto Conference
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
YF	Youth Forum Program at General Council

Glossary

A note about terminology: This glossary is not a comprehensive list of all terms related to interculturalism and Indigenous justice. It is a starting point to assist Commissioners with some key terms that might be used throughout the week. It is also important to recognize that terminology is always changing and evolving—and so what works now, in 2018, may not work as well in a few years. Still, we hope that this is helpful for your process and engagement this week.

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

- Disabilities
- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Indigenous justice
- Interculturalism
- 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.

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 they were assigned at birth.

Gender: A social construct that differs from culture to culture. The World Health Organization defines gender as referring to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (such as certain roles, as well as appearance).

Gender identity: A self-determined identity that reflects an individual's personal understanding of gender in regard to their own embodied experiences.

LGBTQQIA2S: An acronym used to denote identities of individuals and groups; can be understood to be inclusive of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and two-spirited (2S). This acronym is always changing and evolving, which is why in some contexts a common phrase is "people of all sexual orientations and gender identities."

Queer: A term that may include lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans people, and people who challenge the boundaries of sexual orientation, sex, and gender. The term can sometimes be an insult. It is also used frequently as an affirmative political and/or identity statement, and it describes a school of thought called queer theory.

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 gender they were assigned at birth, and/or expresses their gender in ways that differ from societal expectations for 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-spirited or two-spirit: Indigenous people 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. However, not all Indigenous people are always comfortable using this term.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

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" is used rather than "Indigenous People."

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): Right of Indigenous Peoples to be fully involved, as equal partners, in decision-making on issues that affect them and their territories. 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.

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. It 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. This 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 is currently engaged in a process to implement the Declaration. The UNDRIP does not grant any special or new rights to Indigenous Peoples; nor does it prioritize their rights over any other human rights. It simply codifies the collective and individual rights that they 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.

INTERCULTURALISM

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

Ethnic: While this word has been used historically in church documents, it has recently fallen out of favour. The United Church has offered considerable critique of the term “ethnic,” which has its origins in the term “ethnos,” which in turn has roots in the terms “pagan/heathen.”

Equity: Equality refers to the practice of treating everyone the same. 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 refers to an approach that seeks to remove barriers and provide everyone what they need to be successful. Equity is a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does *not* mean treating everyone the same without regard for individual differences (and societal inequalities).

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 commitments, such as racial justice. As such, work related to racial justice, and disabilities, is part of our intercultural engagement.

Intercultural lens: This lens is a practical tool for engaging with our intercultural vision, and it is a tool for approaching meetings, conversations, and report preparation through an intercultural lens. It asks these questions: What is the context? Who will be affected? How will this report, decision, or discussion increase equity? The intercultural lens also invites us to question biases, challenge assumptions, notice who's missing, value all voices, aim for equity, and live out our commitments. Download the Intercultural Lens text and a summary version for projection on the Way of Becoming an Intercultural Church page (www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/ways-becoming-intercultural-church).

Intercultural Vision: The intercultural vision was adopted by the Executive of the 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. Read a plain language version at www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/vision-becoming-intercultural-church.

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's 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 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.

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; 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 institution; 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 erroneous belief that race does not matter in a social context or that it is neutral in a social context. Colour-blindness keeps people from raising concerns and questioning the value of race and racial inequalities in daily experiences. This perspective essentially ignores race and helps to perpetuate racism in society. (Referring to “blind” in this way is also problematic!)

Race: To 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. Race is a social construct; it’s a human creation. 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 in social sciences as a more inclusive and progressive term, instead of “racial minority,” “visible minority,” “person of colour,” or “non-White.” The term “racial minority” is particularly problematic because, while racialized people may have fewer numbers in some parts of Canada, racialized people are not a minority in the world.

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 which 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 enjoyed by White people that gives them 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 our context.

Facilitation Group

The Facilitation Group consists of respected church elders (former Moderators and others), who are not commissioners. They deliberate on comments and suggestions from discussion groups. The Facilitation Group decides on the recommended way forward for each proposal and drafts a refined proposal as necessary.



Since February 2013, Rev. **Hewitt Holmes** has been serving The United Church of Canada 2013 in pastoral ministry. He has been an ordained minister since November 2006. Over the years, his gifts of pastoral presence, critical thinking, leadership and administration continue to be used by the church on various committees at Presbytery, Conference and the General Council. Hewitt is currently in team ministry at Collier Street, Barrie Ontario and has served pastoral charges in Northwestern Ontario and Jamaica. Hewitt believes “love always wins.”



Raised in Toronto, the Rev. Dr. **James (Jamie) Scott** was ordained in 1976 and served in pastoral ministry in Saskatchewan until 1980. His ministry then turned to peacemaking, conflict resolution and restorative justice. Jamie served as the General Council Officer for Residential Schools from 2003-15 representing the United Church in negotiations for the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Dr. **Marion Best** was Moderator of The United Church of Canada from 1994 to 1997 and on the Executive of the World Council of Churches from 1991 to 2006 and served as Vice-Moderator of the governing body for the last seven years of her term. Prior to this, she was a member of the Program Staff of Naramata Centre for 10 years. She and Jack are parents of four and grandparents of 12 young adults.



Betty Kelly (MRD, CAE) has been an active volunteer in all courts of The United Church of Canada for over 25 years, including the Lay Rep to the Executive of the General Council for the Conference of MNWO (2006–2012). Attendance at four General Councils to date, her recent term as Conference President, and now as a member of the Regional Transitional team has deepened Betty’s appreciation of the rich diversity of the church community as well as the complexity of the United Church organizational structures. Betty possesses a Master’s Degree in Rural Development and a Certificate in Adult Education. She has extensive professional experience consulting with non-profit organizations regarding governance, strategic planning, and community development. Betty is passionate about the richness of rural and northern life and the importance of truly being “in community.”



The Rev. Dr. **Carmen Lansdowne** is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation in BC and ordained in The United Church of Canada. She holds a PhD in theology and First Nations worldviews from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA and speaks, writes, and publishes across North America on issues of Indigenous theology and Indigenous-Christian relationships. Carmen currently serves Executive Director of First United in Vancouver’s downtown east side and has served on the Executive of the General Council and as United Church representative to the Executive and Central Committees of the World Council of Churches, and currently sits on the Theology and Inter-Church, Inter-Faith Committee of the national church.

Moderator Nominees

REV. SUSAN BEAVER



Nominating Body

Plains Presbytery (All Native Circle Conference)

Biographical Statement

I am *Kanien'kehá:ka* from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario.

Growing up on the reserve, my mother taught me how important justice is to people of faith, and my father taught me awe and reverence for a seed that falls on the ground, or is placed there by hard-working hands. I grew up in community with a love for history, stories, and spirituality. I asked my uncle, “Why did they shorten our mourning period from one year to 10 days?” and he said, “Because Creator meant our lives to be joyful.” He formed my faith that day.

At the same time, my life was not joyful. My father, whose blessing I pray for every day, is a survivor of two residential schools and raised his children the way they raised him—with violence and hard work. I spent many years traumatized with no framework for understanding what happened to me in my younger years.

After I left the reserve, I lived with the pain and barely lived at all. I came out to my mother and she exiled me from our community. I decided that it had to be worth it; that my life had to have meaning. My early years taught me suffering and I decided that I wanted a better world. Though wounded myself, I always worked in non-profit organizations serving women, queer, and Indigenous peoples.

I was free to experience life, and I never lost my love for spiritual life and stories. Spirit prepared me to meet my partner so that when we met, I recognized her. We’ve been together for 28 years. I had a dream about a polar bear and so got a job in the Yukon. I studied in an Indigenous creative writing program in B.C., went to Okanagan ceremony, sacred places, and had a profound experience of the divine. I majored in Religious Studies at a Buddhist university in Colorado where I meditated every day, went to synagogue, practiced Father Keating’s centering prayer, and sat with Sufi dancers. I challenged the university’s racism and privilege. While there, I truly learned to love God.

My partner and I moved back to Ontario and to my home church, Grand River United. I became a lay reader, got a job at the Francis Sandy Theological School, and began to hear my call to ministry. I served as Chair of Great Lakes Waterways Presbytery, on the Intercultural Ministries Task Group, and as commissioner at General Council.

When I committed to my call, I went to Emmanuel College and served as student minister at Grand River. Since ordination, I continue to serve on the Executive and Council of Learning for both presbytery and Conference. I was a member of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle. I'm on the Indigenous worship-planning circle for GC43. I've also been involved in the Indigenous portion of remit implementation and design. I maintain a relationship with Emmanuel College, who comes to Grand River every October.

Statement about the Church

Before I was called to ministry, I studied with Reb Zalman (may his memory be a blessing), a rabbi who endured an internment camp in France and could just as easily have gone to Auschwitz. He survived the war and afterwards, when he saw that the faith wasn't serving the (traumatized) people in ways that truly gave life to them, or deepened their relationship with God, he began a Jewish renewal movement. Reb Zalman was bursting with joy and love for God. He and his renewal movement are my inspiration for what faith means in our lives, and in the world.

Our church is at wonderful point of embracing change. At GC43, we may choose to restructure our current body, something not done to this degree since union. We have looked at ourselves and said, "This no longer serves us," which gives us the opportunity to say, "This is what gives us life." Through circumstances, God has asked us to change how we do business in very practical ways, like how we enter the candidacy path, or financially support the church. These changes also ask us to develop the culture of the church. We need to do things in new ways and there will be challenges as we seek to follow God's call for us. God's call is not the path of certainty or comfort. When we are uncertain, there is openness and room for Spirit to work in us. God's call is one of trust and faith. With the Risen Christ at our side, can we dig deep and find the new church's new way of being in the world?

If we accept the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle's proposal *Calls to the Church*, The United Church of Canada will be saying—to Jacques Cartier as he "explores," to Duncan Campbell Scott as he designs the residential schools and voices the desire to get rid of "the Indian problem," and to the author of the White Paper promoting Indigenous assimilation into western culture—"You were wrong. This is what a good and life-giving relationship with Indigenous people looks like. And we didn't have to think it up. The Indigenous people gave it to us because they, too, love God."

The church began saying this 30 years ago, but it is also finding its new voice as we design the new structure. I'm sad to say that I've witnessed just how excruciatingly painful it is when we try to work together. I've seen how normal Western culture is debilitating, alienating, and excludes Indigenous and other peoples. I've seen how little people know about us and how we do things and it's a shame because we, as Indigenous people, bring some amazing things to the table. We know that all work in the church can feel like the best worship service you've ever experienced. It can hurt to walk away from a church meeting because we've created meaningful community and joyous fellowship. This is how we can do the work together and see what we create. This is the beginning of the transformation and the new creation.

We have heard that the church, the Body of Christ as we know it, is dying. Dying is life. If the Body of Christ is indeed dying, then we are all Nicodemus and we are all Joseph and Josephine of Arimathea. We are all lovingly and respectfully caring for that crucified body. We are all responsible for getting that body to the place it needs to be so the resurrection can happen. At GC43, we may well roll the stone over the tomb. And we may spend three difficult days, even a brutal Holy Saturday, waiting and praying for a new day. This is holy and faithful work, and that is okay.

The Body of Christ is only the Body of Christ if it lives and breathes, walks and works, and serves those who suffer in the world. In my ministry in the Indigenous context, I am surrounded by what seems to be endless suffering in the people. Our society denies the importance of a living wage while spending billions on world-killing pipelines. The U.S. President is making it safe again for White supremacists everywhere. We have much work to do. Someone has to hold up the story of another way, of the way that leads to life for all. There are as many ways to tell this story as there are people in our church today, and who may well be in our church tomorrow.

Now is the time to truly unleash and join with the many voices enlivened and inspired by a love for justice and for the people. A political analysis speaks the gospel. A commitment to learning and unlearning racism proclaims to the world that life is more powerful than death. Prayer tells us who we may be. At the end of the day, we should all be able to give thanks to our Creator for the work we've been given to do, and go to sleep knowing that we served God's wildest dream for the good of the world.

"The truth of the matter is, anyone who has faith in me will do the works I do—and greater works besides." (*The Inclusive Bible*, John 14:12)

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

The Do-Over. By this I mean a second chance for a relationship between those who were on the land and those who were in the ships. First peoples had prophecies about the visitors coming and were given teachings like the Great Peace. It's time we got to know each other and revived our work on agreements like the Two Row Wampum belt, respecting each other's ways and being held together in friendship. Let us spend time together and share again.

Parrots on Pipes. One of my best experiences was on the Intercultural Ministries Task Group. We shared stories about growing up with diverse histories shaped by colonization, oppression, and racialization but we also shared our hope and hunger for justice. I would facilitate conversation and relationship between peoples who've resisted centuries of being erased and dismissed. What if our central figure was the Samaritan woman? If the gifts of diversity rebuilt and reshaped the church, what then could we offer the world?

The Zombie Apocalypse. In a world where the living dead are chewing away at justice and Spirit, the church has a story to tell about life. As our church embodies new structural and social-political realities we need to live into this resurrection. This will take time so perhaps we are Joseph and Nicodemus caring for Christ's crucified body, getting it to where it needs to be in order for the resurrection to happen. So we pray, and we work hard, and we tell our story.

TESSA BLAIKIE WHITECLOUD**Nominating Body**

Winnipeg Presbytery (Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario)

Biographical Statement

Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud is currently the Executive Director at 1JustCity, an umbrella organization created to bring financial stability and greater visibility to the outreach ministries of The United Church of Canada in Winnipeg.

Under Tessa's leadership for the last three years, 1JustCity has been incredibly successful in diversifying funding for the ministries outside of the church, becoming an incorporated not-for-profit, and meeting its mandate to actively love the underloved. With charitable status, 1JustCity ensures a future for our outreach sites. Tessa has grown their supporter, volunteer, and donor list exponentially. The work of 1JustCity has given Tessa the opportunity to live her faith through her daily interactions with people. Tessa is passionate about the work of 1JustCity and The United Church of Canada. She sees a future for our Church.

Tessa started full-time at 1JustCity the same year she married her husband Hanwakan Blaikie Whitecloud. Together, they are learning his ancestral Dakota language and facilitating workshops on reconciliation and restitution. They also spend a lot of time cycling, practising yoga, and spending time with their goddaughter, godson, and nephews. Soon her nephews will be of age to join Tessa's wrestling class. As a 2005 Canada Games athlete, Tessa has been coaching wrestling for little ones ever since.

Growing up UC and active in all facets of the Church, Tessa looks back with special affection on her time in Canadian Girls in Training, delivering Christmas hampers with her dad, Bill Blaikie, and many games of hide-and-go seek in the church buildings.

Tessa first took to the pulpit at the age of 17 after a school mission trip to Bolivia. Working in Winnipeg's north end for many years as a summer camp leader, Tessa began to recognize and mobilize the privilege she carries as a White settler to work on issues of Canada's colonial attitude and the resulting injustices Indigenous people experience.

Tessa joined the UC Youth 4 Peace Delegation to Palestine (2009) to be in solidarity with Christians, Jews, and Muslims there working for peace. Returning home, Tessa performed over 50 presentations about Israel–Palestine while finishing her Honours degree in Sociology. She served again as overseas mission staff after a severe car accident left her on disability for several months and unable to continue her job as a personal trainer for people with developmental disabilities.

During her MA in Political Economy, Tessa continued to look at the ways that Canadians must not only be “allies” but also owners of the injustices Indigenous people are facing. Tessa now lectures on this regularly on top of teaching in the Sociology department at University of Winnipeg since 2015.

Her master’s work involved an internship with KAIROS ecumenical justice initiatives, a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Grassy Narrows First Nation, and conference presentations on solidarity...eventually she graduated, too.

Her work as a mental health promotion worker with Canadian Mental Health Association, including acting as regional organizer for “Clara’s Big Ride for Bell Let’s Talk” and more, helped her build her media skills and she uses those skills to make sure 1JustCity’s stories of Good News are heard by as many as possible.

Statement about the Church

We are a church with a future! I believe that the future of our church can be extraordinary, it may be different, but if we face the challenges before us with steadfast faith and openness to the guidance of the Spirit and God’s awesome transformations.

Your faith is like a super power, and sometimes-hostile secularism, or statistics of decline, can be like kryptonite. But we are called to remember the Easter Story, and the teaching of the kernel of wheat, that in death, in grief, arises new life, new beginnings, faith renewed.

This is a time of change for our church and in that change I see a huge opportunity. The challenge is: will we seize it?

Every day, I am filled with optimism as I witness communities of love and faith in our United Church outreach work. Where we humbly encourage one another and build each other up, just as we are told to do in scripture;

- As we live out social action as sacrament,
- As we be the manger,
- As we clothe the cold,
- As we feed the hungry,
- And as we advocate for a society in which housing will be affordable, God’s children are not left vulnerable to the elements and hunger is no more.

This is what being Christian means to me.

Today I ask of you the opportunity to share this story of Christianity—our story.

I see opportunity when youth of all faiths who have left Sunday school never to return to church again start coming back to volunteer. Called to action when the church opens their doors to offer shelter, called back to cook so that bread may be broken among the least and the last.

I see opportunity to be medicine for those who are struggling with their self-worth. We can fill a spiritual hunger. We can share the Good News that we all deserve love and are created in love. In so doing we can challenge the culture that says we need to buy this, buy that, eat less, eat more, or otherwise be something or someone other than God intended. We can resist a culture that is not only destroying our souls but the sustainability of our planet.

I see opportunity when we recognize the Jesus in one another and treat each other accordingly; treat each other as Jesus would have. This means ending poverty, ending boiling water advisories in racialized communities, calling out systems of oppression. It means having faith that the incremental changes we make towards the building of God's Kingdom matter. Maybe we don't win today, but we have faith that the win is not what matters.

I see opportunity in sharing the stories of our amazing accomplishments—like youth who feel safe to come out at Sunday School, like the thousands of families across Canada that rely on us this week to have enough to eat, in being a Church at the forefront of social change. A church that makes the hard calls and right choices to repent and apologize. A church committed to moving beyond reconciliation towards restitution. We set a precedent and government followed.

As a community of faith we have been self-aware and so we have been silent at times to make space for others to be heard. Today, Canada needs our voice. It needs to hear that there is an old way made new, that all are welcome to come in and change us, not just join us. Canadians need to hear that everyone, from everywhere, can fill their spiritual deficit by being a part of our community, through leading our community, for God is where we gather together, and the spirit moves among us when we are among each other.

We need to show those who refer to themselves as “Spiritual but not Religious” that we understand their discomfort with religion while at the same time helping them to understand the great possibilities of being spiritual in community.

The intention of our church to be inclusive and progressive is exactly what our world craves.

Let us share that the spirit moves us to be Inclusive, Caring, Prophetic, Faithful, Woke! This is what our Christianity looks like—I see our opportunity!

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

Our story of faith is one the world needs to hear, about Christians that are relevant, inclusionary, and living their faith in today's society.

I have two plans for how working together we share the Good News and the good news of how we're living it out.

Firstly a weekly social media schedule:

- Saturday: a sermon for use in congregations without ministers, transcending congregational silos, highlighting the amazing faith leadership we have, while making it accessible for those who cannot attend on Sundays
- Monday: Mindfulness moment affirming God's love
- Tuesday: Facebook Live suggesting action from sermon reflections
- Wednesday: Worldview focus on Canada's Indigenous communities
- Thursday: Celebration video or story offering a thankful moment for the hands and feet working for heaven on earth thanks to Mission & Service grants around Canada and beyond, highlighting for all the impact as United Church of Canada we continue to have in this world

Secondly a #MyChristianity campaign that invites progressive Christians to share their inclusive and loving God.

My year one priorities for actions are twofold. "Adults Go Back to Bible Camp": Out of this hilarious and intentional time together adults will have an opportunity to say how the church can reshape to meet their spiritual needs. The second: a social justice action worship that invites the non-Christian community to engage with us in making Canada a better place, building national themes adaptable to local contexts.

From these conversations and gatherings, with intentional listening, we can set priorities for the years to come.

REV. DR. RICHARD BOTT**Nominating Body**

Vancouver South Presbytery (British Columbia Conference)

Biographical Statement

Hello! I'm Richard Bott—a member of the Order of Ministry (ordained stream) of The United Church of Canada. I was born and grew up on the north shore of Lake Superior, in the town of Marathon, ON, on the traditional and unceded territory of the *Biigtigong Nishnaabeg*. It has only been in the past few years that I have come to realize that nearly everywhere I have lived has been on territory unceded by the First Nations of those places—the meaning and significance of which I continue to grapple with as I move forward in my understanding of both myself as a settler/descendant and our collective history as a church and as a country.

Since being ordained in 1994, I have served in the congregations of Trinity United Church in Iroquois Falls, ON; St. Marys United Church in St. Marys, Ont., St. Andrews-Haney (which, with Hammond United, became Golden Ears United Church) in Maple Ridge, BC; and Dunbar Heights (which, with Ryerson United, became Pacific Spirit United Church) in Vancouver.

The United Church of Canada is now, and has always been, the defining institution in my life. Although I couldn't always recognize it then, I had the great good fortune of growing up in a community of faith that nurtured my gifts and challenged me to do more. St. John's United Church was, and continues to be, a vital part of their community, sharing faith, and love in tangible acts of care, just like thousands of other United Church congregations across the land.

I understood my call while still in high school but thought that my ministry was to be outside of the church. Others' willingness to struggle with me in discernment showed me a different path. I have lived my life as a beloved child of God, not just with my congregations, but with the church body as a whole.

I'm certain that some of you reading this are people I've met. Perhaps it's been on presbytery committees, or facilitating workshops and worship services in a number of Conferences. Maybe it's been while I have been taking part in worship, interchurch/interfaith, and stewardship committees, or other working groups of the General Council. I've been given the opportunity to facilitate the work of small groups, as well as chairing a presbytery (Huron Perth) and a Conference (London). Other folks may recognize my name from my liturgical writing—especially prayers, calls, and litanies that have been printed in *Gathering*, and then brought home by my colleagues to their congregations. We might even have met online, in one of the various iterations of our denomination's presence there, or on various social media. (If we haven't had the chance to meet, feel free to connect with me. I'd love to hear about what's going on in your part of the people of God we call The United Church of Canada!)

Statement about the Church

I deeply love who we are as The United Church—a community of Christ-connected communities, doing our level best to try and figure out what it means to be Jesus' people in this day and age. We can look at our past and celebrate much of how our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents lived their understanding of this faith, while also recognizing the broken parts that have done damage to many people, in many ways. And, while we need to acknowledge our past and learn from it, we also need to realize that much of *how* we lived into our mission and ministry doesn't connect with where people are *now*. The world has gotten broader, and numerically and demographically, our church has gotten smaller.

And yet I believe that we are, in so many ways, well placed as a denomination in Canada of the 21st century. We have an expansive understanding of what it means to be Christians, one that can offer support to help people who are interested in exploring what it means for them to enter into and deepen their relationship with the Divine, through Jesus; and to live into the abundance of loving God, loving our neighbours, and loving ourselves, with *all* of who we are. Just as importantly, I believe we have a willingness to learn from our neighbours' experiences of life, of love, and of the Divine—and in our places of agreement *and* our places of difference, work together to mend the world.

The changes we are facing are frightening. The next few years will continue to be highly anxious for many of us. What will our structural changes mean? How will they affect me? How will they affect my congregation? What are we going to look like? Will we ever, effectively, respond to the changes in climate, to the injustices we see among economic strata, among genders, among races, among those of us who "have" and those of us to don't? Question upon question upon question...

I am hoping that we will find it in ourselves to challenge the world's anxiety, and reach deep within who we are, recognizing that that we are inSpirited, and we can grow inspiration wherever we go in the world. I believe that we will lean into our "God moments," and build excitement in each other for the possibilities that Christ is building in us!

I believe that worship is the heart of the church—that we express our connection with God, with each other, and with the wider world through the act of coming together in prayer, in celebration, in penance, and in joyful relation with God. It is central to our ability, as Christians, to go and be agents of positive change.

I believe that in times of change, it becomes even more important for us to listen—to one another, to the wider world, to Jesus' teaching, to the Holy Spirit's insistence, and to the Creator's love.

I believe that we need to work to communicate well—with ourselves, with other members of our communities of faith, with other communities of The United Church of Canada, and with people of a variety of worldviews in the wider world.

I believe our communication needs to be not only with our actions, but also with our words. It's okay for us to say, "Why am I joining in this work? Well I'm part of The United Church of Canada, and we believe that it's important to live Christ's love, every day. That's a part of the reason I'm here." We can be proud, without being prideful. We can work out of our faith and worldview, without taking away from someone else's.

I believe that each of us needs to explore what this faith in God means to us; and what Jesus means to us. As we explore it as individuals, I hope that we can find ways of exploring it as congregations—as communities of faith and fellowship. We may never come to complete agreement, remembering that these kinds of discussions have been going on in the church for thousands of years, and wider faith discussions in the world for thousands more. But living into that exploration together, is a big part of what it means to be engaged as church.

I hope that when we get afraid—because each of us will get afraid at some point—we can reach out to one another and be heavenly messengers of God's love. I hope that in those moments we will whisper, or speak, or shout, or sing, or dance, or simply show with our heart, "Be not afraid! There is Good News, Great Joy!"

I believe that we are people of Good News.

I believe that we are people of Great Joy.

Whatever our institutional shape might become, I believe that we—O people of The United Church of Canada—have many more years to live lives of faith and of love.

So, let's go and do it—and let's help one another as we go along the way.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

In times of structural transition, it becomes even more important for us to keep focused on our primary tasks. With every action they take, the priority of General Council and regions is to ask themselves, "How will this (policy, decision, or action) help communities of faith to live out their ministry?" I believe that is the central role of the wider councils of the church. As communities of faith, I think our priority needs to be releasing ourselves from "survival mode," and redirecting our energies into living into our individual and communal calls as Jesus' disciples.

In all of this time, we're going to have to carefully listen to each other, and be honest and open in our concerns and disagreements. We're going to have to work against the cynicism and fear that sometimes threatens to overwhelm, and assume each other's goodwill for the ministry in which we share.

In short, our priorities are: overcome whatever fear we have; look to the good of one another; help everybody live out their call!

REV. DAVID HART**Nominating Body**

Halifax Presbytery

Biographical Statement

It is a deep privilege to be nominated as a candidate for Moderator of our beloved United Church of Canada. Allow me to share a few words by way of introduction to myself for GC43 Commissioners.

Autobiography is comprised of both an outer and an inner journey, both of which shape whom we become. At the age of five an event occurred in my outer life that was to shape my inner journey for years to come. Two older brothers drowned leaving me an only child. My parents were devastated! But they were people of deep faith, one to which they turned for meaning and consolation. It was understandable that I would do likewise.

Although I had a happy enough early life, the loss of my brothers elicited within me a deep spiritual yearning for God, for the relationship that would never leave nor disappoint. I studied theatre, English literature and philosophy at the University of Windsor in Ontario but, as a child of the 60s, my extra-curricular explorations of Eastern religion, meditation, and spirituality evoked my truest passions. When, during theological studies, my Conference Interview Board directed my attention to the Christian mystics, I discovered I had finally found home! And, I would say that the most important thing to know about me, aside from the external elements of my professional career in ministry, is that my life ever since has been characterized by a deep love for God and inner call to contemplative prayer. Additionally, the experience of mystical and contemplative prayer has shaped my entire understanding of Jesus, theology, and the church's call to engagement with the world.

Ordained by London Conference, I have served pastoral charges in Toronto, Saskatchewan, Northern, Ontario and Halifax. For six years, I served as the Minister for Personnel and Global Justice for Manitou Conference. Organizing exchanges with the South African Council of Churches during the closing years of apartheid, and later representing the United Church with Indigenous Mayan Presbyterian groups in Guatemala, opened my eyes to the wonderful work our church conducts with its partners around the world. I have sat on and/or chaired various committees, task forces and special assignments at all levels of organization in the United Church.

For many years, Bedford United Church (BUC) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I have served as team leader, has provided inspiration and vision for the wider church regarding future directions for enlivened congregational ministry. From modelling pro-active engagement with the culture around us as the first congregation in Nova Scotia to become "affirming," and recently honoured by the Government of Canada for building bridges with the Islamic

community, to demonstrating what truly modern worship and theology can look like in today's world, BUC has always thrived on the cutting edge of congregational ministry.

Passionate about articulating a thoroughly contemporary theology for people both inside and outside the church, my congregation encouraged me to write, resulting in two books *Christianity: A New Look at Ancient Wisdom* and more recently, *Spirit Awakening: Finding New Life in Christian Faith*. I have a deep interest in the connections between contemporary science and faith, and derive much theological inspiration from modern music. Married to Daniele, a lawyer with the federal government, and blessed with a daughter, Kinza, attending McGill University in Montreal, it is a privilege to stand with the other nominees as a candidate for Moderator.

Statement about the Church

As indicated in my statement above, the experience of contemplative prayer has profoundly shaped my understanding of the world in which we live and of the United Church through, which we serve. Contemplative prayer serves to deepen and enrich one's experience of the Sacred, not as some otherworldly Reality, but as very present in and guiding our lives here and now! This dimension of my life has enabled me to more deeply appreciate the profound currents of spiritual change presently flowing through our culture. We live in a time in which the sacred and the secular are no longer experienced as diametrically opposed to one other. Rather, everywhere, people are locating God, or the Sacred, here and now in their daily lives. Various theologians have noted that we are living on the cusp of what could be referred to as a second Reformation.

The challenge for the church, including our United Church of Canada, is not that people no longer believe in God and therefore no longer attend church. Rather, the opposite is true. People everywhere believe strongly in God but fewer and fewer believe that the church has any special "corner on," or access to God. For growing numbers of people who call themselves "spiritual but not religious," the wider church often seems to pose a "barrier" to God rather than providing an "opening" to God.

Related to this shift is the currency people place on experience as distinct from belief. For decades, if not centuries, the church has invited people to subscribe to its beliefs about God. In today's world, people recognize the limitations and shortcomings associated with our human ideas about God. Rather, what people hunger for is experience of God. This experience can be found in a yoga class, a mindfulness meditation group, or working in a soup kitchen feeding the poor. But regardless of how it takes place, the well-being of the future church will depend upon its ability to facilitate meaningful spiritual experience for people in a wide variety of different ways.

The United Church presently is undergoing a major restructuring to accommodate to a new reality characterized by a much-reduced membership and influence in our Canadian culture. Less people, less money, less volunteers, and churches closing across the land, require us to find new ways to function and govern ourselves. This restructuring will take some time to

unfold. We can trust in the multitude of wonderful leaders, employed and lay, working in administrative positions across the denomination, to manage it as effectively and transparently as possible...mind you, I would guess, not without a hiccup or two along the way!

But the very need to conduct this restructuring constitutes a wakeup call for the church necessitating that we learn how to re-engage deeply with our culture about religion, faith, and Spirit. The good news is that we are extremely well positioned to do so. We have the infrastructure, resources, background and the depth to truly make a difference in Canadian life. The challenge before us is to discern Spirit's wisdom regarding how to do so.

I have my own personal observations and insights, gleaned from 25 years of experience leading a dynamic and constantly evolving congregation, regarding how Spirit may be calling us to respond. For example, I personally believe we need to renew our encouragement for young people to enter ministry and to provide them with a much deeper level of spiritual formation and leadership training than we, to date, have done. But this is just by way of saying that, in parallel with the organizational re-structuring presently occurring, our denomination needs to undergo another process of re-visioning how Spirit is calling us to be The United Church of Canada in this new age and circumstance. And the role of Moderator needs to serve the facilitation of that re-visioning, one that will engage the wisdom and experience of us all.

In keeping with the contemplative vision and experience that Spirit is present everywhere in and animating all of life, I trust that it is very much alive and present in our United Church of Canada. If we can open profoundly to its Presence and Wisdom, I trust that it will continue to have a very significant role for us to serve in the years ahead. Thanks be to God.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

As indicated earlier, present denominational restructuring is necessitated because of the significant decline in members and resources at the congregational level throughout The United Church of Canada. If elected as Moderator, my foremost priority will be to assist our denomination to reverse this membership and attendance bleed. Allow me to sketch the barest of outlines of a suggested program.

1. Calling for a year of prayer and study to reignite the spiritual flames within the United Church!
2. Immediate convening of a cross-Canada delegation of leaders within rural, suburban, and urban ministries to address the UC membership drain.
3. Organization of an *Awakening of Spirit* conference within each new "region" of the United Church, to consolidate the new "regions," reinforce local "associations" of ministers and laity, and renew congregational vision.
4. Establishment of working groups to address the issue of congregational resources required in the next decade, including IT, marketing, and capital resources.

5. Implementation of a full-fledged campaign to recruit young people back into United Church ministry.
6. Establishment of a working group to review United Church requirements of theological schools regarding preparation for contemporary ministry. Present educational programs are severely deficient.

I have spent the past 25 years working with an amazing team of people focusing precisely on the issue of congregational vitality and renewal! At this critical juncture in United Church history, we need leadership to support our congregations that possesses vision, concrete proposals, and results- oriented management ability. I refuse to believe that decline is inevitable! Together with Spirit, we can rebuild the United Church!

REV. CATHY LARMOND**Nominating Body**

Kent Presbytery (London Conference)

Biographical Statement

Cathy Larmond is currently the minister at the Tupperville Pastoral Charge, consisting of Zion United Church in Tupperville and Lindsay Road United Church in Turnerville just outside Dresden, ON, in Kent Presbytery. She has been there since 2009. Previously, she served at Forest United Church in Lambton Presbytery from 2000 until 2009, and at the Sparta-Union Pastoral Charge in Elgin Presbytery from 1991 until 2000.

Following her ordination in Hamilton Conference in 1988, she served for three years in the Grimshaw-Berwyn Pastoral Charge, located about 25 km west of Peace River in Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Cathy is a graduate of McMaster University in Hamilton, ON, with a combined honours BA in English and Sociology, and she received her Master of Divinity at Queen's Theological College in Kingston, ON. She also spent some time as an officer in the Naval Reserve in various capacities; she completed her time in the navy as a Reserve Chaplain.

Cathy has been involved in all aspects of Ministry and Personnel during her time in London Conference, including Education and Students and Pastoral Relations. She has served as Chair of Elgin Presbytery, and as Chair of Kent Presbytery, twice. She was elected as Chair of Lambton Presbytery, but her husband, George, was diagnosed with cancer two months after she was installed; she was unable to complete her term. He passed away in 2008.

Cathy is currently a Past President of London Conference (2015–2016). While she was president, she travelled to Mozambique as a representative of the Conference and visited two outreach ministries of the London Conference. As part of her responsibilities as president, she visited all of the presbyteries in London Conference. Cathy is the Chair of the Division of Ministry and Personnel and remains a member of the London Conference Executive. She has been active in the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships test in London Conference. She served on the Settlement Committee, which is responsible for all appointments and calls, and on the Sub-Executive, which is responsible for oversight and discipline of ministry personnel.

Cathy was elected a General Council Commissioner for the 41st General Council (2012), the 42nd General Council 42 (2015), and the 43rd General Council (2018).

She has three sons. George is an undergraduate at Huron College in London, ON. After he completes his Master of Divinity, he hopes to be ordained in the Anglican Church. Joe lives and works in Ottawa. Davey is completing his degree at the University of Ottawa.

Cathy is a life member of United Church Women (UCW) and is active in both her current UCWs. She attended the past two national UCW events in Ancaster, ON, and in Vancouver with her mother. She enjoys knitting, crocheting, reading, music, and camping.

Statement about the Church

Sometimes when people ask me what the future holds, or what the main concerns are for the next few years, I am tempted to tell them that my crystal ball got cracked in my move to my settlement charge and hasn't worked since. I believe that most of the challenges facing the church in the future will involve creating and maintaining relationships, which are built on trust and respect. If I don't know the other person or group, then I can't trust them and can't risk developing my relationship with them. We need to get to know our neighbours and our neighbourhoods!

In the two-point charge where I am currently a minister and in the small villages and towns around me, I see churches of all denominations struggling with smaller numbers, trying to keep up their buildings and their donations for outreach, sometimes moving to part-time ministry. We need to build relationships with other churches in our areas and to share projects, and resources. We need to encourage ecumenical and interfaith relationships and to recognize each other's ministries, to work with, and not to be in competition with, the other churches and faiths around us.

Because of the structural changes that we are working towards, I believe we need to build these relationships with the United churches around us in new ways. There are projects that we can do together to create a more visible United Church presence in our communities than we can achieve as individual churches. Cooperating by sponsoring refugee families, or by promoting Canadian Foodgrains Bank projects is important to keep us looking outward into God's world. We need to build ties within and across regions to keep us connected to each other and we have to be intentional about developing meaningful relationships and strong ties.

We are creating new structures, such as the Office of Vocation. The relationship between the volunteers and the staff in that office, and those ministering in the communities of faith is going to be new and exciting. We are also going to need a large number of volunteers to help to achieve the regions' responsibilities. We need to be intentional about the retention, recruitment, training and support of these volunteers. We have an opportunity within these new structures to build trust and mutual respect between the regions and the communities of faith, as well as within clusters and networks. We must build these relationships with the knowledge and skills that we are going to need to help to create and maintain these new structures.

Relationships must be formed and maintained between the church and our First Nations and our LGBTQ2 brothers and sisters. Some of those relationships have been badly damaged in the past; reconciliation and renewal must be a priority. Some of this work can be done at the national level, but in the end, all relationships are between people of goodwill. To have supportive, nurturing co-operative relationships, we must start by listening to each other.

In a recent workshop, a group of eight people was asked to stand in a circle facing inward linking arms. Then three other people came toward the circle. The people in the circle felt defensive and didn't look at the new people who felt rejected and unwanted. Then the people in the circle were asked to stand facing outward linking arms. The newcomers came toward the circle again. This time, there was an interaction and relationships were formed. Jesus said that He is the Vine, and we are the branches. Now we, like branches, need to find ways to connect and intertwine with each other. The structures that have held us in relationships are changing, and new connections will need to be made. These new relationships are within our church and with our communities, including our friends in other faiths, and others of goodwill who will help us to work together to make God's world a better place for all of God's children.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

My priority as Moderator would be developing relationships, starting with those between the people of the regions and their members, as well as the ties between the regions. We have spent too much time inside our "silos." We know the people in our presbyteries, and some of those in the Conference, but if asked about someone from a neighbouring Conference, the answer all too often is that I don't know them. That needs to change! Our regions will need to work together as they share staff and possibly resources. And we need volunteers, experienced and enthusiastic, to help to make these new structures work. How do we find volunteers? Through relationships! People know people who are interested. As the Spirit moves in and around us, we find the people with the gifts that we need.

I think the Moderator has a role in trying to encourage these relationships to form. I see myself as a bit of a matchmaker. I hope to introduce people to each other, having learning, and social events to draw neighbours together. Some of that can be done over social media, and some in person. It is the intention to form relationships and to network with each other that is key. As Moderator, I would set that tone and encourage reaching beyond our human-made boundaries as God calls us to be the Body of Christ in the world.

REV. DR. CATHERINE FAITH MACLEAN**Nominating Body**

Edmonton Presbytery (Alberta and Northwest Conference)

Biographical Statement

I am a theological pastor formed by CGIT and the New Curriculum, PEI summers and long novels, congregational rhythms of liturgy and experience, siblings and cousins laughing through stories of faith, and the nurturing of church and friends. My Dad was a minister in the Maritimes and Mum served with the church in Japan; Moderators and overseas personnel sat at our dining table. Currently, I am in a long-term pastorate with St. Paul's in Edmonton. I was ordained by the Maritime Conference and happily settled in the Restigouche Charge in northern New Brunswick. Calls took me to Yellowknife and Canmore, Alta. in the Rocky Mountains, before my present call.

My undergraduate degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax was in literature and languages. Harvard offered one of the few divinity schools with an interfaith setting in the 1980s, and I took courses offered by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a United Church of Canada professor of world religions with a specialty in Islam. His teaching that we must examine religious traditions, and for that matter, persons, in their most constructive form became thematic for my practice of ministry. Twenty years later, I received a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from McCormick in Chicago. My thesis explored the foundations of our faith: how what we believe gives rise to who we are, and shapes our action.

I have been listening and asking questions around and across the church. It is a privilege and a pleasure to accept invitations to listen and speak around the church, guest preaching from Whitehorse to the LaHave River in Nova Scotia, from Thunder Bay to Sherwood Park in Alberta, from Chalmers Kingston to Metropolitan Toronto, from Beaverlodge Alberta to an annual meeting of Toronto Conference. I've enjoyed offering keynote addresses for the AST Aitken Workshop on Preaching, *reVITALize: Practical Theology Now*, and Berwick Camp. Listening, I've been able to lead discussions about identity with ministers and leadership with university students and interfaith Pride. My recent writing has been published by *The Christian Century*, *Touchstone*, *These Days*, and *Gathering*. John H. Young and I wrote the book *Preaching the Big Questions: Doctrine Isn't Dusty*. I travelled the country to write the Trinity chapter in the upcoming textbook on United Church theology. I also had the pleasure of being a Guinness Book Official Witness for the Biggest Dodgeball Game in the World.

My wider church committee work includes General Council Theology and Faith, chairing the Edmonton Presbytery New Ministries Development Team, and planning reCall: Day Apart for Ministry Personnel in Alberta and Northwest Conference. I am president of the Canadian Theological Society, which hears and discusses emerging ideas annually during the Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences. I was one of the people who brought *A Song of Faith* and *A New Creed* into our Basis of Union alongside the *Twenty Articles of Doctrine*. I have attended

three General Council meetings, one as a Steward and twice as Commissioner, including Thunder Bay where we presented *A Song of Faith*, which I had a hand in writing.

Statement about the Church

The United Church of Canada is a small church with a big backyard. This image comes true to me as I have been listening around and across the church these many years. In the particularities of our geographic locations and spiritual experiences, we hold much in common—personnel, ethics, hymns—and we hold much in unique, local, and theological expressions of the United Church—language, mystical experiences, times of worship.

It is a deep pleasure to travel the church and discover what the unique expressions are. It is as though we are cousins in faith. Our action unites us, a common drive for justice, fairness, and joy. In these recent years of restructuring, we have maintained and—more than that—energized our commitments to right relations, intercultural identity, and worshipping with soul. Our drive for social justice and honest, trusting relationships has deepened and grown.

Much of our exciting action happens because of function: we see something that needs to be done, and we do it. We do it to right wrongs, to ask forgiveness, to make good things happen. As church, we make things happen. And there is a liminal space between seeing a need for action and thinking the faith. It is experience of the living God, and shared experience of the movement of the Spirit. Talking the walk is one of the great joys of our spiritual lives.

My question for the immediate future is one of motivation. As a small church with a big backyard, having restructured our home to make it more convenient—having mowed the lawn, so to speak, torn down the time-worn walls and reset the shrubs—what will keep us connected, keep us meeting neighbours, inspire us to open the doors and throw a ceilidh? Human energies wear thin, and we need the deep resources of Christ.

It's really a question of identity: a reflection on who we are, what we do, and who is our neighbour.

How big is our tent? Can Trinitarians and Unitarians share the same backyard? How do the understandings of the Creating God sit beside First Nations' understandings of the Creator? These are the kind of questions we have the opportunity to explore in upcoming years.

As Moderator, my spiritual leadership would be in good part asking: Why we are undertaking what we do, in whose name, and to benefit which neighbor? I am not interested in right doctrine. I am interested in robust conversations about the faith that underlies our work, and is the energy for our mission. Theological understandings change, and we benefit from leaning across our big backyard to ask how our cousins now understand our common life.

We will be coming to know each other differently in regions, and in Denominational Council. Questions of anxiety and isolation still loom, although we will have new judicatories in which to voice them. When I moved to Yellowknife, I wanted to figure out a way to get to know the

people upon whose land my church and home were built. I had studied languages, so I signed up to learn the local Dene language, Dogrib. During those winters under a sky full of northern lights, I learned about home and hospitality, and sharing stories in ways different from my own habits. As our many Regions in the United Church come to know each other differently, knowing how to set aside assumptions in order to love each other better—let alone work together—will take grace.

The world needs the church. It is not ours, it belongs to Christ, and that reassures me in the face of others' heartbreak and anxiety about resources, or property, or numbers. The world and our close neighbours need the beloved community of the church as allies, as partners, as friends. Friends seek to know one another more deeply. Here it is from A Song of Faith:

We sing of God's good news lived out,
 a church with purpose:
 faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
 gifts shared for the good of all,
 resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize, fierce love in the face of violence,
 human dignity defended,
 members of a community held and inspired by God,
 corrected and comforted,
 instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
 creation's mending.
 We sing of God's mission.

As a church with purpose, let's think about how we speak of ourselves—our identity—in these new days. How, for instance, are we facing what Linda Mercadante calls a “‘protest theology’ against an arid or distorted representation of God?”

The book *Preaching the Big Questions* came out of a theme address for Worship Matters. Difficult areas of life and theology are what John Young and I presented, and how those big questions can be discussed in sermons. People asked us to put the material into a book to serve the church. It has to do with talking the walk, and how talk informs where we walk and with whom. When we walk out of this big backyard, our neighbours ask us what we think about evil, or the concept of God, or why we bother with church when we can be good people without them. Bringing those questions into our daily life as a denomination is something I find fruitful, and I think it bears wide conversation.

As a spiritual leader in an Affirming Congregation, I am aware that our behaviour reflects concepts of God: the sacred among, within, and beyond us. I am aware that gentleness and public witness are both necessary. I am aware that public scrutiny leaves us vulnerable and courageous, rooted in tradition while singing a new song. We learn to love each other better, seeing and speaking the sacred among, within, and beyond us.

I am excited and honoured to be nominated to serve the United Church as Moderator. I hope my seasoned and proven leadership across the church will prove valuable as we share and enjoy this big backyard, our beloved community, in the present company of God, serving the world with insight and faith and love and joy.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

We are a small church with a big backyard. The ceilidh in the yard has changed, and we need to bring out more lawn chairs and talk about why we've been turning down the music.

We are perplexed about our broad theological scope. We have changed who we are with regard to closer and honest relations with Indigenous peoples and communities. We have put the rubber-on-the-road into our restructuring. We are expanding our intercultural identity. We use our fewer buildings differently. These changes make constructive differences. What are our theological underpinnings?

It is my practice to open up these conversations as I travel across the church in congregations, small groups, and conferences. I have discovered brooding over betrayal, forgiveness, concepts of God, and surplus property. These uncertainties merit spiritual attention.

The first time someone suggested I offer to serve as Moderator was 30 years ago. I have been seriously contemplating that call with church leaders since, and see that my commitment to theological pastoral leadership would be valuable now.

I am prepared to offer the spiritual leadership that quickens the heart with an awareness of the Divine, that quickens the mind with an openness to curious and constructive thought, and that quickens the community with a desire to draw closer rather than to divide.

I am prepared to lead. I am prepared to listen, pray, and initiate robust fresh conversations about how faith characterizes us and energizes mission. I am prepared to host theological gatherings across our backyard and pull up more chairs to the picnic table.

DR. COLIN PHILLIPS**Nominating Body**

Toronto South East Presbytery (Toronto Conference)

Biographical Statement

I am a native of London, ON. My faith journey began when, as a rebellious teenager, I announced one Friday night that I was going to White Oaks United on Sunday morning. We had been to worship once or twice in the previous 15 years. I stayed at White Oaks until I started university, studying social work at the University of Waterloo. Emmanuel United welcomed me into their fold for those four years.

When I finished my BSW and moved to Toronto to do a MSW, I had every intention of going “church shopping.” Trinity St. Paul’s was the first stop on my tour, and there never was a second. A beloved member of the congregation died rather suddenly last fall. I couldn’t quite grasp why I was absolutely heartbroken. The answer was simple: he was—they are—my family.

In 2009, I discerned a call to serve the national church, and was subsequently appointed Member-at-Large for Youth and Young Adults on the Executives of the 40th and 41st General Councils. My two cascading GCE appointments were to the Permanent Committee for Programs for Mission and Ministry and the General Secretary’s Supervision Committee. I was Commissioner to GC41.

In 2011, I began my doctorate in policy studies at Ryerson University. My dissertation contextualizes Toronto’s policies to address homelessness in an era of government cutbacks and a decreasing social safety net. In other words, I study how empire’s current insistence that the free market can solve the world’s most complex problems hurts the most marginalized amongst us. Today, I teach various courses on social policy and anti-oppressive practice in the School of Social Work at Ryerson. Being a part of a school that has put the journey towards decolonization at the core of everything it does has shaped how I teach and live on these lands. Decolonization is a process of learning, unlearning, and critical reflection. As I read the *Calls to the Church* from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, I am filled with hope for our ever-unfolding transformation towards being a decolonizing church.

I try, not always successfully, to remember that how I transverse this world is shaped by my many privileges. At the same time, my travels are accomplished in a wheelchair and I communicate with a computer, or word board, because I was born with cerebral palsy. When a significant other’s footprints are next to mine, they are those of another man’s. For me, my disability and my queerness are simply parts of the diversity that is God’s creation. They certainly inform how I see the world, but I have never felt called to make them a focus of my work. I see honouring this as an act of resistance.

Teaching and writing consume much of my time, but I treasure my escape to the gym and my subscriptions to the orchestra and the opera. Being “Uncle C” to a four- and two-year-old is the best job in the world.

Statement about the Church

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:44–47).

It is interesting to reflect on the earliest days of the church, as depicted in Acts, and to see them as both a reflection of where we are as the United Church today, and a blueprint for what we need to build. As it is with any community, those early folks had to deal with the questions of how they would be in the world—who would lead them, how would everything get done, and how would the community organize in a way that was true to Jesus’ teachings. These were all big questions, which were being answered amidst what must have been tremendous fear of an empire that was so threatened by their message that there were floggings, executions, and forced migration. Yet, despite all of this, there was an unflinching tenacity amongst them to keep on proclaiming the good news, to keep on healing, to keep on resisting. They could have given up, reason would argue that they probably should have, but they didn’t because they knew they couldn’t.

Today, we are also discerning how best to organize ourselves and complete the work that comes before us. Although our job in Oshawa, Ont. is to be the final eyes and hearts to look at decisions that have been made across the church, the heaviest lifting will come when we begin to live into these decisions in earnest. This will be a great deal of work that we all must attend to, bringing humility, our best listening skills, and a willingness to follow the Spirit wherever She may lead. There are undoubtedly people who ask, “why bother?” If this work were seen as an end unto itself, then *why bother* indeed. We know that this is not the case, though. As important as they are, these tasks only enable us to do our true work—the work we have no choice but to do.

Like we have since the earliest days, we are a church that lives surrounded by empire. Although the spread of liberal democracy has meant that Canadians can practice their faith without prosecution, the violence that empire perpetuates is as real as it was for Peter and John. Floggings have been replaced by paralyzing poverty. The modern guillotine is rising coastal waters, especially in the global south. Families are continually forced onto rickety boats, pawns in the latest geopolitical manoeuvres. Our brothers and sisters in the Latin American church see this modern violence as a denial of the very personhood of its victims. The work of the church—the work that we can’t help but to do—is being with the oppressed, dismantling the sources of violence, and unequivocally proclaiming that they are beloved children of God.

Now, none of this is earth shattering news to United Church folk. Indeed, putting forth a critique of empire that is rooted in our understanding of a loving and just God is one of our greatest strengths. There are also countless examples every week of how we care for children of God whose personhood has been denied. There is still a question before us, though: are we able to embrace the fact that the change we seek requires not just knowing God's will and individual acts of affirmation (as important as they are), but a willingness to be bold and stick our necks out to ensure that the Kingdom is realized? Are we willing to once again pick up that thread of unflinching tenacity that starts with the apostles, and runs through the Latin-American church and our own prairie heritage? I think we are.

The need to atone for our own complicity in empire and direct involvement in the genocidal colonial project, messaging from the broader society that our voice no longer matters, and concerns about how we will be in the world, have all meant that our voice has been diminished in the public square. The change we seek—the change God demands—means that this must change. It is time for us to reclaim evangelism, and actively disrupt its co-optation into a source of homophobia, patriarchy, and a rejection of the common good. True evangelism announces God's love for all, especially the poor, and sets out how to realize a commonwealth on earth.

Our renewed evangelism will take us to Parliament Hill and to Government House in Halifax, to contaminated soil in Grassy Narrows, and to tents of volunteers at the corner of Main and Hastings in Vancouver, who are just trying to keep their neighbours alive in the middle of a public health crisis. We will go into these spaces not as experts, but as partners who will tell stories of pain authentically, and visions of hope triumphantly. Our promise to our partners will be to stand with them humbly yet boldly, and with every ounce of our being.

An evangelical United Church that actively challenges the status quo will upset some. There will undoubtedly be cries for us to stick to charity and prayer, to accept things as they are, to deny the radicalness of God's love. Following the Christ who ate with prostitutes and tax collectors, and turned over tables in the temple, means that this passive voice simply isn't an option. Our message to the naysayers will simply be this: God needs us. This aching world needs us. Like those folks in Acts, empire will not deter us. A church that is tenacious in the public square is our calling. We have no choice but to answer.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

There are three priorities that I would like to address as Moderator.

First, the Moderator must create space for the decisions that we make at General Council to be lived into. We need to remember that expressions of ministry will be ending and we will be interacting with each other differently in the future. The most important thing that I can do is to simply listen to the unease, and remind us all that the Spirit is moving among us. However, I

also come with experience in governance and a PhD in Policy Studies, which will enable me to offer concrete and practical leadership.

Second, again, I believe that we must reclaim evangelicalism. This work would be a major focus for me, and I'm eager to share my ideas about it at General Council.

Finally, we must decolonize the church. Right relations can never truly happen until the assumptions, structures, and ethos that underpin the colonial project are dismantled. Decolonization is an opportunity to start anew and build a Body of Christ that authentically reflects all of God's children. Decolonization is not something that can be achieved through committees and reports alone. Rather, we must further the relationships that have been built over the decades and explore questions of power, privilege, and favouring one way of knowing over another. As Moderator, my role will be to ensure that these conversations happen constantly. Decolonization is not easy work, but, as with all of the possibilities that await this church in transition, the results will be life-giving in ways we don't yet know.

REV. WANDA STRIDE**Nominating Body**

Kawartha Highlands Presbytery (Bay of Quinte Conference)

Biographical Statement

Hello! It is an honourable place to be, spilling my life onto a page because I am letting my name stand for Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

As immediate past president of Bay of Quinte Conference, I expected to have a summer of leisure as my family and I regroup from a deeply rewarding year serving the church through Conference.

I am deeply humbled by this nomination—almost beyond words. What does it mean that some people think Christ is calling me to lead the church in our time? I can only wonder.

My experience in our church is not typical for this nomination. I work hard at presbytery and Conference. Since my ordination in 2009 from Toronto Conference, I have served the wonderful people of Woodville and Peniel Pastoral Charge in Kawartha Highlands Presbytery; this year they enter a regional team ministry agreement with three United Church neighbours.

I have supported students as they navigate the new Pathways to Ministry pilot, helped organize a roving-VBS in our presbytery, led intergenerational trips of solidarity with El Salvadoran global partners at Emmanuel Baptist Church. Nationally, I have written articles for denominational magazines, *The Observer* and *Mandate*, and served as a consultant for the EDGE network in central Ontario.

I have two main spiritual practices. I like to run and I'm helping to organize the Alvin Dixon Run this year, drawing from running two marathons and a handful of half-marathons.

My other passion is music. As a singer-songwriter, I had the privilege of playing piano in the GC42 band in Corner Brook, NL. I was also a commissioner from Bay of Quinte. It was a busy week! I provided music for the national event, More than Franchises 2012, in Toronto, and led or helped out with music and worship at Bay of Quinte Conference Annual Meeting over the past nine years. I have a solo CD of ministry-inspired music, and two CDs with a Celtic folk duo. I believe that we can find Christ's joy through artistic expression and passion. When we have that joy, anything is possible.

I felt the call to ministry in high school. Instead of entering theological college, a diverse foundation has enabled me to become a flexible, useful minister in small, rural congregations. While studying English and History at the University of Toronto, I wrote for *The Varsity* student newspaper, and became the unofficial religion reporter in 1988 and 1989, an important time in The United Church of Canada. I did French and English public relations for a hospital satellite

network, community newspaper reporting, and finally an eight-month stint as a political assistant at Queen's Park; a crooked path that inevitably led me back to the church.

I was music director at Trinity United in Cannington, Ont. and Stouffville United in Toronto Conference. It was at Stouffville where my life changed. My partner, John, and I married, had our two children (Catie, 19, and Sam, 17), and I finally explored the call to ministry. Sam was still in diapers when I started at Emmanuel College. Eventually, I was appointed to do student supply at Lemonville United for four years. I still live in Uxbridge, Ont. with John, Sam, and my mother Doris Stride. Catie is studying neuroscience at McGill University in Montreal.

Statement about the Church

In the Gospel of John, Jesus talks a lot about love and joy. One phrase from Chapter 15:11 resonates with me in this time of change; Jesus wants us to abide in his love, so that we receive his joy. Joy. It's a third-Sunday-of-Advent word that doesn't get much airplay when we talk about governance and restructuring. But this is Christ's wish for us.

As I traveled Bay of Quinte Conference this past year, I invited presbyteries to name their loves, their frustrations, and their concerns about our church today. Not surprisingly, a few common themes emerged:

- lament, from missing the days of bursting Sunday School programs to fearing the loss of presbytery, their connection to the larger church, and lament over our history of broken relationships with indigenous neighbours, and the Indian Residential School System;
- fear, that we are getting the restructuring wrong, and that we won't survive the changes;
- confusion about people's personal roles going forward.

While these voices of concern are loud, the most prominent and memorable theme that emerged, one that gives me hope, is one of joy: joy found in faith through the church, joy found in each other's presence, and most importantly, joy found in our love for the Christ who calls us to serve the marginal, the lonely, the hungry, in his name.

The changes we are facing are not just in governance. I am hearing faithful church members wonder, why is the distance between them and their secular neighbours growing? Why aren't younger generations coming to church? What is the meaning of being church today? How are we supposed to serve our neighbours when we are tired and so few in numbers?

These are powerful questions that come from the core of meaning and purpose, on a personal level, but also on a national church level.

These are questions that I can't answer in a statement about the church, but they are questions we can ask together, we can pray about, and we can trust in the spirit that guides us from those discussions. All the while, I believe Jesus is calling us through this chaos to a place of joy.

Please don't think I'm using this word lightly or in any trite way. Joy can only be felt when we feel respected, grounded, heard, and loved.

However, we move forward as a church, and whatever happens with remits this summer; whatever happens over the next three years as we face this almost-overwhelming challenge of living into the processes and offices and structures of our new way...however we do this, it must be done in respect for each other, grounded in our faith, in a spirit of listening to the voices that are normally quiet or missing, and to love in a radical and challenging way that lifts neighbour to the level of self.

When we care for each other in this way, we will know the joy of Christ. My friends, what a strong and relevant church we will be on that day!

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?"

While I hesitate to name priorities before General Council has come together, I believe there is an opportunity for us to frame all this work, energy, and commitment to the nuts and bolts of restructuring (if the remits pass), with a powerful pastoral presence. By that, I mean having an opportunity to support each other as we engage the internal work, all the while responding to the outward call of Christ.

I see a growing need for pastoral care on a national level. Over and over I've heard people say they want to belong to something that is larger than their own little church. They want to know that their own little church is relevant. They want to feel the comfort of tradition even as we face the challenges of today.

I would love to invite people into conversation: give people a platform both online, and through town hall, face-to-face encounters, where we can wrestle with our faith in a time of great change. Maybe we could do this through national Bible studies, or weekly devotional readings, that create space for artistic responses to sacred texts, to listen to the call of justice in these texts and see a way forward as Christ's body in our communities. I know my own passion is expressed through music, but what about you? Let's find a way forward together as a strong, faithful church, a reimagined United-Church-of-Canada-body-of-Christ.

REV. DR. MARTHA TER KUILE**Nominating Body**

Toronto South East Presbytery (Toronto Conference)

Biographical Statement

Born in Quebec City, I grew up in a large family, in Toronto and Montreal. Sunday school and youth choir and long midnight talks with friends laid the basis of a liberal faith. After studying music and African history at Victoria College, I began a career in international development. I worked for CIDA and the UN, living with my husband and children in Kenya, Ecuador, Nigeria, and later Guatemala, eventually returning to a farm in Ashton, near Ottawa. Through the travelling years, Cliff Elliott, a revered minister whom I knew from university days, would recommend books about faith, maintaining that thread of curiosity and reflection.

An M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Guelph led me to focus my work on agricultural research for developing countries. I became interested in institutional development and governance through serving on the boards of two international agricultural research centres, and have continued as a governance consultant in a number of institutional and system evaluations.

While on the farm, I reconnected with the United Church at Ashton United, a warm and open-hearted congregation, with a thoughtful minister. This experience of welcome stirred up a spiritual reawakening that took me by surprise. (And also led to a Life Membership in the UCW!) In 1992, I began preparation for ordained ministry with an M.Div. at Queen's University, and served wonderful congregations at Zion United Church, Apple Hill, ON, and Bells Corners United Church, Ottawa before moving to Bloor Street United in Toronto in 2007. Through those years, I continued part-time theological studies at Saint Paul University, University of Ottawa, with an MA in Christian Ethics, on the history of Christian ideas about poverty. In 2012, I completed a PhD in Theology at Saint Paul University. My dissertation developed a Christian Realist Virtue Ethics, based on Reinhold Niebuhr and Martha Nussbaum.

Since my ordination, I've been active in in the wider church, serving on the General Council executive from 2000 to 2009, where I chaired the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes. As a member of Toronto Southeast Presbytery, I have served as chair of the Pastoral Oversight Team 2009–2011, and Chair of Presbytery 2014–2016.

Reading is my main spiritual practice. Gardening restores my soul. In summer at the cottage, I like to swim and kayak and mess around in the woods with a machete. In town I walk a lot and go to concerts. I sing in an English and a Spanish choir.

I am blessed with three grown daughters and four beloved grandchildren. My husband Coenraad, a soil scientist of Dutch nationality, died in 2006.

Statement about the Church

Like every generation of Christians, we are called to discover what it means to follow Jesus in this time and place. To do that in a season of transition and transformation, we have to become good listeners and learners. We need to pay attention to the world around us: a world which is secular, and diverse, and crying out for justice. That is the world God loves.

It is in listening and learning that we will encounter the power for good that the Gospel promises. We can listen to Indigenous voices as we make the slow journey toward reconciliation with first peoples of this land. We can learn with others about social and environmental challenges to a flourishing planet, so that our work for justice is effective. We can learn, and keep on learning, lessons about the harm that racism, and ableism, and LGBTQ exclusion do to us and to our brothers and sisters. We can listen to the newcomer and youthful voices in our midst about different ways of being church. We can learn from people of other faiths about practicing faithfully when your neighbours think your religion is a bit weird. We can learn from our own rich traditions about a faith that is both ancient and always new.

This is a critical moment in the life of our church. We are facing a significant governance challenge with the restructuring—but not simply in the sense of belt tightening and new policies and committees and procedures. Even more important than the administrative details will be establishing the way we work together, as we live into the new structure with transparency, flexibility, and determination. We have to communicate well, and stay connected as we implement changes that will make us more nimble. And we may need to show some forbearance! The creation of the new Denominational Executive, the Regions, and the Office of Vocation will delight governance geeks, and I confess that I am one.

But governance isn't an end in itself. This restructuring is a kind of decluttering exercise. The point of it is to create more space and time and energy for what we are called to do and be. At a book study, someone said recently, *the church needs to be where the people are hurting*. And whether that is in our own pews, or in the neighbourhoods we live in, or in the public discourse, we want to be able to be there. As we worship God together, encourage one another, reach into our communities with compassion, advocate for justice, and share our faith, we need to be ready to act in ways that are both old and new. The new structure will help us do that.

I do think we are working our way toward a new way of being the church. The future hasn't been defined yet. There is plenty of scope for imagination and creativity, even when times are stressful. Looking around me at our beloved United Church, I believe that we have both more vitality and more freedom than we recognize. More compassion to offer, more hope to share. We need to dig down and find that vitality. We need to have the nerve to live out that freedom.

Writing this in the first days of spring, I think of what a plant needs, to flourish – first to be rooted deeply in the soil, drawing nutrients from the layers of earth beneath. And it also needs to be open to the air, and the sunshine, and the replenishing rain. As this season of transition and transformation unfolds, we in the church will need to be deeply rooted in the Holy Mystery

of God's love, and also open to the breezes and sunshine (and occasional shower!) of the Spirit as we go forward.

Each one of us will have a part to play over the next triennium, and all will make their contribution. It is a privilege to let the church consider my name as it discerns the next Moderator.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

The Moderator carries the pain and the joy of the church, as the church carries the pain and joy of the world. The main task of the Moderator is to love the people of the United Church: to pray with them; to befriend and encourage, and cajole when necessary; and to nurture the bonds that make us a *united* church.

The next Moderator will have to navigate the waters of unprecedented change in the United Church. In this triennium, marshalling the church's resources of faith and hope, as Moderator I would address these areas as priorities:

1. The changing church. We know we aren't what we used to be—a different church is emerging in the Canadian landscape and with partners around the world. We need to clarify our faith, finding new ways to explore and talk about the faith we have. We must commit to continuous reformation—on race, on gender, on ability, on class, on right relations—so that we walk our talk on diversity. We must raise our voice—offering insight, solidarity, and leadership in the public forum.
2. New structure. Serving as chair of the Denominational Council and Executive (and chief encourager of Regions and Office of Vocation!), the Moderator will play a key role in getting the wheels under our new structure.
3. Indigenous Church. Living into a different relationship with the Indigenous Church, this Moderator will establish the listening tone and respectful mutuality as we learn the new path together.

REV. DONALEE WILLIAMS**Nominating Body**

Yellowhead Presbytery (Alberta and Northwest Conference)

Biographical Statement

I am nine years old, upstairs in the manse where my Dad has his office. It's bulletin day. I am transfixed by the rhythmic sound of the hand-cranked Gestetner (old-school copier technology), smelling the tang of the ink smeared on his hands, and so wanting to be part of it, hoping I will be asked to fold them. Weaving through the mechanical noises, the sound of my mother's music from downstairs: a piano student, or the

Junior Choir anthem we would soon practise for Sunday.

Who am I? Essentially, I am a storyteller, whether in writing, or speaking, or singing. Becoming a candidate for Moderator is definitely an unexpected twist in my story. But what a great opportunity to look backwards and forwards with faith!

At an early age I experienced church and belonging rooted in incarnation and delight. A daughter and granddaughter of ministers, daughter of a music teacher, and sometime choir director, a child of the manse, mostly in small-town southern Ontario, descendant of Scots and German immigrants, I was born into, and nurtured by, God and music and church—initially the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB), which became part of The United Church of Canada in 1968.

School, church, and music wove through my teenaged life. On my bedroom wall, a poster: "Be patient. God isn't finished with me yet." Then university, marriage, career, and much less time for church.

Baptism drew me back to regular attendance in my early 30s. My spouse, Ian, and I were expecting a baby. However, it was in exploring the meaning of my baptism in the following 15 years that I discerned a call to ministry, went back to school, left a career in radio news broadcasting, was ordained, and settled, and moved with Ian and our son, Gavin, from Mississauga, Ont., to Fort McMurray, AB. And I discovered God's call is more persistent and expansive and liberating than I could imagine.

In ministry at Fort McMurray First United Church since 2010, I have discovered joy and beauty and delight, lament and challenge. God sent me here to love, and I have been stretched by the Spirit in ways I never imagined—learning to love others, creation, God, and myself. The 2016 wildfire was one of those stretching experiences. In evacuation, exile, and return, we learned about terror and trauma, and about overflowing and abundant care and concern from family, friend, and stranger. The words of our Creed, "We are not alone," were written on my heart as never before.

With my congregation I have worshiped in many and lively ways. Highlights include creating “pig swill” for a Messy Church exploration of the prodigal son, a pet blessing service that included a hedgehog, and the experience of grace in countless ways. Preaching is a deep joy of my vocation and also a strong element of my worship services. I took on a leadership role in the theologically diverse Wednesday Team at the local Baptist church soup kitchen. I have explored generous, inter-faith partnership as a founding member of the Collaboration for Religious Inclusion. Volunteering at the Golden Years Society by leading the enthusiastic G.Y.S. Singers has been a delight. I have been nurtured and given opportunities to serve in Yellowhead Presbytery and Alberta and Northwest Conference. I have been privileged to serve as a commissioner to GC41 and GC42, as the ANWC-ordered representative to the General Council Executive, on the national Nominations Committee, and as a facilitator for the Comprehensive Review.

For me, ministry is richest when I participate in ongoing traditions of service as well as open myself and others to explore something new together. I am doing theological reflection all the time in ministry, whether I’m showing up for interfaith events, reading pages of reports for General Council meetings, up to my elbows in “pig swill” at Messy Church, preparing sermons, creating puppet personalities for children’s time, or looking for the growing edge of God’s grace within me. For me, ministry is a combination of serious work and intentional play. And sometimes, serious work alone won’t get you there!

In all these stories, I have known joy, delight, and laughter amid the hard work and challenge, love and hope as a leader in this United Church of ours, and this world that God so loves.

Statement about the Church

The breath of life, the breath of creation, the breath of the Spirit: natural, intuitive, gift of joy and delight.

Babies know it; we see it in their belly breathing, and perhaps wonder when we stopped breathing that way.

The first singing lessons I took were both exciting and frustrating when it seemed my breath control had disappeared. However, I began to discover this was learning and re-claiming another way of breathing.

In these days of change, both recent, structural change, and decades of societal change, The United Church of Canada has an opportunity to discover, learn, and re-claim another way of breathing.

When was the last time you laughed, or played, or danced, or had fun in church? As well as praise and lament, and finding that quiet centre, surely these things also have a place when we gather as followers of Jesus who are Spirit-blown into the world, of which we are a part, into God who births all things and who, amazingly and wonderfully, desires to know and be known.

I wonder how the United Church could engage intentional delight and play as a spiritual discipline. In Proverbs 8:30-31, Wisdom, the first act of creation, remembers being beside God like a master worker, or perhaps a darling child, being daily God's delight, rejoicing before God always, rejoicing in God's inhabited world, and delighting in the human race. I wonder how worship and work and intentional delight could be one.

Justice can also be rooted in Divine Delight. Delight-rooted justice bears the hope of reconciliation, sometimes as a twinkle in the eye, or as a banked hearth. Delight-rooted justice rolls up the sleeves, refusing to look, or turn away from, the hard work to which God calls us: continuing to live ever more deeply into right relationships, including the TRC Calls to Actions for the churches, digging into the work of being intercultural beyond the surface, getting into the messy work of ensuring our structure, our actions, and our words reflect our commitment to justice; engaging in awkward and courageous conversations about privilege: White privilege, male privilege, straight privilege, able-bodied privilege—those privileges that some of us can easily fail to examine, and that some of us are all too aware.

If approved, the restructuring of the United Church will eliminate presbyteries and Conferences. Even though it still will be "us" in the new governance model, we will be "us" in an unfamiliar way. And I wonder if we could think of ourselves as a church experiencing trauma. Many of the stories of our faith forbearers are rooted in trauma, including the great flood, the exile in Babylon and the return home, the death of Jesus, the birth and expansion of the early church. Scripture gifts us with stories of our faith ancestors who experienced being led, accompanied, and recreated by a faithful and loving God, the resurrected Christ, and the enlivening Spirit.

In the post-trauma reality after the Fort McMurray wildfire, one of the most important tools for recovery was breathing. When memories of trauma are triggered, being mindfully connected to breath helps to root us in the present.

In trauma, individuals respond in different ways, including paralysis, super-activity, denial, and anxiety. I wonder if we, as church, can see these responses in ourselves. What if we engaged this change as a new way of breathing? I wonder how we can perceive and live out the Spirit who is beginning to breathe us in a different way.

The Rev. Diane Strickland, a specialist in post-trauma work, has journeyed with Fort McMurray First United Church for the past two years, funded by the outpouring of generosity from our United Church family. And I lift up this wisdom she has often shared as wisdom for our church: after trauma, there are things you will never be able to do again. And there are also things you will be able to do that you never thought you could.

In experiencing trauma I have learned more than I ever thought I could: about the One who grounds me; about how laughter can suddenly sweep into the breathless gap of terror; about how a scattered community can hold on to one another and be held by an even wider community; about how, whether or not I become Moderator, I really know how to play.

I believe The United Church of Canada, as it has been so many times in our history, is on the edge of possibility that is filled with promise, justice, new life, joy, and delight.

Statement about Priorities and Leadership

Question: What priorities would you name for your time as Moderator, and how do you envision offering leadership in these areas?

I believe nourishing and practicing Holy Delight is a priority for The United Church of Canada in this time of change that can be traumatic, and that can tempt us to hunker down and focus on survival. In Proverbs 8, Wisdom speaks of herself as God's first creation who works and plays with the Creator and "is daily God's delight." As Moderator, I would call the entire church into a daily spiritual practice of exploring how we delight in God and how God delights in us. And, affirming Wisdom's call at the crossroads, I would also call the church to a spiritual practice of daily repentance: to seek, in joyful humility, the myriad ways of justice that is God's delight. I would encourage us to share and connect through these stories, which I believe can lead to healing, trauma recovery, reconciliation, and a recognition of abundance that our church needs.

I would also prioritize living into the Caretakers' Calls to the Church, UNDRIP, and the TRC recommendations to the churches, as well as awkward conversations about privilege (White, male, settler, straight, able-bodied) in our church. I would encourage these steps and these conversations in every community of faith and circle of governance to engage individual and systemic privilege, which I see as "sin that clings so closely" (Hebrews 12:1).

I believe we must engage this challenging work with joyful and faithful persistence that is mindful to the delighting and delightful Spirit who shows up in the most unexpected ways.

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Minutes of the 43rd General Council, 2018

Saturday, July 21, 2018

The 43rd General Council 2018 of The United Church of Canada met from 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, 2018 to 9:00 p.m. Friday, July 27, 2018. The meeting was held at Durham College/University of Ontario Institute of Technology, in Oshawa, Ontario. The Moderator, The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell, presided.

A concurrent Festival of Faith was held from Saturday to Friday, including evening events.

Welcome and Orientation

The Moderator welcomed all gathered for the meeting. She thanked Cathie Cunningham and Adrian Jacobs, who, earlier in the day had welcomed Commissioners, staff and guests to the traditional land on whose territory the meeting was held: the Anishinabek, the Huron-Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. The Moderator reported that she had offered tobacco in thanks to Cathie and Adrian.

Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker of All Native Circle Conference and Bill Smith, Executive Secretary of Bay of Quinte Conference, welcomed those gathered and introduced members of the hosting Conferences.

Cathie Cunningham, Kimberly Heath, Randy McNally, and Lawrence Moore brought greetings from the hosting groups, outlined some of the logistics for the meeting, and introduced members of the various working groups. Allan Buckingham, Business Coordinator, outlined how the online workbook will work during the meeting.

The Moderator invited Cathie Cunningham and Adrian Jacobs to share the teachings they had offered earlier in the day. Adrian brought greetings in three languages. He spoke of wampum belts and the associated teachings, reminding Commissioners of the obligation to fulfill the agreements made with treaty people to live in peace, respect, and right relations.

Mayor John Henry was introduced and brought a warm welcome from the city of Oshawa.

Peter Garrett, from the Office of the President of Durham College, welcomed the 43rd General Council to Durham College/University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa.

Larry Doyle, chair of the 43rd General Council Planning Committee, welcomed Commissioners and thanked the members of the planning committee.

Allan Buckingham outlined the three-phase process for business at this meeting:

- listening sessions (learning more about particular proposals);
- discussion sessions (time to digest, discuss and share what was heard in each listening session regarding the proposals); and

- decision-making times.

An orientation to electronic voting was led by Bev Oag, a member of the 43rd General Council Planning Committee.

Plenary Listening Session: Calls to the Church

Lee Claus, Janet Sigurdson, Russel Burns, and Lawrence Sankey, members of the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle, introduced “The Calls to the Church from The Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle” report and shared a video, “A New Future.”

Each shared personal stories of their journey, while acknowledging with respect and gratitude the journeys taken by those who have passed and those who are survivors of residential schools.

In closing, they thanked the church for listening and travelling on the path of reconciliation. The church was invited to continue to love the Creator God and to walk in humility, kindness, and justice.

The Moderator invited questions for clarification.

Lee Claus closed in prayer.

The Moderator thanked Lee, Lawrence, Russel, and Janet for their presentation.

Sunday, July 22, 2018

The day began with a Sacred Fire Ceremony led by Evan Smith and Cliff Standingready at Lakeview Park in downtown Oshawa.

The Alvin Dixon Memorial Run and Walk took place onsite, raising \$10,567.31 for the Alvin Dixon Memorial Bursary Fund, which supports initiatives that focus on multi-year academic education programs for Indigenous students.

Opening Worship

The 43rd General Council opened with Elder Grafton Antone leading worship with the Indigenous Edge of the Woods ceremony.

The Moderator offered thanks for the three wampums that had been offered—representing wiping the eyes, cleansing the mouth, and opening the ears—and acknowledged being welcomed to the land.

The scripture readings were from the Book of Mark. Miriam Spies preached the sermon, “You Feed Them.” The Storytellers were Cathie Cunningham (Indigenous Storyteller), Adele Halliday

(Intercultural Storyteller), Nancy Sutherland (Women Storyteller), Nick Philips (Conservative Storyteller), David Giuliano (Peace Storyteller), Aaron Miechkota (LGBTQ Storyteller), and Mathew Drabble (Youth/Child Storyteller).

The Moderator presided over communion, assisted by Elder Grafton Antone.

Listening Session

Listening sessions on the following themes were held from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.:

- Governance
- Ministry Personnel
- Right Relations

Constitution of the Court

At the beginning of the afternoon business session the Moderator constituted the General Council with the following words:

“Au nom de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l’Église, et par l’autorité qui m’a été conférée par le 42^{ème} Conseil général 2015, I hereby declare this meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018 to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it to the glory of God.”

GS 01 OPENING PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle

GC43 2018-01

Bounds of Council

That the bounds of the plenary for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Gymnasiums 3, 4, and 5 in the Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre College of Durham College and University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Oshawa, Ontario, excluding the visitor seating and unnumbered tables.

Corresponding Members

That the following persons who are in attendance be corresponding members of the 43rd General Council 2018 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 43rd General Council 2018;
- Youth Forum participants who are not Commissioners;
- Participants of the Children and Young Teens;
- 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 Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker.

Resource People**Business Committee Membership**

- Allan Buckingham, Chair
- Jordan Cantwell, Moderator
- Larry Doyle, Chair, General Council Planning Committee
- Nora Sanders, General Secretary, General Council
- Shannon McCarthy, Executive Secretary, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- David Allen, Remit Implementation Project Leader
- Cynthia Gunn, Legal/Judicial Counsel
- Bev Kostichuk, Chair, Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda

Friends in Council

That the Friends in Council for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Lawrence Moore, Cathie Cunningham, Cheryl Jourdain, Ryan McNally, Kim Heath, and Bill Smith.

Scrutineers

That the Scrutineers for the 43rd General Council 2018 be:

- Norma Thompson, Chief Scrutineer
- Wendy Lowden
- Patti Rodgers
- Heather Leffler
- Charles McMillan
- Laurie O'Leary
- Robert Hayes
- Paul Wright

Facilitation Group

That the Facilitation Group for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Marion Best, Hewitt Holmes, Jamie Scott, Betty Kelly, and Carmen Lansdowne.

Business before the 43rd General Council 2018

That the reports and proposals provided in the Workbook (online and including additions and updates), along with any change pages, and any new business received by the deadline for new business, be received for consideration by the 43rd General Council 2018.

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. *Listening phase:* Information sessions will inform Commissioners about the issues on the agenda. This continues the listening phase that began prior to the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018. Information sessions may be held in plenary or concurrently in breakout rooms, with Commissioners choosing which listening sessions to attend.
2. *Discussion phase:* Commissioners and corresponding members who are seated at table groups will meet in discussion groups with a pre-named chair/host and a note-taker. 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. Note-takers record comments, affirmations, and suggestions, and the discussion groups confirm the information to be recorded and shared. Reports from all discussion groups are available for viewing by the entire court and the Facilitation Group.
3. *Decision-making phase:* The Facilitation Group's refined proposals are made available to the court. There is final debate and refinement of the proposal in plenary, with the Facilitation Group returning to do more refinement as necessary. The process concludes with a motion in response to the proposal and a vote on the motion.

During the decision-making phase in plenary, the Moderator will apply the Rules of Debate and Order (*The Manual Appendix*).

Speakers will:

- Speak from designated microphones in the court;
- Be recognized by the Moderator prior to speaking;
- Begin comments by identifying themselves by name, role, and Conference (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 floor microphone to raise a point of order, that is to raise a specific question of procedure with the Moderator;
- Use the floor microphones to raise points of personal privilege, which will be understood to be limited to comments noting that the individual raising the point has been insulted or maligned in the current debate.

Note: General concerns about the meeting (inability to hear, temperature of the room, 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 43rd General Council 2018 will be assigned based on the priorities named by Commissioners of the 43rd General Council 2018 as determined through consultation in advance of the meeting. Proposals will be reviewed and grouped by theme/issue. The top 10 proposal themes/issues named by them will serve as the priority agenda for the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018. 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 an Omnibus or Consent Motion

The 43rd General Council 2018 will adopt the following procedure in the event that a Commissioner desires that a proposal be withdrawn from an omnibus or 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, indicating the piece of business they wish to have removed in its stead.
2. The request will be granted only if a majority of Commissioners vote in favour of it.
3. If an item of business is removed from an omnibus or consent motion, the Moderator will direct the Business Committee to find a place for the work consistent with the request.

New Business

All 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 recommendations for incorporation into the agenda for the decision of the court.

Items of new business will not be ordered on a first come-first presented basis, but with preference to items:

- a. arising unexpectedly in response to the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018;
- b. arising in response to global or national matters that occur during the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018; and
- c. as determined by the court on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

New business that cannot be dealt with by the General Council 2018 due to time limitations 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 43rd Moderator of The United Church of Canada:

1. Nominations may be made from the floor until 4:20 p.m. on Sunday, July 22, 2018. There must be a mover and a seconder, and the nominee must indicate willingness to stand for election. The Moderator will call for any further nominations just before the official close of nominations.

2. Nominations from the floor of the 43rd General Council 2018 will be declared closed at 4:20 pm on Sunday, July 22, 2018.
3. The nominees will be introduced to the 43rd General Council 2018 and presented with their nominee stoles before the supper break on Sunday, July 22, 2018.
4. Nominees will address the 43rd General Council 2018, individually, on Monday, July 23, 2018.
5. Voting will be by ballot and take place on Thursday, July 26, 2018.
6. Anyone who receives 50% plus one of the votes cast will be declared elected as the new Moderator.
7. If there are ten or more names on the ballot, the four with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are seven, eight, or nine names on the ballot, the three with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are five or six names on the ballot, the two with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are four or fewer names on the ballot, the one with the lowest number of votes will be released from subsequent ballots.
8. When there are four or more names on the ballot and there is a tie in the number of votes cast for the candidates with the lowest number of votes in their favour as set out in the preceding paragraph, the candidates who are tied will be released from subsequent ballots. This could mean that more candidates are released from a ballot than as specified in the preceding paragraph.
9. Voting on any ballot with more than ten names will be done by paper ballot. Voting on ballots with ten or fewer names will be done by electronic ballot.
10. Announcements of the results of the ballots will take place at times determined by the Moderator with advice from the Business Committee.
11. Tallies of votes will not be announced.

Minutes of the 42nd General Council 2015

That the minutes of the 42nd General Council 2015 be approved.

Minute Secretary

That the Minute Secretary for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Susan Fortner.

Reports

That the 43rd General Council 2018 accept the accountability report of the Executive of the General Council.

That the 43rd General Council 2018 receive for information the following reports:

- Moderator's Accountability Report
- Moderator's Advisory Committee Report
- General Secretary's Accountability Report
- Report from the Remit Implementation Task Group
- Aboriginal Ministries Council Accountability Report
- Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle Report

- Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools Report
- United Nations Declaration Task Group Report
- Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Accountability Report
- Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships Report
- Manual Committee Report
- Nominations Committee Report
- General Council Judicial Committee Report
- Conference Records Review 2012-2015
- Archives and History Committee Report
- Report on the Full Communion with the Disciples of Christ
- Faithful Decision Making on Social Justice Issues
- Audit Committee Report
- Report of the Boundaries Commission
- UCW Report
- Newfoundland and Labrador Conference Report
- Maritime Conference Report
- Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference
- Bay of Quinte Conference Report
- Toronto Conference Report
- Hamilton Conference Report
- London Conference Report
- Manitou Conference Report
- All Native Circle Conference Report
- Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Report
- Saskatchewan Conference Report
- Alberta and Northwest Conference Report
- British Columbia Conference Report
- The United Church Foundation Report
- Rulings and Opinions of The General Secretary, General Council – July 2015 to June 2018
- Minutes of the Executive of the General Council – June 2015 to June 2018 (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 43rd General Council 2018 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 43rd General Council 2018, 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.

Carried

AMC1/GCE1 CARETAKERS REPORT: CALLS TO THE CHURCH

Norm Seli and Maggie Dieter provided background on the proposal *AMC1/GCE1 Caretakers Report: Calls to the Church*, emphasizing that this was an opportunity for the Indigenous church and the settler church to model for the whole country how to move into new relationships and move forward in reconciliation.

Motion: Russ Burns/Janet Sigurdson**GC43 2018-02**

That the 43rd General Council receive the report of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, discuss it to ensure that it is understood and embraced, and approve it for implementation.

Carried**AMC 02 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALLS TO THE CHURCH****Motion: Russ Burns/Janet Sigurdson****GC43 2018-03**

That the 43rd General Council receive with approval the *Calls to the Church*, and

- a) Endorse and commit The United Church of Canada to the *Calls to the Church*, named in the report of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, and authorize and direct the following steps towards fulfilling these Calls:
 - a. Approve the creation of a National Indigenous Elders Council (Elders Council) to provide spiritual advice to the Denominational Council; Denominational Executive; Indigenous Organization; National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering; Regional Councils; Office of Vocation; and Working Groups of the Church, as capacity allows:
 - i. The Moderator may call upon this Council from time to time for advice and guidance.
 - ii. The National Indigenous Elders Council will consist of eight (8) members that will reflect an equitable representation from across Canada and will include the urban Indigenous and LGBTQ2 Spirit Communities;
 - iii. Indigenous Communities of Faith will lift up Elders they know to be suitable for this work, including Elders who follow traditional Indigenous spiritual paths as well as Elders who identify themselves as Christian.
 - iv. The Elders Council will meet face-to-face during its formation to develop protocols, build relationships, and deepen their knowledge of the mission and ministry of the church and the vision for the Indigenous Church. There will be one face-to-face meeting per year, thereafter.
 - b. Approve the creation of a National Indigenous Organization, which will be a decision making body which will:
 - v. Receive spiritual direction on matters of ministry and mission from the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering and the National Indigenous Elders Council;
 - vi. Provide presence and voice to the Denominational Council, its Executive, Regional Councils, and the Office of Vocation;
 - vii. Have responsibility for decision-making on matters of Indigenous Real Property; Stewardship, including Mission Support Granting to all Indigenous Communities of Faith; Healing Fund; Youth and Congregational Support and

- development; Provide oversight of Leadership/Congregational Development Funds;
- viii. Glean best practices from the rich history of the All Native Circle Conference, Ontario-Quebec Native Ministries, and British Columbia Native Ministries;
 - ix. Consist of representatives from the National Elders Council, youth, strategic thinkers, knowledge keepers, and carriers of history; urban Indigenous and LGBTQ2 Spirit communities, for a total of 8-10 members;
 - x. Meet face-to-face once each year;
 - xi. Provide guidance to the Indigenous Justice Working Group;
 - xii. Promote and honour local protocols (as determined by the local Communities of Faith) and will honour Elders;
 - xiii. Develop and implement strong communications strategies and resources necessary to accomplish the work of a National Indigenous Organization;
 - xiv. Provide continued opportunities for the gathering, working together, and supportive work of all the Indigenous faith communities in the United Church. The following gatherings will honour the cultural and linguistic regions of the Indigenous communities and support a national network of urban Indigenous ministries:
 1. A National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering to be held every three (3) years, with the first National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering to be held in August 2019 at the Geneva Park Convention Centre, the traditional territories of the Williams Treaties (Orillia, ON) to mark the inauguration of the new National Indigenous Organization;
 2. Cluster gatherings to provide continued opportunities for local networking, discussion, common issues of concern, fellowship, and collaboration;
 3. A national network of urban Indigenous ministries.
 - xv. Work in collaboration with other parts of the church to strengthen relationships between the Indigenous communities of faith and the wider Church through Indigenous representation in the areas of education of all United Church personnel, including Indigenous history, culture, and contemporary issues; groups who look to strengthen relations with Indigenous Communities of Faith; and reignite the spiritual, cultural, holistic, and healing renewal of the whole church.
 - c. Authorize the Indigenous members of the current Aboriginal Ministries Council to serve as the National Indigenous Council until such time as the new organization is established, which shall be no later than August 2019.
 - d. Authorize and direct the General Secretary, working with the National Indigenous Council, the Executive of the Denominational Council, and the Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries, to support and facilitate such further steps as may be needed to implement the *Calls to the Church*.

Carried

GS 02 ENACTING REMITS AUTHORIZED BY THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL 2015

Nora Sanders provided a brief summary on the actions taken following the approval of decisions made at the 42nd General Council, Corner Brook requiring remits. She noted that the majority of congregations and presbyteries approved the remits.

Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle

That the 43rd General Council enact the following remits authorized by the 42nd General Council 2015, all of which have been approved by a majority of the presbyteries and pastoral charges [Remits 1, 2, 3, and 4] or a majority of the presbyteries [Remits 5, 7, and 8]:

Remit 1: Three Council Model

Remit 2: Elimination of Transfer and Settlement

Remit 3: Office of Vocation

Remit 4: Funding a New Model

Remit 5: Mutual Recognition of Ministry

Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway

Remit 8: Towards a New Model of Membership

Paul Reed asked that the court be given 10 minutes to discuss *GS 02 Enacting Remits Authorized by the 42nd General Council 2015* in table groups.

Order of the Day: The Moderator asked if there were any further nominations for Moderator. As there were not, she declared nominations closed.

The table groups took 10 minutes to discuss the motion to accept the remits.

Penny Nelson requested that the motion be dealt with *seriatim* (one item at a time).

Remit 1: Three Council Model**Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-04**

Concerns were raised regarding regional representation on the Denominational Executive. Clarification was given that this General Council could not change the number of representatives on the Denominational Council Executive to exceed the number (maximum 18 including Moderator, Past Moderator, and General Secretary) without requiring a further remit process.

Motion: Elizabeth Morrison/Richard Choe

To postpone definitely to later in this meeting, the vote on Remit 1.

Defeated

Original motion as moved

Carried

Remit 2: Elimination of Transfer and Settlement**Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-05****Carried****Remit 3: Office of Vocation****Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-06****Carried****Remit 4: Funding a New Model****Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-07****Carried****Remit 5: Mutual Recognition of Ministry****Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-08****Carried****Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway****Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-09****Carried****Remit 8: Towards a New Model of Membership****Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-10****Carried**

The Moderator offered a prayer.

Paul Douglas Walfall, Intercultural Observer, raised the point that the previous motion will have put some people out of a job and that those people should be thanked for their hard work and sacrifice. A round of applause followed.

GS 03 CONSENT MOTION**Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-11**

That the 43rd General Council 2018 approve the following in response to the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council (Denominational Council) to ensure that such actions are taken as outlined below:

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
ANW 01 - Adding Line Numbers to <i>A Song of Faith</i> Section 2.6 (Basis of Union) Edit the Basis of Union by adding line numbers in the margin of Section 2.6 "A Song of Faith" in future	Considered an edit to <i>The Manual</i> . The language was changed to reflect as much.

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
editions of <i>The Manual</i> , so as to increase its usability in devotional and instructional applications.	
ANW 05 - Language in The Manual Adopt the principles of clarity and simplicity of language to guide the writing of all future editions of <i>The Manual</i> .	Responds to the desire for easy to understand language in <i>The Manual</i> while recognizing that some words of Latin origin are used in a legal context and are part of the English language.
BC 07 - Assessments for Ecumenical Shared Ministries Affirm the principle that there be a reasonable and equitable assessment for ecumenical shared ministries, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of how pastoral charges that are ecumenical shared ministries are presently assessed by all their judicatories, and • clear communication of all assessment procedures. 	Changed to clarify the original language. Considered a worthwhile consideration in determining assessments.
BQ 07 - Fairness in the New Funding Assessment Affirm that money given by individual communities of faith towards significant capital projects is not assessed in the new funding assessment model.	No change. This is already an aspect of the assessment formula.
BQ 09 - Not Limiting Grant Applications to One per Pastoral Charge Initiate a review of all available grants and change the granting criteria to limit the number of applications to one per community of faith instead of one per pastoral charge.	No change. Considered a reasonable request as our structures are changing.
GCE 02 - G&A 27 Three Council Model Governance Requirements Approve the policies set out in the appendix to GCE 02, for each of the three councils.	No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.
GCE 03 - G&A 29 Conflict of Interest Policy Approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy appended to GCE 03.	No change. Update to existing policy.
GCE 04 - G&A 30 Nominations Committee, Mandate and Membership Approve the mandate, responsibilities, membership and terms of appointment of the Nominations Committee as outlined below: Mandate	Addition to the list under responsibility number 4 of the churches commitment to ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of our identity. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
<p>The Nominations Committee recommends appointments for the Denominational Executive, and other committees, boards, task groups, or United Church representatives, as requested by the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary.</p> <p>Responsibilities The Nominations Committee is responsible for reviewing nominations and submitting to the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary, as appropriate, recommendations for appointment. In carrying out this responsibility, the committee will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reflect theologically on the basis for appointed member participation in the church 2. discern who is equipped to serve 3. develop and test processes for selecting individuals and developing effective groups 4. strive to meet the church’s commitments to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becoming an intercultural church • the full inclusion of people with disabilities • ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of our identity • developing new and young leadership • the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • any future commitments regarding the appointed leadership of the United Church <p>Members of the Nominations Committee will actively seek out and encourage nominations from across the diversity of the church and its geographic regions.</p> <p>Membership The Nominations Committee will consist of eight members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two members of the Executive • six members of the United Church not serving on the Executive 	

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
<p>The composition of the Nominations Committee will reflect the intercultural church.</p> <p>The members and chair of the Nominations Committee will be appointed by the Denominational Council. Vacancies on the committee may be filled by the Executive until the next meeting of the Denominational Council.</p> <p>For the Nominations Committee that will serve from July 2018 to July 2021, the two members of the Executive will be from those appointed to the incoming Executive (2019–2021). Members will be appointed by the 43rd General Council.</p> <p>Terms of Appointment Members will serve for a term of three years, corresponding with the term of each Denominational Council, with the possibility of reappointment for a second term.</p> <p>Meetings The Nominations Committee will meet as needed, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the committee may meet in person.</p>	
<p>GCE 05 - G&A 31 Judicial Committee Membership Approve the actions outlined in GCE 05.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 08 – GS 84 Remit Related Revisions to the Basis of Union Approve the revisions to the Basis of Union appended to GCE 08.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 09 - MEPS 25 Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board Approve the recommendations in GCE 09.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 10 - MEPS 27 Policy Change Ministry Positions Accountable to the Governing Body</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Change the Lay Ministry policy of the United Church, such that members of the order of ministry may not be appointed to positions “accountable to the governing body rather than 	<p>No change. Clarifying the policy for Filling Positions Accountable to the Governing Body, found in <i>The Manual</i> at section I.1.8.3.</p>

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
<p>the presbytery,” resulting in policy that serves rather than conflicts the church; and</p> <p>2) Remove section I.1.8.3 (a) from <i>The Manual</i>.</p>	
<p>GCE 11 - MEPS 30 New Pastoral Relations Covenant Policy</p> <p>Make the policy changes to allow for a new pastoral relations covenant policy and process as outlined in GCE 11.</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 13 - PMM 15 Iridesce the Living Apology Project</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recommit The United Church of Canada to the full inclusion of all people. 2) Extend The Living Apology Project, to report to the spring 2020 meeting of the Executive of the General Council 3) Request the Executive / General Secretary to appoint a group to work with the outcomes of The Living Apology Project, to offer an apology to the LGBTQ2+ community at the Denominational Council in 2021 4) Reaffirm the church's endorsement of the Affirming Ministries Program and invites all communities of faith to participate. 5) Direct the General Secretary, General Council to develop resources for ministers, church leadership, and the wider church in their ministry with LGBTQ2+ communities that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. offer pastoral care b. create opportunities for healing and reconciliation c. demonstrate respectful engagement in conflict/disagreement 	<p>No change.</p> <p>Continuation of the project initiated by GC42 2015-060.</p>
<p>GCE 15 - PMM 18 LGBTQ+ Communities and Human Rights</p> <p>Affirm a commitment to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Naming LGBTQI2+ Solidarity and Human Rights solidarity as a key component of the Global and Canadian Partnership Program of The United Church of Canada, 2) Affirming The United Church of Canada participation in and support of the Dignity Network, a network of organizations and individuals from across Canada that encourage 	<p>No change.</p> <p>Affirming our continued support of this work as requested by our Partner Council.</p>

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
<p>a stronger Canadian voice on human rights issues facing LGBTQI2+ communities around the world. The initiative has the twin objectives of strengthening solidarity work by Canadian civil society groups and Canada's foreign policy commitment to the realization of human rights for LGBTQI2+ people internationally. (See: www.dignityinitiative.ca/en/)</p> <p>3) Supporting Aboriginal Ministries Circle and Council in their work towards full inclusion and support work towards an Indigenous Two Spirit consultation within Aboriginal Ministries</p> <p>4) Paying particular attention to supporting Migrant Church communities on their journey of full inclusion</p>	
<p>GS 04 - The United Church of Canada Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request Parliament and provincial legislatures to make the legislative changes to their respective acts that are necessary to reflect the three-council restructuring. • Declare and affirm that, during the interim period until the revisions to the Acts are all in effect, the regional council is the successor to the presbytery and performs all functions of the presbytery with respect to the Model Trust Deed and property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council. 	<p>No change. Request needed to move forward with the structural changes.</p>
<p>GS 05 - Regional Council Transitional Commissions Appoint a commission for each of the regional councils with membership and mandate as outlined in GS 05.</p>	<p>No change. Creation of the structure needed to move into structural changes.</p>
<p>GS 06 - Communities of Faith and Covenants Declare that all applicable existing requirements for membership, meetings, governance body and organizational matters set out in the bylaw portion of <i>The Manual</i> and as approved by the presbytery for the community of faith will continue to apply and will be deemed to be the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council unless and until modified with the approval of both the community of faith and regional council.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>

Proposal	Notes: Explanation of inclusion and/or changes
<p>GS 07 - Assets of Presbyteries, Districts, and Conferences</p> <p>Establish the process for the transition of presbytery/district and Conference assets to regional councils as outlined in GS 07. This process must be followed by presbyteries/districts and Conferences that will still own assets on December 31, 2018.</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Policy needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GS 08 - Formal Hearings and Appeals</p> <p>Provide for the transition to the new structure of formal hearings and appeals that are outstanding as of December 31, 2018 as outlined in GS 08.</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GS 09 - Reviews of Ministry Personnel and or Pastoral Charges</p> <p>Approves that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. responsibility for all reviews of ministry personnel that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the Office of Vocation as of that date; and b. responsibility for all reviews of pastoral charges that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the regional council with oversight of that pastoral charge. 	<p>No change.</p> <p>Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>NOM 02 - Recommendations for Appointment to the Committees of the GC</p> <p>Approve the recommended appointments and reappointments in NOM 02</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Affirming the work of the Nominations Committee</p>
<p>SK 07 - Admission Process Questions be Reviewed for Today's Reality of More Intercultural Ministers</p> <p>Direct a review of the general process of admission from the intercultural perspective including the suggested questions for interview.</p>	<p>Considered a reasonable request for a policy review.</p> <p>Language changed to be clear and directive.</p>

Motion to amend: Daniel MacDonald/Penny Nelson

That *GCE08-GS84 Remit Related Revisions to the Basis of Union* be lifted from the consent docket and placed in the remit implementation theme.

Carried

Motion to amend: Sandra Nixon/Paul Reed

That *GCE09-MEPS 25 Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board* be lifted from the consent docket and placed in the remit implementation theme.

Defeated

Motion as amended

Carried

The Moderator expressed her gratitude and thanks on behalf of court to the Conference Executive Secretaries and Conference staff for their ongoing work and continued support to bring the work of the General Council forward.

GC43 01 NON-PRIORITIZED PROPOSALS

Allan Buckingham provided background information on *GC43 01 Non-Prioritized Proposals*, noting that items could be pulled from this proposal to be dealt with at the meeting, but that other work would need to be removed from the current agenda to accommodate the newly added work.

Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle**GC43 2018-12**

That the 43rd General Council 2018 refer the following proposals to the Executive of the General Council:

BC 01 - Advocacy for the Decriminalization of Drug Possession for Personal Use

GCE 14 - PMM 17 LGBTQ+ Pride Sunday

M&O 02 - Accessing the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise

MTU 02 - Proposal - Korean Peninsula

TOR 03 - An Urgent Call for Peace Accord in the Korean Peninsula

TOR 07 - Seeking Peace in the Middle East with Methods Applied in South Africa

ANW 03 - Disaster Assistance Strategy

BC 08 - Support to Terminate Plans to Expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline

LON 01 - In Our Common Interest - Indigenous Peoples and Abrahamic Faiths

ANW 07 - Mental Health and the Mission of the Church

MAR 01 - Mental Health Training

BC 02 - Concern over Present and Future United Church Pensioners

HAM 02 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - 10% from the Sale of Properties

HAM 03 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - United Church Pensioners

SK 04 - Fair Pension Outcomes

TOR 06 - Inflation Affects Pensioners Too - Adding Cost of Living Allowance to Retirees' Pension as with Active Members' Salary

Motion to Amend: Steve Berube/Sean Handcock

That *MTU 02 – Proposal - Korean Peninsula*, *TOR 03 - An Urgent Call for Peace Accord in the Korean Peninsula*, and *TOR 07 - Seeking Peace in the Middle East with Methods Applied in South Africa* be removed from the GC43 01 docket and find space on the agenda to deal with them.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Barry Rieder/Penny Culverson

That *TOR 06 - Inflation Affects Pensioners Too - Adding Cost of Living Allowance to Retirees' Pension as with Active Members' Salary* be removed from the GC43 01 docket and find space on the agenda to deal with it.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: David Patterson/Erica McNeilly

That *BC 08 - Support to Terminate Plans to Expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline* be removed from the GC43 01 docket and find space on the agenda to deal with it.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: David Pollard/Penny Culverson

That *HAM 02 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - 10% from the Sale of Properties* be removed from the GC43 01 docket and find space on the agenda to deal with it.

Defeated

Original motion as moved

Carried

NOM 01 APPOINTMENT OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Graham Brownmiller, Nominations Chair, provided background information on the following motion and thanked those who had put their names forward, as well as the members of the Nominations Committee.

Motion: Graham Brownmiller/Nora Sanders**GC43 2018-13**

That the 43rd General Council appoint the following members to serve as the Denominational Council Executive beginning January 1, 2019, with terms as stated:

Positions by office

- To be elected, *Moderator*
- Jordan Cantwell, *Immediate Past Moderator*
- Nora Sanders, *General Secretary*

To serve until the in-person gathering of the denominational council in 2021 (three-year term)

1. Sharon Aylsworth
2. Katie Curtis
3. Deb Hinksman

4. Ha Na Park
5. Deborah Richards
6. Andrew Richardson
7. Janet Sigurdson

To serve until the in-person gathering of the denominational council in 2024 (six-year term)

1. Teresa Burnett-Cole, as chosen by the Aboriginal Ministries Council
2. Kathy Brett
3. Samuel Dansokho
4. Paul Douglas Walfall
5. Larry Doyle
6. Jane McDonald
7. Arlyce Schiebout

Carried

Susan Brodrick (Alberta and Northwest Conference) asked that it be recorded that as we move forward in the new structure we try to work to a balance of order of ministry personnel and lay individuals on the Denominational Council Executive.

Moderator Nominees

The Moderator nominees were introduced to the General Council and presented with stoles created by Evan Smith and Jess Swance.

The nominees were:

Rev. Susan Beaver
 Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud
 Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
 Rev. David Hart
 Rev. Cathy Larmond
 Rev. Dr. Catherine Faith MacLean
 Dr. Colin Phillips
 Rev. Wanda Stride
 Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile
 Rev. Donalee Williams

Worship

Worship was offered by Niki Andre through an *a cappella* jam.

Evening Program

The Festival of Faith, with members of the Indigenous church, hosted an evening program, “Living in Covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations,” reflecting on how to live out the vision of reconciliation adopted in the Calls to the Church. This included a presentation by Jenna

Wirch and Michael Champagne and was followed by commentary from panelists Kenji Marui, Mitchell Anderson, Beth Symes, and Samantha Miller.

Monday, July 23, 2018

Worship

Étienne LeSage and Min Goo Kang led worship with the theme “Celebrate God’s Presence.” Horacio Mesones, a member of the Partner Council, offered the reflection.

Global and Ecumenical Guests

Michael Blair, Executive Minister, Church in Mission, introduced the global and ecumenical guests.

Canadian and North American Ecumenical Partners

- Peter Noteboom (Canadian Council of Churches)
- Pastor Andre Lavergne (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada)
- Stephen Kendall (Presbyterian Church in Canada)
- Lynne McNaughton (Anglican Church of Canada)
- Bishop Daniel Miehm (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Full Communion Partners (current and proposed)

- Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson (United Church of Christ, USA)
- Rev. Terri Hord Owens (Christian Church Disciples of Christ, USA)
- Rev. Paul Tché (Christian Church Disciples of Christ, USA)
- Rev. Dr. Jennifer Garbin (Christian Church Disciples of Christ Canada)

Global Ecumenical Relationship

- Rev. Philip Peacock (World Communion of Reformed Churches)
- Rev. Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri (World Council of Churches)
- Rev. Bao Ping Kan (China Christian Council)
- Venerable John Gichimu (Organization of African Instituted Churches)
- Rev. William Mpere-Gyekye (Methodist Church, Ghana)
- Robert Witmer (Overseas Personnel)

Partner Council

- Jennifer Henry (KAIROS Canada)
- Bishop Reuel Marigza (United Church of Christ in the Philippines)
- Necta Montes (World Student Christian Federation)
- Horacio Mesones (Regional Ecumenical Advisory and Service Centre CREAS)
- Rev. Dr. Peggy Mulambya Kabonde (The United Church of Zambia)

Horacio Mesones brought greetings on behalf of the global and ecumenical partners.

The Moderator acknowledged the gift and blessing of having so many global and ecumenical partners present at this meeting. These partners help the United Church stay connected to the wider body of faith.

Moderator Nominees

The Moderator invited the first five nominees to speak. (*The order of speaking had been determined by a random process at dinner with the nominees on Sunday evening.*) At the conclusion of each address, a verse of one hymn chosen by the nominee was sung.

1. Rev. Donalee Williams
2. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
3. Rev. Wanda Stride
4. Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile
5. Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud

Plenary Listening Session: Intercultural and Dominant Privilege Lenses

A listening session on the Intercultural and Dominant Privilege theme was held in the plenary space from 9:45 to 10:30 a.m.

Adele Halliday, Team Leader, Discipleship and Witness, Church in Mission, and Peter Noteboom, General Secretary, Canadian Council of Churches, provided background and context about the intercultural and dominant privilege lenses.

Adele noted that the commitment to becoming an intercultural church was named in 2006, and in 2012 the Executive of the General Council adopted an intercultural vision. One of the key messages was acknowledging the ongoing work to create an environment where we as a church can sustain our own cultural identities while affirming the intercultural difference and diversities of one another.

Peter addressed White privilege and the characteristics of a dominant culture, noting that when the pivotal characteristics are skin colour, culture, and race, these become the measuring stick for an entire society. Residential schools were noted as an example of how White privilege and the dominant culture, combined with a colonial perspective, tried to eradicate an entire culture.

The introduction to this theme was followed by short presentations on three of the proposals within this theme:

- ANW 09 - Racism, Racial Discrimination, Racial Justice and White Privilege
- BQ 03 - Equity Monitor
- SK 05 - Living into Transformation: Continuing the Journey as an Intercultural Church

Listening Sessions

The listening sessions on the following themes were held between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.:

- Administration of Sacraments
- Small and Rural Ministry

- Governance, Right Relations, Ministry Personnel
- Leadership

Before the afternoon session started the Moderator asked Stephen Kendall (Presbyterian Church of Canada) to offer a prayer for the victims, their families and the community, following the shooting last evening on Danforth Avenue in Toronto, Ontario.

Moderator's Accountability Report

Gary Paterson, Past Moderator, assumed the chair during the Moderator's report.

The Moderator, The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell, thanked her family, the members of her Moderator's Advisory Committee, General Council and Conference staff, Sue Fortner, former Moderators, global and ecumenical partners, and the whole church, for their support, for sharing their hopes and challenges, and prayerful support during this triennium.

She lifted up two gifts in particular that she received on behalf of the church.

The first gift was a Medicine Bag. This was a gift to The United Church of Canada from the community of Oxford House. It was given to the church at this time as an offering of support and to encourage the church through a time of tumultuous change. It was given in a gesture of friendship and solidarity. She then explained the teachings of the Medicine Bag:

- *Strap* – The seven sacred teachings are named.
- *Front of bag* – Seven flowers represent the seven sacred teachings all held within the circle, with the cross at the centre.
- *Materials* – Felt and suede recall the Métis heritage.
- *Bible* – When settlers came, it sparked massive and disorienting change for Indigenous peoples. Much was lost—medicines, culture, traditional ways—all of which had given shape and guidance to their lives. The Bible became a new source of wisdom and guidance that helped them to get through that time of change.
- *Five-dollar bill* – This represents treaties (\$5 is the annual treaty payment status Indians receive). A reminder of the relationship that provides a framework and meaning for our life together as we live into change; and a symbol of our connection and responsibility to each other.
- *Psalm 23* – These words offer us a reminder of God's presence and guidance and to not be afraid.
- *Water from Oxford House* – These waters, which were once pure, represent the life-giving gift of creation that we must protect together. (The bottle was found in John Thompson's garden.)
- *Soil from Oxford House* – This soil contains stinging nettle seeds, which grow to produce an important medicine; also four stones—one red, one yellow, one black, one white—representing the Medicine Wheel; and a heart-shaped stone on top. This jar contains medicines and wisdom that grow and yield their gifts over time. The lid is painted with the colours of the Medicine Wheel.

The Moderator explained that there is a message in the giving of this gift: “When you came you took away our bundle (medicines), and gave us your bundle (the Bible). Now we offer back to you your bundle; and we want ours back too.”

The second gift was a coolamon. This was a gift from the Uniting Church of Australia and the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. The coolamon is used to cradle babies, to dig for food, to carry gathered food, and to winnow seed. It is a Life Bowl.

While acknowledging that conversations about race and privilege demand great courage on all our parts, the Moderator noted she found herself changed and inspired by the creativity and resilience of our communities of faith. And that she believes our courage is far greater than our fear.

She concluded her remarks by acknowledging again that her heart has been broken by the pain and despair that she was witness to over her term, while also being humbled by our grace to continue to risk faith and dare hope in God’s abundance and inclusive love.

Gratitude was offered to the Moderator following her report.

The Moderator resumed the chair.

Faithful Footprints

Erik Mathiesen introduced the official launch of “Faithful Footprints” with a video presentation. In conjunction with Faith and the Common Good, this program will offer ideas, tools and grants to help live out our climate commitments.

General Secretary’s Accountability Report

The General Secretary, Nora Sanders began her report with a video of a lemon rolling down a hill, noting that this had gone viral on the internet the previous week and had garnered responses with words like “hope” and “joy” and “inspirational”. She reflected that people are seeking meaning in our complex world, and that we never know what simple thing that we do or say will affect someone deeply. She noted that sometimes what we need can be simpler than we imagine. She reflected on her sabbatical experiences and many conversations about the value of talking about our faith in God in smaller group settings, and living our faith in the world.

Speaking to the theme “Risking Faith and Daring Hope,” she noted that The United Church of Canada is not just reinventing itself for the sake of structure but also for the next generation and the generation after that. Asking the right questions will help the church define who it is and where it is going. She offered some questions for reflection as we look to the future:

- What is the unique thing (or things) that the United Church offers to Canadian society?
- Who are those next generations? Who will be the United Church people in 20 years?
- How do we talk about faith in this increasingly secular world?
- What actions does the world most need from us?

- What is God already doing? Have we noticed?

She reaffirmed that our actions in the world count, referring to the church's endorsement of the Calls to the Church from the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle, our response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis, and the generosity of Conferences that chose to share Conference Grants with other Conferences so that all could continue to manage financially in this transition period.

In concluding her report, Nora thanked David Allen, Project Manager Remit Implementation, the staff leaders (Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker and the General Council Office management group), as well as all General Council, Conference, and presbytery staff for their faithfulness in carrying out the work of the church through this challenging period of transition.

Nora then received affirmations and questions from the floor.

Moderator Nominees

The Moderator invited the next five nominees to speak:

6. Dr. Colin Phillips
7. Rev. David Hart
8. Rev. Cathy Larmond
9. Rev. Dr. Catherine Faith MacLean
10. Rev. Susan Beaver

Discussion Session

Groups met from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to discuss the following themes:

- Governance
- Ministry Personnel
- Right Relations

Evening Program

The Festival of Faith hosted the evening program "Iridesce/Affirm United" in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the United Church's decision to ordain LGBTQ persons.

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

Worship

barb janes and Min Goo Kang led worship with the theme "To Live with Respect in Creation." The scripture reading was Matthew 14:22–17. Horacio Mesones and Bernice Saulteaux offered the reflection.

Agenda

Allan Buckingham updated the agenda, thanking the Commissioners for their patience, feedback, and humour. He took some time to outline how the day would proceed.

DECISION SESSION THEME: GOVERNANCE

Facilitation Group members Hewitt Holmes and Betty Kelly presented the report of the facilitation group on the Governance theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on the proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- There was a healthy conversation on governance, and we thank the discussion groups for their active engagement with this important issue.
- Discussion groups said that governance is about decision making, accountability, transparency, accessibility, and keeping our vision and mission clear. It's how we relate but not how we rule each other. It's conciliatory. It has both organizational and theological implications.
- There was concern from some marginalized groups (Indigenous and other ethnic ministries) about the impact of the shifts on their communities. There was also concern for the potential of losing our voice for social justice and representation when it is important (regional, different groups, ordered/lay).
- When governance creates burdens, isolation, and confusion, governance is no longer serving us.
- It's important to know the difference between governance and management: governance sets the framework and management gets it done. It seems these proposals deal with both governance and management.
- Strong communication is needed; there is a need for trust in a time of great fear.

ANW 02 CONSTITUTION OF A MEETING

What We Heard

There was acknowledgment that there are pros and cons:

- Concern that emails could create miscommunication/ineffective communication
- "Prior consent of higher court of the church" can cause confusion and concern
- Some Commissioners experience this already happening in some contexts
- E-mail is only appropriate for yes/no votes
- E-mail must be minuted if we move forward
- Requires explicit caution if it relates to anything confidential
- Would require rules for implementation
- Concerns about consistency with the theological implications about how/where we say the Spirit moves
- Should be reserved for conversations that don't require deep discussion or conversation and reflection
- Requires accessibility to technology
- Should be the exception not the rule
- Generally we heard affirmation for using this process in limited circumstances

- There is no consensus from the Discussion Groups about how and when this method of meeting/voting would be used.
- Affirmation that it be used for smaller matters and would not be normative.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Bill Sheaves/Larry Doyle

GC43 2018-14

That the 43rd General Council amend *The Manual* to allow a meeting by e-mail in exceptional circumstances, with clear parameters and policies to be developed by the General Secretary.

Motion to Amend: Kathleen James-Cavan/Wayne Sanderson

That the words “including ratification at a subsequent face to face meeting” be added to the motion.

Defeated

Original Motion as Moved

Carried

ANW 11 UCW REPRESENTATION ON REGIONAL COUNCILS

What We Heard

- Most groups questioned the appropriateness of General Council directing the Regional Councils in this matter.
- There was recognition by almost all groups of the historical and current importance and value of the UCW.
- The importance of women’s representation in general was recognized by some groups.
- Corresponding membership was suggested as a possible option.
- Most groups did not communicate strong support for this proposal and felt that the matter was for regions to decide.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Bev Kostichuk/Larry Doyle

GC43 2018-15

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal *ANW 11 UCW Representation on Regional Councils* to the regional councils for consideration and take no further action.

Carried

GCE 12 FAITHFUL DECISION MAKING ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

What We Heard

- Groups noted that the proposal was about hearing from marginalized voices.
- There was support for inclusion, and that it should apply to all levels of the church.
- There was appreciation for the background report.

- Some questioned how do we determine which voices are prioritized when there are so many groups and priorities?
- Timely communication was affirmed as important by several groups.
- One discussion group also noted that timely communication will have implications for staff workloads.
- Formal partnerships (ecumenical and international) were named as important stakeholders in this issue.
- General affirmation for and no opposition to this proposal.
- There were suggestions for consideration in its implementation.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Bev Kostichuk/Larry Doyle

GC43 2018-16

That the 43rd General Council adopt the Report ANW3 Faithful Decision-Making on Social Justice Issues in The United Church of Canada in its entirety and direct the General Secretary to implement the report and the recommendations of *GCE 12 Faithful Decision Making on Social Justice Issues*.

Carried

Intercultural Observer Reflection: “Lenses”

Sharon Ballantyne was introduced by the Moderator. She reflected on the work of the 43rd General Council, reminding the council to trust in the process, to be open to the wisdom of God, and to learn to be church together. She asked the court to question biases and assumptions, and to consider the lenses that are being brought to the work, to life. She concluded her remarks by challenging Commissioners to ask themselves what they hold on to, through what lens they are seeing, and to come together to be bridge builders.

Discussion Session

Discussion groups met from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to discuss the following themes:

- Right Relations
- Leadership
- Administration of Sacraments

Listening Session

The listening sessions on the following themes were held from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.:

- Remit Implementation
- Theology
- Small and Rural Ministry, Leadership
- Intercultural and Dominant Privilege, Administration of Sacraments

Discussion Session

Discussion groups met from 4:00 to 6 p.m. about the following themes:

- Administration of Sacraments

- Small and Rural Ministry
- Intercultural and Privilege Lenses

Evening Program

The Festival of Faith hosted the evening “Sunset Ceremony and Celtic Call: Conference Gathering,” where there was time to celebrate the contributions of Conferences and presbyteries through word, song, and prayer.

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

Worship

barb janes and Min Goo Kang led worship with the theme “To Love and Serve Others.” The scripture readings were John 1:4–18, 12 and Galatians 5:6. Dr. Isabel Phiri, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, offered the reflection.

Agenda

Allan Buckingham outlined the business agenda for the day.

DECISION SESSION THEME: GOVERNANCE (CONTINUED)

Facilitation Group members Hewitt Holmes and Betty Kelly continued the report of the facilitation group on the Governance theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

M&O 01 FRANCOPHONE REPRESENTATION ON THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL AND THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

What We Heard

The discussion groups provided a diversity of comments on this proposal:

- There is a need to balance inclusion with the nominations process already set out.
- There was pastoral concern for the francophone constituency and named the historical importance of this constituency.
- Groups believed in inclusion and voice, but not necessarily that there should be designated seats on the Denominational Council and Denominational Council Executive.
- It was noted by many groups that francophone representation is already taken very seriously by the Nominations Committee.
- A few groups noted that the membership of the incoming Executive of the Denominational Council shows our collective commitment to inclusion of the francophone community.
- There was some affirmation for *La Table* to be able to propose names to various courts of the church.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Bev Kostichuk/Larry Doyle****GC43 2018-17**

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal M&O 01.

Motion to Amend: Cathy Hamilton/Nicole Beaudry

That the words: “that La Table des Ministères en français be empowered to propose names to the Nominations Committee for inclusion in the various councils and committees of the church and” be added to the motion.

Carried**Motion as Amended**

That La Table des ministères en français be empowered by the 43rd General Council to propose names to the Nominations Committee for inclusion in the various councils and committees of the church and take no further action on proposal M&O 01.

Carried**GCE 07 FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA (GS 83)**

Dan Hayward provided background on this proposal. Dan introduced the rest of the group that had been working toward full communion between The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Terri Hord Owens, Paul Tch , Jennifer Garbin, Nora Sanders, Shannon McCarthy, Heather Leffler, John Young, and Gail Allan.

Motion: Daniel Hayward/Heather Leffler**GC43 2018-18**

That the Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. At its meeting on Oshawa, Ontario (July 21–27, 2018) make the following mutual declaration with the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Des Moines, Iowa (July 20–24, 2019):

That the 43rd General Council:

Acknowledge and celebrate before God that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is an authentic, faithful part of the one, universal body of Christ.

Declare and celebrate that a relationship of full communion now exists between The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, by which is meant that both churches will pursue with intention ways of expressing the unity of the Church. This includes commitment to mutually recognizing ordered ministers of each partner church, and ways of manifesting the common mission of witness and service.

Commit itself to work, with God's help and together with its partner churches, to effect greater unity in the whole church of Jesus Christ, and

2. The 43rd General Council together with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada:

- a. *Receive the final report of the planning group, including the possibilities presented for common life and witness together,*
- b. *Encourage study of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of the full communion agreement,*
- c. *Direct the General Secretary, General Council to work collaboratively with the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to establish a Partnership Committee to give guidance to this process, and*
- d. *Agree to commence the full communion agreement with the signing of the common agreement by the two Heads of Communion at a joint service of celebration that will include opportunities for people across the two churches to celebrate in meaningful ways.*

Carried

Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), offered thanks and explained that the General Assembly where the Disciples will give their approval for this agreement will take place in Des Moines, Iowa, in the summer of 2019. This agreement will provide us with a common sense of mission, while acknowledging the importance of being united in a common witness of peace and justice.

Observer Video

A video promoting upcoming changes to the *United Church Observer* was presented.

Evangelical United Brethren Recognition

Nora Sanders invited David Hallman, Catherine Ambrose, and Bruce Seebach to share the history in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the union between The United Church of Canada and the Evangelical United Brethren. At the Consummation of Union Service on January 10, 1968 at Zion Church in Kitchener, Ontario, EUB Moderator W.C. Lockhart made the declaration that: “the Canada Conference and the General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church be received as a part of The United Church of Canada.”

David Hallman introduced a video presentation, noting that 50 years ago this historic union created the united and uniting church that we are today.

Catherine Ambrose, daughter of W.C. Lockhart, closed with a prayer of thanksgiving that was first used 50 years ago at the Consummation of Union Service followed by a verse of “Now Thank We All Our God.”

Discussion Session

Discussion groups met from 11 a.m. to noon to discuss the following themes:

- Intercultural and Dominant Privilege Lenses
- Remit Implementation

After lunch, Commissioners were given an afternoon free for “Sabbath time,” with options for local excursions or rest.

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Worship

barb janes led worship with the theme “Seek Justice and Resist Evil.” The scripture readings were Psalms 72:5–7 and Hosea 10:12. Min Goo Kang offered the reflection.

Moderator Election

Nora Sanders reviewed the process for voting, noting that this will be done electronically. The results will be sent to the Chief Scrutineer, who will communicate the results of the vote to the candidates. Once the nominees have been told the results, the next round will take place as soon as there is time in the agenda. This process will be followed for each voting round.

The names on the first ballot were:

1. Rev. Susan Beaver
2. Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud
3. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
4. Rev. David Hart
5. Rev. Cathy Larmond
6. Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean
7. Dr. Colin Phillips
8. Rev. Wanda Stride
9. Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile
10. Rev. Donalee Williams

The Moderator, Jordan Cantwell, led in a prayer, and then the first vote took place.

Agenda

The Moderator invited Allan Buckingham to outline the agenda for the day.

DECISION SESSION THEME: GOVERNANCE (CONTINUED)

Facilitation Group members Hewitt Holmes and Betty Kelly continued the report of the facilitation group on the Governance theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

MTU 01 A CHANGE TO CURRENT REMIT PROCESS

What We Heard

- There were mixed feelings generally across the groups who responded on this proposal.

- There was acknowledgment of the historical reasons for the current system.
- There was suggestion that communities of faith should be encouraged to participate.
- There was concern that small/rural communities of faith might be having issues receiving communication.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Graham Brownmiller/ Mike Wyatt

GC43 2018-19

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal MTU 01.

Carried

MTU 03 MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL NL 01 REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL

What We Heard

- Some groups felt that the loss of regional representation meant a loss of the conciliar nature of the church.
- Some groups noted there is a difference between representation and conciliar: we are moving away from a geographically representative model, but we are still a conciliar church—we still have councils.
- Some noted the role of the Executive Ministers is important in this new regional model of the church.
- One group noted regional representation is not a theological requirement of our conciliar structure.
- Some groups felt concern over the implications of losing regional representation but affirmed that corresponding members could play a role in the new model.
- There were a significant number of questions raised about the implications of the new systems in addition to comments noted.
- There is a lack of clarity around representation and accountability of those elected to do the work of the church, as well as what it means to be conciliar.
- There were significant and important questions raised on these proposals.
- There was some affirmation for the proposals
- There were some groups who felt not increasing the size of the denominational council executive was important.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Loraine Shepherd/Paula Gale

GC43 2018-20

That the 43rd General Council refer MTU 03 and NL 01 to the General Secretary to study how we define the conciliar nature of the church and the impact of regional representation on decision-making, and direct the General Secretary report to the 44th General Council on the experience of living into the new models of the church.

Motion to Amend: Elizabeth Morrison/George Bott

That the wording be amended to read (*additions underlined and in quotes*): That the 43rd General Council refer MTU 03 and NL 01 to the General Secretary to study how we define the conciliar nature of the church and the “role” of regional “and other forms of” representation “within our conciliar system and its” decision-making “processes,” and direct the General Secretary report to the 44th General Council on the experience of living into the new models of the church.

Carried

Order of the Day: Moderator Election

The General Secretary announced the names of those who would be on the second ballot for Moderator, followed by a short prayer.

1. Rev. Susan Beaver
2. Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud
3. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
4. Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean

A video sharing information about community ministries was shown.

The second round of voting for Moderator took place.

Continuation of:

**MTU 03 MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL
NL 01 REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE OF THE
DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL**

Motion to Amend: David Pollard/Tony Orlando

That the words “and in the interim ensure regional representation through corresponding membership to the Denominational Council Executive” be added to the motion.

Defeated

Motion as Previously Amended

That the 43rd General Council refer MTU 03 and NL 01 to the General Secretary to study how we define the conciliar nature of the church and the role of regional and other forms of representation within our conciliar system and its decision-making processes, and direct the General Secretary report to the 44th General Council on the experience of living into the new models of the church.

Carried

TOR 05 THE MANUAL ITEM 5.3.3: MANDATORY MEETINGS OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE**What We Heard**

- There was general affirmation for the proposal, and for taking into account the difference between smaller and larger churches in how they determine the required number for a mandatory meeting.
- One group suggested the matter be referred to the Denominational Council Executive for further study.
- One group suggested that the number required for a mandatory meeting of the pastoral charge be 10 people or 10 percent, whichever is greater.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Cheryl Wood-Thomas/Angus MacLennan****GC43 2018-21**

That the 43rd General Council amend *The Manual*, Item 5.3.3: Mandatory Meetings of the Pastoral Charge, to make the requirement for a mandatory meeting 10 people or 10 percent of the membership, whichever is greater.

Motion to Amend: Jean Macdonald/Bob Fillier

That the word “full” be added before “membership.”

Carried**Motion as Amended**

That the 43rd General Council amend *The Manual*, Item 5.3.3: Mandatory Meetings of the Pastoral Charge, to make the requirement for a mandatory meeting 10 people or 10 percent of the full membership, whichever is greater.

Carried**Moderator Election**

The General Secretary announced the names on the third ballot for Moderator.

5. Rev. Susan Beaver
6. Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud
7. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
8. Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean

The General Secretary gave thanks for the nominees whose name would not be on the next ballot, and offered a prayer.

The Commissioners voted on the third ballot for Moderator.

After a break, the General Secretary announced the names for the fourth ballot.

1. Rev. Susan Beaver
2. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
3. Rev. Dr. Catherine MacLean

The General Secretary gave thanks to the nominee whose name would not be on the next ballot, and offered a prayer.

Voting on the fourth ballot took place.

Plenary Listening Session: Identity and Vision

A listening session on the Identity and Vision theme was held in the plenary space from 11:30 a.m. until noon. The presenters for this listening session were Bob Fillier and Jay Olsen from BC Conference.

The two proposals covered in this session were:

- BC03 – Leading on Purpose
- BC05 – A Vision to Ground Us

Moderator Election

The General Secretary announced the names for the fifth ballot.

1. Rev. Susan Beaver
2. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott

The General Secretary gave thanks to the nominee whose name would not be on the next ballot, and offered a prayer.

A video on the Living Presence Ministry was presented.

The final vote for Moderator took place.

Plenary Listening Session: Identity and Vision

The presenters for the second plenary listening session on Identity and Vision were Dan Hayward, Gail Allan, and John Young.

The two proposals for this session were:

- TICIF1/GCE17 – Report on Membership
- TICIF2/GCE18 – Honouring The Divine In Each Other: Hindu-United Church Relations

There was time for clarifying questions at the end of the presentation.

Moderator

Nora Sanders welcomed the new Moderator of The United Church of Canada, Rev. Dr. Richard Bott.

Lorna Standingready offered a prayer.

Motion

Susan Beaver, Rev. David Hart, Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile, Rev. Cathy Larmond, Rev. Dr. Catherine Faith MacLean, Dr. Colin Phillips, Rev. Wanda Stride, Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud, Rev. Donalee Williams

That the vote for Moderator be made unanimous.

Carried Unanimously

BALLOTS FOR MODERATOR

Motion: Larry Doyle/Nora Sanders

GC43 2018-22

That the ballots for Moderator be destroyed.

Carried

Discussion Session

Discussion groups met from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. to discuss the following themes:

- Remit Implementation
- Theology

Discussion Session

Discussion groups met from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to discuss the following theme:

- Identity and Vision

Evening Program

The Festival of Faith hosted the evening program led by the Youth Pilgrims and Youth Forum, reflecting on the Apologies that the United Church has given to the Indigenous church and to Residential School survivors.

Friday, July 27, 2018**Worship**

Barb Janes and Ming Goo Kang led worship with the theme “Crucified and Risen.” The scripture reading was Isaiah 58:6–9. Necta Montes, of the World Student Christian Federation, and the Venerable John Gichimu, of the Organization of African Instituted Churches, offered the reflections.

Agenda

Allan Buckingham outlined an addition to the voting process to enable the business to proceed more quickly. Any item receiving an affirmation of 90% or more from Commissioners would move immediately to a vote. Other items would be dealt with, as time allowed, in the order of approval.

DECISION SESSION THEME: MINISTRY PERSONNEL

Facilitation Group members Marion Best and Carmen Lansdowne presented the report of the Facilitation Group on the Ministry Personnel theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- Groups named some fundamental questions about the current structure of the church:
 - How do we do mission and leadership in our current church culture?
 - How do we value trained ministry?
 - How can the church keep pace with changing contexts like low attendance and property redevelopment?
- We care about relationships and being equitable, while honouring the distinctions of who we are.
- However, current church contexts with low attendance, low availability of ministry personnel, shifting attendance patterns and relying heavily on part-time and retired ministers can create difficult working conditions and recruitment problems.
- Concern that with the loss of presbyteries, individuals will be responsible for setting up their own support/care systems.

BC 04 CREATIVE RIGHTS

What We Heard

- Many groups agreed completely with the proposal and some groups had such broad or unanimous support they did not discuss it.
- Questions that were raised:
 - When should congregations hold the copyright instead of the ministers if we make this change?
 - What about when ministers collaborate?
- Several groups suggested the need for a legal review. General Counsel for the United Church informed the facilitation group that it is legally possible for the church to make this change should it be approved by the court.
- There were some groups who noted they were unaware of this issue before this proposal and still feel unclear on the issue and implications.
- Some groups noted it was a good idea and could be expanded beyond ministry personnel (e.g. music ministers).

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Brian Mee/Graham Brownmiller

GC43 2018-23

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to include a statement assigning copyright to ministry personnel on the call/appointment form, and to create a resource for communities of faith that supports assignment of copyright to other paid staff where applicable.

Carried

M&O 04 MANADATORY TRAINING FOR ALL UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MINISTRY PERSONNEL

What We Heard

In general there was affirmation in most groups, and some had mixed feelings.

- There should be a theological component that could be mandatory for all staff; needs to include training about homophobia and transphobia.
- There can be value in setting standards; we do it for other issues like boundaries and racial justice.
- Mandatory training does not always result in learning and can seem like lip service; it can also create vulnerability for LGBTQ2+ communities in implementation.
- Can create additional burdens on paid accountable ministers; starting to feel mandatory overload.
- There are cost and implementation implications unclear in the proposal.
- There should be French translation with attention to the gendered nature of French.
- The Office of Vocation needs to review all the mandatory training required.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Heather McClure/Mead Baldwin

GC43 2018-24

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *M&O 04 Mandatory Training for All United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel* and directs the General Secretary to implement its recommendations.

Carried

MNWO 05 MOVING EXPENSES FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

What We Heard

Most groups supported the proposal.

- The need is clearly recognized.
- There were concerns about where the source of funding would come from.
- Limited resources—should let the regions determine how to respond rather than direct regions to implement.
- Support for having funding run through the denominational council so that the national church could respond to different need in different regions; can support broader movement over geographical areas.
- It was suggested we refer the proposal for further study, taking into account the concern over funding and some of the creative solutions noted by the discussion groups.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Miriam Spies/Blair Paterson

GC43 2018-25

That the 43rd General Council refer *MNWO 05 Moving Expenses for Ministry Personnel* to the General Secretary.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: RIGHT RELATIONS

Facilitation Group members Jamie Scott and Carmen Lansdowne presented the report of the Facilitation Group on the Right Relations theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- The groups expressed affirmation for this work and that the church is called to continue working on right relations.
- Groups said it's about reconciliation, diversity and genuine reparation.
- One challenge is to really understand the UNDRIP and think about how the church looks different moving forward.
- It is essential Indigenous people be involved going forward.
- We are all treaty people and want to participate in this work and want to be aware of settler privilege regardless of how and where we settled on these lands.
- Honoured the relationship is still being offered to us from the Indigenous community and we are grateful for the grace that has been extended to the non-Indigenous community.

ANW 06 LIVING INTO RIGHT RELATIONS NETWORK

BQ 02 STEPS TOWARD RECONCILIATION

TOR 01 FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR LIVING INTO RIGHT RELATIONS (LIRR) NETWORK BEYOND 2018

What We Heard

- Several groups dealt with proposals ANW 06/BQ 02/TOR 01 as one, therefore so did the facilitation team. Groups affirmed the spirit of these proposals and the continuation of this important work. One group felt we should take no action on these proposals, but that the Regions should be encouraged to continue networking and consider the Calls to the Church.
- There was some confusion about what the Living into Right Relations network is, what its role is, what the cost is, and whether the network is effective and has had impact?
- There was concern about bringing something from the past into the new structure and balancing that with preserving what has existed that ensure this important work continues.
- Most groups expressed the view that adequate funding should be provided and that the work needs to continue in the new structure.
- There was concern about the capacity of staff.
- There was a strong sentiment that this settler work needs to happen nationally, regionally, and locally.
- The work should not be imposed on the Indigenous church, but rather be done through a framework developed with the Indigenous church.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Morgan Bell/Wendy Brown****GC43 2018-26**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposals ANW 06/BQ 02/TOR 01 and refer them to the General Secretary.

Carried**M&O 03 ENHANCING RIGHT RELATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES TO NAME OUR CHURCH****What We Heard**

- Most groups expressed affirming the spirit of recognizing local Indigenous languages.
- They suggested this could be a regional or local initiative.
- Groups asked questions about practicalities such as: What language would we use as there are many Indigenous languages? Would some languages be privileged over others?
- While the majority of the discussion in groups focused on implementation questions, in the end there was consensus for the proposed study.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Kyle Grant/Hugh Johnson****GC43 2018-27**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *M&O 03 Enhancing Right Relations Through The Use of Indigenous Languages to Name Our Church*, and direct it to the General Secretary for implementation.

Carried**Abstention:** L.E. Moir**SK 06 MINISTERIAL TRAINING IN RESPONSE TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION CALL TO ACTION 60****What We Heard**

- All groups supported this proposal, and some wanted stronger language: changing “might encourage” to “encourage” or “will encourage.”
- Some groups felt that this educational formation is essential, not just for students but all ministry personnel through continuing education.
- There was acknowledgment that many theological schools are already working on this; there was some support for making courses on Indigenous issues mandatory.
- Indigenous groups should have the right to self-determine their engagement with theological training schools, and Indigenous groups should be consulted in the development of curriculum.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Pamela Thomas/Allan Gairns****GC43 2018-28**

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to encourage The United Church of Canada testamur-granting theological colleges and other educational bodies to develop concerted, timely, and coordinated efforts to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #60 in consultation with the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle, the church's national Indigenous organization, and other appropriate bodies.

Carried**TOR 02 TRC CALL 60/BLANKET EXERCISE****What We Heard**

- All groups expressed support for this proposal.
- This training is a first step and we need to find additional tools in consultation with the Indigenous church; there is need for further training.
- There was concern for the impact of cost for rural churches as these courses are often in urban settings; it was suggested there is need for training in rural communities.
- There was a suggestion that this could be a regional responsibility or referred to the Office of Vocation, as well as other practical questions on implementation.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Lorna Standingready/Susan Eagle****GC43 2018-29**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *TOR 02 TRC Call 60/Blanket Exercise*, including the recommendations from Toronto Conference, and direct it to the General Secretary for implementation.

Carried**Global and Ecumenical Partners**

Global and ecumenical partners and members of the Partner Council expressed their thanks and gratitude for the United Church's solidarity and commitment to living out of faith, while accompanying partners in living out of their faith in their own particular contexts. They raised up the work of The United Church of Canada with respect to right relations with the Indigenous church, the ongoing work to embody equity and racial inclusivity, and the commitment to embracing full communion with more and more communities of faith. They reminded us of the need to support communities dealing with human rights issues globally. In conclusion, the United Church was encouraged to learn and grow together, as that will only make all stronger.

Youth Forum

After the morning break Youth Forum representatives presented Nora Sanders and Moderator Jordan Cantwell each with a Youth Forum t-shirt.

DECISION SESSION THEME: LEADERSHIP

Facilitation Group members Jamie Scott and Carmen Lansdowne presented the report of the Facilitation Group on the Leadership theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- Appropriate leadership is essential for the mission of the church; leadership should be relevant to the reality of when and where we live.
- Some individuals felt lost in a discussion specifically on student preparation for ministry; there was concern there were knowledge gaps not necessarily addressed during the listening sessions, for example: the difference between testamur and a degree.

GCE 06 FORMATION FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

What We Heard

- There was affirmation that this is a stronger document than what came to GC42.
- There was affirmation that the church should be in conversation with theological schools and theological training centres.
- There was recognition that schools/training centres have the responsibility for determining their curricula and programs; students have the option to choose the best school and program for their needs.
- The groups generally affirmed the direction of this proposal, with the following feedback on the numbered parts of the proposal:
 - There was struggle with the two-year Supervised Ministry Experience; wondered if there could be flexibility on the length of term.
 - Groups named strong support for Point 11 about diversification of faculty and curricula. Some suggested a broadening of the definition of diversity (e.g. LGBTQ2+).
 - There are mixed views specifically on Point 13; some groups affirmed it, others suggested it be removed. There were also questions about what accountability means and how the Office of Vocation would hold ministry personnel accountable for ongoing education.
 - Some noted that the report is focused on preparation for ordered ministry—it does not deal with preparation for service as a Designated Lay Minister.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Sheryl McLeod/Mary-Jane Hobden

GC43 2018-30

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *GCE 06 Formation for Church Leadership* and direct the General Secretary to implement its recommendations.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: SMALL AND RURAL MINISTRIES

Facilitation Group members Jamie Scott and Betty Kelly presented the report of the Facilitation Group on the Small and Rural Ministries theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- Rural ministry is a very important part of the church; it's not just on the prairies. Each rural area has its own characteristics and challenges.
- Rural ministries keep people together.
- Need to make a distinction between rural and isolated. There is a difference between the two.
- There are significant challenges facing these ministries right now—they are at a crisis point—and they have been the heart of the United Church.
- Economic struggles in communities and financial pressures on communities of faith; rural communities are also facing depopulation. We are losing touch—ministers often don't live in the community(/ies) they serve.
- Small churches are not only rural—there is need for an alternative model of ministry in smaller churches. Often the current model of ministry doesn't fit innovative ways of being the church.

BC 06 MINISTRY SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

What We Heard

- Strong agreement with the proposal.
- Some said we need to capitalize on the models where things are working successfully already; we need not always reinvent the wheel. Effective models exist in All Native Circle Conference.
- Several groups said that a handbook would be helpful. One group wondered whether, if the policy and handbook are created, there needs to be a network.
- One group said there doesn't need to be a staff role; another group suggested there should be a regional paid accountable staff.
- There were questions about how some of the resources might be adapted for small urban ministry.
- One group wondered when there is no longer a presbytery what touchstone for communication will exist?
- The proposal presupposes the supervising minister is ordered but it is sometimes the case that a supervising minister is a lay person.
- It is hard to find people to supervise; becoming a growing demand on ministry leadership.
- There can be tension when the supervising minister needs to spend significant time with a pastoral charge that is not your own.

- A minority felt that this is forcing small and rural communities of faith to pay for a service that is required by *The Manual*; on the other side there is a community of faith paying someone who is not always there. Is remuneration a solution? Would the regions provide resources?

Suggested Way Forward

Moved: Ingrid Brown/Brian Mee

GC43 2018-31

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *BC 06 Ministry Support and Supervision* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried

BQ 06 ALTERNATE RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

What We Heard

- There is strong support for the proposal.
- It would be good to have options and alternatives.
- Policy/practice needs to catch up with reality. Many communities of faith are having “meetings” that are not meetings (as defined by *The Manual*).
- Need more guidelines and more flexibility; need structures for locally appropriate governance. Guidelines are better than models—one size doesn’t fit all.
- We should be sharing best practices when bodies are successfully changing governance practices. For example, one group shared about a multiple pastoral charges sharing one Ministry and Personnel Committee.
- One group suggests to refer to the Manual Committee for consideration with respect to the ongoing revision and location of the bylaws; Manual Committee is already considering guiding principles without defining how they must be met.

Suggested Way Forward

Moved: Wanda Stride/Morgan Bell

GC43 2018-32

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *BQ 06 Alternate Relationships and Governance Structures*, and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried

MNWO 04 ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

What We Heard

- Existing church grants for technology should continue with prioritizing rural congregations with high needs.
- There was support for the Church’s role in advocating to government and telecom companies for adequate internet access in all rural communities; all the technology in the world can’t overcome connectivity and networking issues. This is a justice issue.

- This is important because of increased use of technology for mandatory training; this is an issue of equity.
- Suggestion for a church-wide IT strategic plan on use of technologies in the church; could be a focused study in each region.
- Technology is also a concern for urban congregations due to structure and connectivity concerns.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: George Bott/Tony Orlando

GC43 2018-33

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *MNWO 04 Access to Technology for Effective Communication*, and directs the General Secretary to establish a plan for advocacy for rural connectivity and to implement the proposal.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: INTERCULTURAL AND DOMINANT PRIVILEGE LENSES

Facilitation Group members Hewitt Holmes and Betty Kelly presented the report of the facilitation group on the Intercultural and Dominant Privilege Lenses theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- We need to reflect on our responsibility and the role we play, and the ways we live this theme out.
- Appreciate understanding the past the present and plan for our future of our being; some in the church are still not clear on the distinction between multicultural and intercultural.
- It's not about the small percentages but affects all of us.
- These lenses are important because they are an opportunity for the privileged to raise this issue.
- One group questioned how do we raise these issues at the pastoral charge? Some congregations might not have capacity to add additional committees.
- Regions need time to organize themselves; we should not be imposing new structures on the regions.
- We need to walk the talk; this is the work of Christ's ministry.
- The Affirm United/S'Affirmer Ensemble process asks us to do this—to transform your community into one that is radically hospitable to everyone.

ANW 09 RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, RACIAL JUSTICE, AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

What We Heard

- All groups affirmed the need to respond to this important issue. However while groups appreciated the intent, they had a variety of opinions on the details of the proposal.

- Some congregations are not very diverse (and can be self-focused), making it difficult to undertake this work at the congregational level.
- Every community has racism. In addition, groups noted we need to approach interculturalism with respect to classism, ableism, and linguistic diversity.
- Some people reacted to the title and it made them defensive at the outset.
- It can be helpful to have extra support for ethnic and migrant leaders who may be alone in ministry in rural contexts; this training could be provided for members of ministry and personnel committees.
- This is important work in the church. We need to make resources available for use. Mandating the work feels unreasonable, should be optional.
- The church needs to continue this work, and one group felt this proposal was an important nudge not to let this work fall off the table while we adjust to the new structure.
- This proposal may not actually work to dismantle the systems that have created and supported racism.
- This needs an educational component for individuals who come from dominant culture/privilege. This is not an isolated situation—it exists and persists in the church. The church needs to own its commitment to becoming intercultural so that we can dismantle systems of oppression, not just talk about it.
- Some groups remarked that the proposal is a way forward but did not feel it is the right way forward. Some felt the timing is premature while acknowledging that we can't ignore the issue. Will support guidelines and principles but not mandated committees.
- “Not now” is not a good thing to be saying to marginalized communities who are suffering; could explore alternatives like a 12-step guide—similar to Holy Manners.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Alwin Maben/Hedy Baker-Graf

GC43 2018-34

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal ANW 09 to the General Secretary.

Carried

BQ 03 EQUITY MONITOR

What We Heard

- Mixed support from some groups, many groups affirmed the proposal.
- It was unclear to some people which courts the proposal referred to.
- One group asked should the General Council add to demands on staff.
- Some individuals felt it should be a paid position. A few groups noted it doesn't require a paid staff position—volunteers can make sure that there are a range of accommodations to ensure that spaces are accessible, and needs are met. A set of guidelines could support volunteers taking on this role.
- All groups affirmed the idea of a handbook.
- The language of equity can be confused with other areas of equality in the church—why not use the language of accessibility?

- There is tremendous cost to make things truly accessible.
- It's not the expectation that all needs will be accommodated, but the conversations need to happen.
- It might need to be a team so that all needs and concerns can be met. There are existing systems in many places in the church that are already doing this well.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Judith Evenden/Bill Sheaves

GC43 2018-35

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *BQ 03 Equity Monitor* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried

BQ 04 DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO

What We Heard

- Groups had generally supportive conversations and strongly supported this proposal.
- End products should be vetted by end users.
- One group suggested consulting with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
- One group mentioned the church made a previous commitment to descriptive video in 2009.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Jennifer Canning/Penny Culverson

GC43 2018-36

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *BQ 04 Descriptive Video* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried

BQ 05 INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY/EQUITABLE STANDARDS

What We Heard

- The majority of groups were in favour of this proposal.
- There are legal standards for accessibility (with Ontario leading the country on this) and existing resources that need to be shared with all in the church, not just staff.
- Some were concerned about overloading ministry personnel, some were concerned about overwhelming volunteers; but agreement the church needs to act.
- One group noted it could be difficult if this was mandatory, but also helpful in meeting provincial and federal standards and generally supported the proposal.
- There are variations from province to province. More than one group mentioned the church can lead on this by meeting and exceeding standards.
- The church needs to consult with people with disabilities in the church, not just those recognized by existing statutes to ensure our policies are as inclusive as possible.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Robert Gross/Kim Shantz****GC43 2018-37**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *BQ 05 Integrated Accessibility/Equitable Standards* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried**BQ 08 UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO WORK WITH UNESCO'S CANADIAN COALITION OF MUNICIPALITIES AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION****What We Heard**

- There was strong support for the proposal; some were very excited about it.
- The church will need more information about the named UNESCO program in order to implement.
- Several groups suggested communities of faith collaborate with their own municipalities.
- Two groups suggested this could be added to proposal ANW 09, clarifies some of the ambiguities there—could it be a starting point or an implementation strategy on that proposal?
- One group noted that our new partner denomination The Disciples of Christ is involved in this UNESCO program.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Loraine Shepherd/Shelley Roberts****GC43 2018-38**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal BQ 08 and Direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried**GCE 16 MIGRANT CHURCH: MIGRATION****What We Heard**

- There was strong support for this proposal from most groups, although some were not able to come to a consensus position.
- One group suggested the General Secretary combine points A and B on implementation because there are many organizations who should be consulted and with which we could partner.
- One group suggested we need to find out what work is already happening on this with global partners; need to connect with migrant communities.
- The appendix was helpful information—the church needs resources to better understand the plight of migrant workers. One group noted they were sure there are already many great resources available, especially from partners.
- One group suggested including the homeless, adopting the Berlin statement, and developing resources to share.

- One group expressed that this was a timely/urgent issue they would like to see addressed as quickly as possible.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Gaie Goin/Rosemary Addison****GC43 2018-39**

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *GCE 16 Migrant Church: Migration (PMM 16)* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried**SK 05 LIVING INTO TRANSFORMATION: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY AS AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH****What We Heard**

- All groups affirmed the intent of the proposal; some groups affirmed the proposal as is.
- Groups felt that using the language of “encouraging” the regions was more appropriate than “requiring” the regions.
- One group said it seems tokenistic to collect names of people who identified as racialized; other groups were concerned about keeping such a list.
- One group named support for the idea of including at least one person who identified as racialized on the admissions board, but commented that the number needs to be high enough to achieve collective impact.
- Newcomer events can be difficult geographically in some regions.
- Several groups noted it would be good to broaden the language to racialized/marginalized.
- More than one group suggested this proposal should interface in some way with ANW 09.
- One group noted that the first and third parts of the proposal were already being addressed in the newly revised admissions process.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Allison Playfair/Marie Claude Manga****GC43 2018-40**

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal *SK 05 Living into Transformation* to the General Secretary.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: REMIT IMPLEMENTATION

Facilitation Group members Betty Kelly and Jamie Scott presented the report of the Facilitation Group on the Remit Implementation theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- One group had a lengthy discussion on the complications and importance and challenges of the networks and clusters part of the new structure.

ANW 08 PRIORITIZING CLUSTERS AND NETWORKS

What We Heard

- Appreciation for the lifting-up of this work.
- Groups supported parts of the proposal but not all parts.
- Groups supported the idea of intentional promotion of networks and clusters; may be challenging to expect them to self-initiate.
- One group noted in their region, recent initiatives have required staff and budget in order to get established; if this is essential the church must have a plan to resource it (i.e. staff and/or money). Other groups echoed concerns about resourcing.
- One group noted there is a distinction between a) establishing a network with financial support, and b) the financial support for the program that a network may deliver.
- How can General Council provide a strategy without becoming directive? There is a need for the church to support the development of clusters and networks without forcing or imposing on communities of faith.
- The purpose of clusters and networks are different. Especially networks may not be the ministry of one region alone.
- One group questioned if it was possible for clusters or networks to be ecumenical beyond communities of faith.
- One comment noted concern in the ANCC about how big things are in the new structure—if things are to be organic, what happens if the invitation doesn't come?
- There was recognition that this will take concerted effort from everyone to make clusters and networks work.
- Some groups expressed concern that it may be too early for this proposal, rather should wait to see what develops organically.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Miriam Spies/Cassie Vermeer-Korittko

GC43 2018-41

That the 43rd General Council:

- 1) affirm that clusters and networks will be central to living out our faith in the Three-Council Model, and essential to a healthy transition to the Three-Council Model; and
- 2) refer proposal *ANW 08 Prioritizing Clusters and Networks* to the General Secretary.

Carried**Moderator's Advisory Committee Report**

Tracy Murton, chair of the Moderator's Advisory Committee, introduced the members of the committee and highlighted their Accountability Report. She thanked Moderator Jordan Cantwell, the Moderator's partner, Laura Fohse, and the committee for their service to the United Church.

DECISION SESSION THEME: THEOLOGY

Facilitation Group members Hewitt Holmes and Betty Kelly presented the report of the facilitation group on the Theology theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- No groups had general comments on this theme.

MAR 02 1925 20 ARTICLES OF FAITH**What We Heard**

- There was either mixed or no support for the proposal.
- Groups expressed the need for General Council to define and engage the church on what is exactly meant by "essential agreement." It is being used differently in different parts of the country—one group noted the Office of Vocation might help to bring consistency.
- The Articles of Faith were written close to 100 years ago and do not take into consideration modern scholarship, biblical understanding, feminist perspectives, Indigenous wisdom, and expressions of our understanding of God.
- The word "essential" was originally adopted at union to accommodate the more inclusive perspectives of the Congregationalist churches.
- There was some discussion about whether and how the Articles of Faith are used at the congregational level.
- The conversation raised the question of how we address different theologies on the spectrum of progressive to conservative.
- There were suggestions that A Song of Faith could be the requirement for essential agreement when entering ministry.
- One group wondered about the implications for recognition of ministry from partner denominations.
- Notes indicated that groups discussed whether or not we should delete the 20 Articles of Faith from The Manual, even though MAR 02 actually proposes removing them from

the requirements for essential agreement during ordination/admission/recognition of ministry.

- One group noted that this proposal was transmitted with non-concurrence from Maritime Conference.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: David Whiting/Alison Mock

GC43 2018-42

That the 43rd General Council:

- 1) Direct the Theology, Inter-church, Interfaith Committee to engage in a study of the meaning of “essential agreement,” and
- 2) Take no further action on proposal MAR 02.

Carried

SK 02 CHANGE OF WORDING TO QUESTIONS ASKED OF CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

What We Heard

- There was mixed reaction in groups, but no affirmation for the proposal.
- Groups expressed a desire for the church to have this conversation; groups reported that there is a desire for more inclusive language addressing the male-gendered language in the Trinity.
- There was discussion about the implications of this proposal—which would mean a move from Trinitarian to Unitarian theology—what would that mean for our ecumenical and full-communion partners? Many groups expressed concern about the ecumenical implications.
- One group suggested a study on whether we could modernize the Trinitarian language to be more contemporary for the essential agreement requirements.
- One participant wondered if the question could simply just be “Do you believe in God?”
- One group said that this conversation has been a burden and resulted in broken relationships in other courts of the church.
- There was reluctance to engage in another remit.
- One participant wondered why we were discussing something that they felt was settled at GC42.
- Some groups proposed a study that would be brought back to the 44th General Council.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Bill Steadman/Maxwell Martin

GC43 2018-43

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.

Carried

TOR 04 RETHINKING AND UPDATING THE SOCIAL GOSPEL THEOLOGY

What We Heard

- There were mixed views on this proposal, although there was constructive discussion in the groups, there wasn't consensus to affirm the proposal.
- The tone of the proposal might suggest that the Social Gospel is the intellectual property of the United Church; we need to be careful in our language.
- One group said that 19th-century understandings of right and wrong need to be brought into the modern age; study and conversation are good things.
- Corporate memory of our theological roots in the Social Gospel has been lost; updating theological language addressing the current changes in our society's economic and social context. There is United Church theological work on this issue that is not assembled in one place.
- There is much good theology happening in our world through other groups and countries; we do not need to take time, energy and money to address this issue.
- Groups were concerned about the additional recommendation by Toronto Conference directing regions to add social justice animators.
- It is important to consistently re-evaluate and update our evolving theology. The conversation/study needs to include scholarly sources from diverse backgrounds and theologies. It was noted all theologians cited in the report were white.
- The Theology and Interchurch Interfaith Committee has already been given several pieces of work; could this be a conversation that happens elsewhere? Regions? Clusters?

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Samuel Vauvert Dansokho/G. Pirie Mitchell

GC43 2018-44

The 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal TOR 04.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: IDENTITY AND VISION

Facilitation Group members Jamie Scott and Marion Best presented the report of the facilitation group on the Identity and Vision theme, reflecting what they heard and their recommended way forward on proposals.

What We Heard about This Theme

- Important for us to be talking about identity amidst the remit process.
- Need to be able to articulate more than a few public perceptions and/or perspectives.
- Without a vision we are lost.
- We need to stay true to our vision and identity as we move from the old to the new.

BC 05 A VISION TO GROUND US

What We Heard

There was support for this proposal from most of the groups, accompanied by very robust conversations. Some comments included:

- This work may be a priority but should it be?
- There was debate about the need to do this type of work or is it time to stop talking and get to action.
- Two groups felt it was unnecessary when we have A New Creed and A Song of Faith.
- There was concern about how much money would be spent to do this work.
- People recalled the Arnprior consultation and the Calls to Be the Church in GC39 (which were used to hold ourselves accountable).
- One group commented it's about time. We have been tied up with structure conversations for so long we have not talked about being the church. We need to affirm the importance of working with and through the Spirit.
- Congregations already have familiarity with the Joint Needs Assessment process, the General Council should do this type of work too. We should always put mission and purpose first and the bricks and mortar will follow.
- Need to maintain and deepen the relationship the Indigenous church in this work as well as equal partners in the sacred circle.
- Some affirmed the need to engage all levels of the church; one group preferred to leave this work to the Moderator and the denominational executive.
- Important in the light of ecumenical partners.
- Perhaps we need a good marketer—we need an effective communication strategy to relate who we are to our congregations and the world.
- There is a wide cross-section of people and ideals; it's an expensive process that cannot be justified.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Mark Marshall/Ingrid Brown

GC43 2018-45

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal BC 05 and refer it to the General Secretary.

Carried

TICIF 02/GCE 18 HONOURING THE DIVINE IN EACH OTHER: HINDU-UNITED CHURCH RELATIONS

What We Heard

- The United Church is really good at creating resources, but needs to encourage people to use them.
- Groups appreciated the consistency with other interfaith partners, and some mentioned previous interfaith statements in particular.

- One group requested to make online access to this statement easier. The Commons website is not user-friendly.
- This statement should be referred to the theological schools for study and use.
- One group raised a justice concern about the caste system.
- Some wished to see the United Church to go further with all interfaith statements.
- There was a concern raised about the wording “God’s liberating presence at work in the Hindu faith” on page 4. It was explained that this is from the 1966 United Church document stating that God is at work in other religions.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Robert Goss/Jim McKibbin

GC43 2018-46

That the 43rd General Council adopt the statement “Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church-Hindu Relations Today” and commend it to communities of faith as encouragement to continue to build interfaith relationships.

Carried

Marion Best thanked the court for their work and the notes that came from the discussion groups, which enabled the Facilitation Team to do their work effectively. The Moderator thanked the Facilitation Team for their work throughout the meeting.

The Moderator explained to the court that they would next work on three proposals from various themes which had been noted as ready to be voted on (over 90% approval).

DECISION SESSION THEME: MINISTRY PERSONNEL (CONTINUED)

SK 01 SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ACCESSIBILITY

What We Heard

There was strong affirmation for the proposal.

- A number of groups suggested the church consider additional languages as needed/appropriate; we should be translating when there is need/critical mass.
- One comment flagged the possibility that this proposal could be perceived as racist.
- One group noted a concern about funding the implementation.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Pamela Thomas/Robert Hays

GC43 2018-47

That the 43rd General Council affirms proposal *SK 01 Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policies and Procedures Accessibility* and directs it to the General Secretary, General Council for implementation.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: SMALL AND RURAL MINISTRIES (CONTINUED)**MNWO 02 FUNDING RURAL MINISTRY****What We Heard**

- There was a strong consensus that we need to find long term solutions to significant problems facing rural ministries, without a will to affirm the proposal.
- Consider asking the General Secretary to write a policy to support rural ministry.
- There was some support for the creation of the Rural Ministries Animator to respond to the sense of isolation and urgent needs facing rural congregations.
- There were many questions about funding, appropriate structure to respond, and whether this is a prairie or national issue similar to other proposals on small and rural ministry.
- There is urgent help needed, but groups raised concerns about how the proposed funding allocation would impact the grants to regions.
- Revitalization of ministry is the issue, not the money—the proposal needs to go to the Regions.

Suggested Way Forward**Motion: Susan White/Julie Frostad****GC43 2018-48**

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to encourage the regions to consider proposal MNWO 02 and that the General Council take no further action.

Carried**DECISION SESSION THEME: REMIT IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED)****GCE 19 ASSESSMENT RATE (2019-2021)****What We Heard**

All groups agreed with the proposal, with the following comments:

- This proposal is speaking to that which is in the remit background material for Funding a new model.
- A group said they were not debating the rate but how it's implemented; staff resources were intended to be closer to pastoral charges—it seems now that the opposite is happening.
- One group wanted to see a change to 10% increase each of the next three years for all pastoral charges.
- This proposal clarifies what the assessment rate is based on and what the cap process looks like going forward.
- GC42 thought the split would be 60/40, and now it is 50/50. When, how, and why was this changed?

- One group felt it was necessary to trust the process.
- A few groups asked: Who decides if there is an unusual event or transaction?
- Several groups mentioned they wanted clarity about who gets assessed. What about a new community of faith like a house church? Will they eventually be assessed? If they don't have a charitable number can they be assessed?
- It was suggested that we need to educate the church on how the use of Mission & Service funds has changed and how the assessments are helping us to respond to the changing funding of all our work.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Brian Cornelius/Susan Brodrick

GC43 2018-49

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal *GCE 19 Assessment Rate (2019-2021)* and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Carried

The Moderator explained that the next items of business would be those that had a lower approval rating (less than 90%) and which had therefore not moved straight to a vote during the facilitation group reports. These items would be dealt with in theme groupings in priority sequence (as determined by online vote prior to the meeting).

DECISION SESSION THEME: REMIT IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED)

BQ 01 MAINTAINING THE NAME GENERAL COUNCIL

HAM 01 MAINTAINING THE TERM "GENERAL COUNCIL"

What We Heard

- Many groups dealt with both proposals together, so the facilitation team did as well.
- About 2/3 of the groups supported the proposals.
- In part, support for the proposals was because the name General Council translates better into French.
- Some folks felt that it was important to have a new name for a new structure while others wanted to honour our history by keeping the name General Council.
- Ecumenical partners know the name as General Council.
- Keeping the name General Council is one less change to adjust to; Denominational Council can be difficult to pronounce.
- One group commented it is not worth a remit if one is needed to revert to the name General Council.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Larry Doyle/Bill Sheaves

GC43 2018-50

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposals BQ 01 / HAM 01.

Allan Buckingham explained that the Business Table wanted to offer a friendly amendment to try to work within the process that is being followed at this meeting. The General Secretary explained that this option would not require a further remit. Changing the name back to “General Council” would require a remit.

Motion to Amend Larry Doyle/Bill Sheaves

That the phrase: “That ‘denominational council’ be understood to be the legal description of the decision making body of The United Church of Canada which will continue to be referred to as the ‘General Council’ and;” be added to the beginning of the motion.

Motion as Amended

That “denominational council” be understood to be the legal description of the decision-making body of The United Church of Canada which will continue to be referred to as the “General Council” and; that the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposals BQ 1/HAM 1.

Carried

GCE 08 REMIT RELATED REVISIONS TO THE BASIS OF UNION

What We Heard

- Groups expressed general affirmation for the proposal; it enables the work of transitioning to the three-court model. However, there were several general concerns raised by the groups:
 - One group was concerned about the removal of reference to the sick and elderly as a mission of the church.
 - Many groups commented that the exact changes should have been provided in parallel to facilitate clear understanding of what was changed.
 - One group questioned: What are the ambiguities that require discernment?
 - There was a request for a clear definition about how lay people are elected or appointed to the regional council.
 - There was a significant concern over the lack of clarity surrounding changes relating to definitions of pastoral charge, congregation, and communities of faith, and their relationships to each other and to the regions.
 - One group asked: What is the central unit of the church? Pastoral charge or community of faith?
- In addition to the general comments above, there were the following specific concerns:

Including the word “Christ” following Jesus in sections **5.3.1(3)**, **6.3.4(1)**, and **7.3.1.(1)**.

Revise “Calls & Appointments/Covenants” to read “Calls, Appointments & Covenants” in sections **5.3.4(1)** and **6.3.7**.

Include: “No candidate shall be received by the Office of Vocation unless recommended by a Community of Faith” as Section 13.2 and renumber accordingly.

5.3.3 (5) - it was suggested to add “The care of the poor and the visiting of the sick.”(see general comment above)

4.1 The members of pastoral charges and congregations shall continue to be members of the United Church. - Should this refer to communities of faith?

5.7 Church Membership – does this section need to be revisited based on the potential change to the meaning of membership in the proposal from the Theology committee?

10.0 The Order of Ministry shall be open to both men and women. Should this not be revised to say all individuals like other sections that had gendered references removed?

11.7.2 It was suggested to replace “offer of employment” with “other form of covenant.”

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Fred Braman/Blair Paterson

GC43 2018-51

That the 43rd General Council:

- 1) Refer the proposal to the Executive, General Council;
- 2) Refer the GC 43 Discussion Group notes on proposal GCE 08 to the General Secretary for review and to facilitate further edits; and,
- 3) Delegate the authority to the Executive, General Council to finalize the required edits to the Basis of Union.

Motion to Amend: Mark Arnill/Susan Brodrick

That the third point be amended to read:

- 3) That the 43rd General Council be reconvened electronically to finalize the edits to the Basis of Union.

After further discussion the motion to amend was withdrawn.

Original Motion as Moved

Carried

MAR 03 ACTION ON THE FORMATION OF AN ASSOCIATION OF MINISTERS WITHIN THE NEW THREE COUNCIL MODEL

What We Heard

There was some support for this proposal, but many groups had mixed feelings about it, and one group did not affirm it:

- All groups felt support for ministry personnel is important and should continue to be a priority.
- One group was more specific in suggesting clarification on how ministry personnel will be supported should happen before the end of presbyteries.
- A group reflected a concern that ministry personnel are unsure of where their support comes from if a conflict arises with a community of faith in the new structure; another

group appreciated the language of “reaffirm the importance of” the support for ministry personnel without strict timelines.

- Some wanted denominational support for such an association, others thought there should be an organic development.
- It was noted by one group that the DUCC (Diakonia in The United Church of Canada) is an association.
- There were questions about whether or not this would be similar to a union and concerns about moving towards unionization.
- One group suggested learning from other groups (e.g. Canadian Armed Forces).
- One suggestion that came from a group: delay three years and see if advocacy develops organically or with the Office of Vocation rather than setting up a separate support system now.
- One group felt it was not up to the employer to form an association and recommended taking no action.
- One group reiterated that the proposal reminds General Council that there is a task group already working on this as assigned by General Council 42, and that the task group is supposed to report to the General Council Executive.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Ross Bartlett/Jim Webber-Cook

GC43 2018-52

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal MAR 03 to General Council Executive for information.

Motion to Amend: Penny Nelson/Elaine Kellogg

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal MAR 03 to General Council Executive for implementation.

Carmen Lansdowne of the Facilitation Team came forward to explain the thinking of the team.

The amendment was declared out of order.

Motion to Amend: Daniel MacDonald/Penny Nelson

That the phrase “and that the work of the current task group on the Association of Ministers be made a priority” be added to the motion.

Carried

Motion as Amended

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal MAR 03 to General Council Executive for information, and that the work of the current task group on the Association of Ministers be made a priority.

Carried

Organization of African Instituted Churches Presentation

After a break, the Venerable John Gichimu of the Organization of African Instituted Churches presented Elder Jim Angus and the Indigenous Church a *rubega* from the Maasai. He also presented a purse and an armband. The *rubega* shows that the person wearing it on behalf of the community is the custodian of the wisdom. The purse, also given to the Elder, represents holding the story, history, teachings, and practices of the community.

Elder Jim Angus spoke on behalf of Indigenous peoples and The United Church of Canada and expressed gratitude in receiving these gifts.

DECISION SESSION THEME: IDENTITY AND VISION (CONTINUED)

BC 03 LEADING ON PURPOSE

What We Heard

- There was no consensus on the proposal. Comments included:
 - Who we say we are as a denomination and who we say we are in our congregational living is disconnected. We would want the denomination to clarify its purpose and vision so that our congregations can live into that vision.
 - Efficiency is not a Christian virtue.
 - This feels redundant or too late—even if it reaffirms important parts of moving forward.
 - We should be doing adaptive work instead of structural work (i.e. we need work on strategic leadership instead of functional leadership).
 - One group questioned if this proposal was really about funding and setting things up so that funding following priorities.
 - There was a question about whether or not this should be the work of the transition teams.
 - Who is setting the direction? Top down or bottom up? Concern if we are moving away from grassroots.
 - Some suggested this could be a good idea to ground us with all the changes we are undertaking, especially true since General Council Executive needs priorities to base the budget on; others were concerned this would be imposing something that shouldn't be a priority on to the General Council Executive.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Mead Baldwin/Elaine Kellogg

GC43 2018-53

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal BC 03.

Motion to Amend: Jean Macdonald/Judith Evenden

That the words: “forward the notes from the discussion and facilitation group to the new General Council Executive, and” be added to the beginning of the motion.

Carried

Motion as Amended

That the 43rd General Council forward the notes from the discussion and facilitation group to the new General Council Executive, and take no further action on proposal BC 03.

Carried

TICIF 01/GCE 17 REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP**What We Heard**

There was rigorous conversation about this proposal with many perspectives, some of which we have captured below:

- There does need to be change—could we change to something more inclusive?
- Church needs conversation about discipleship; Jesus told us to leave no one behind. We also need clarity on membership so we can determine who has the right to vote at meetings.
- Even with Model 2, we still need to draw a line about how we define commitment.
- Most groups had mixed preferences for Model 1 or 2.
- Concern was expressed about the loss of connection between baptism and membership in Model 2.
- There is a need to acknowledge that there are those who are fully active and committed and those who may be full members but not active.
- Membership is an opportunity to recognize the relationship with the community of faith.
- The language in the current model is dated (i.e. adherents may only vote on “temporal” matters).
- In one group, nineteen favoured model 1, one person liked model 2, and one was ambivalent.
- One group almost unanimously favoured model 2.
- One group felt we should start with Model 2 and incorporate the best of Model 1 into it. Another suggested combining the best of Model 1 and 2 into a Model 3.
- There is a concern about non-active members who return only to influence and cause upset over specific issues.
- Many congregations have not had conversations about membership.
- A few groups suggested that there should be further study.
- There are active congregants who might never become full members under our current model because of cultural ties to another faith tradition (e.g. Roman Catholic) but who add to the life of the church.
- If we are not careful, we could end up with too many categories of membership.
- Some disliked the binary either/or approach of the proposal. Seems administrative rather than spiritual.
- How does this fit with the General Council’s other conversations around vision and identity?

- One group commented that we haven't educated our membership well about what membership means (i.e. adherents, members, full members, transfer of membership). People need to know what it means to be a member of The United Church of Canada.
- What does it mean to belong to the family of God, to the wider Christian family? Baptism is an important part of that belonging to the family.
- One group recommended that Theology, Inter-church, Interfaith Committee do more work on this and solicit more feedback at the local level.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Loraine McKenzie Shepherd/Matthew Lindsay

GC43 2018-54

That the 43rd General Council:

- 1) Forward all notes from the Discussion Groups at GC43 to the Theology, Inter-church, Interfaith Committee to facilitate their further work on the issue of membership and;
- 2) Direct the General Secretary to develop and implement an educational campaign for communities of faith on our current membership model as defined in *The Manual*.

Motion to Amend: David Leyton-Brown/Bill Steadman

That the second point be deleted.

Carried

Motion as Amended

That the 43rd General Council forward all notes from the Discussion Groups at GC43 to the Theology, Inter-church, Interfaith Committee to facilitate their further work on the issue of membership.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: SMALL AND RURAL MINISTRIES (CONTINUED)

MNWO 01 RURAL PRAIRIE MARGINALIZATION

What We Heard

- There was mixed support for this proposal.
- Small and rural congregations are highly important to the United Church.
- There was support for consultation with rural advocacy clusters; clusters are free to be created without input from the national church.
- It is up to the region to ensure that there is a balance of representation at the Denominational Council.
- The request for exceptions is uncomfortable—it feels like a band-aid again instead of a solution; groups hear this as a cry for help and there is a lot of anxiety moving to the three-court structure.

- Groups noted that this was a rural issue, not just a Prairie rural issue; we need to avoid further isolating rural communities. Rural communities are often not represented in national church programs and committees.
- Concerns over the recommendation about creating a back door for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to become full-time worship leaders; on the other hand, it is frustrating for rural communities who have access to designated lay ministers, ministers from other denominations, or licensed lay worship leaders who are limited by *The Manual* in how/often/how long they can serve rural communities.
- Our current period of transition and ambiguity creates an opportunity for us to respond creatively to needs in the church.
- Almost all groups noted that we must respond thoughtfully to the circumstance of isolated and rural ministries; rural life is a culture.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Blair Paterson/Maxwell Martin

GC43 2018-55

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal *MNWO 01 Rural Prairie Marginalization*.

Motion to Amend: Kristiane Black/Gaie Goin

That the words “direct the General Secretary to implement GC42 2015-48;” be added to the motion.

Carried

Intercultural Observer Reflection

The Moderator invited Paul Douglas Walfall to share his reflections. Paul shared about his experiences and those of other racialized people at General Councils and other United Church meetings. He challenged the church to act (**acknowledge, confront, transform**) to end racism, identifying a three-part challenge: acknowledge and encourage dialogue; confront White privilege and entitlement both inside and outside of the church community; and build on these two steps to transform ourselves. He spoke passionately about being a member of a minority within a minority within a minority, and his struggle to not be invisible. He also challenged the church to look and see who is missing from the table. To be able to answer that question, we need to listen to the stories of the other and only then can we determine which voices are missing. The church must see each person who comes to the table not as guests but as valued members of the family who are treated with dignity, respect, and love. It is then that the church can look through the intercultural lens and have the value that is offered by all the missing voices. He concluded his remarks by saying that the church needs to question our biases, challenge our assumptions, notice who is missing, value all voices and aim for equity, and live out our commitments on becoming an intercultural church.

The Moderator thanked Paul for his challenging words.

MNWO 01 RURAL PRAIRIE MARGINALIZATION (continued)**Motion as amended**

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to implement GC42 2015-48; and take no further action on proposal *MNWO 01 Rural Prairie Marginalization*.

Carried

DECISION SESSION THEME: MINISTRY PERSONNEL (CONTINUED)**MNWO 06 APPOINTMENTS OF CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTERS****What We Heard**

It was clearly articulated that we need a larger discussion regarding choices in keeping vulnerable congregations alive. The proposal highlights there is a pressing need in rural congregations that are not left with any viable leadership options in their communities of faith under our current structure.

Discussion groups expressed a lot of mixed feelings, and it is evident there is a lot that needs clarification. There was no consensus to affirm the proposal, but an affirmation that the problem is a significant challenge.

- There were concerns over availability and consistency of accountability, supervision and discipline.
- There was confusion over the role and accountability of Congregational Designated Ministers as already defined in *The Manual*.
- Some groups questioned whether other options within our current structure could respond to the problem.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Linda Buchanan/Tony Orlando

GC43 2018-56

That the 43rd General Council refer proposal *MNWO 06 Appointments of Congregational Designated Ministers* to the Executive of the Denominational Council.

Motion to Amend: Murray Speer/Mary Quirk

That the 43rd General Council refer "the first two suggestions in section 3 of" proposal *MNWO 06 Appointments of Congregational Designated Ministers* to the Executive of the Denominational Council.

Defeated

Original Motion as Moved

Carried

MNWO 07 EQUAL PAY FOR DESIGNATED LAY MINISTERS

What We Heard

The groups had mixed response to this proposal.

- There was recognition of the value of the work done by Designated Lay Ministers.
- Some Commissioners felt the education required for ordered ministry deserves higher pay; others felt that with similar ministry and job descriptions there should be equal pay for equal work.
- Some groups noted that it is possible to pay both ordered ministers and Designated Lay Ministers more than the minimum; multiple groups noted the difference in current pay minimums is very small.
- One suggested solution was amending the salary schedule to include a matrix that guides communities of faith to consider factors in addition to equal pay for equal work (e.g. education).
- Multiple groups suggested more work is needed on this issue, with some groups expressing concern this was a workaround to the failed Remit 6.

Suggested Way Forward

Motion: Bill Sheaves/Kyle Grant

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposal *MNWO 07 Equal Pay for Designated Lay Ministers*.

Wanda Stride introduced a motion to amend *MNWO 07 Equal Pay for Designated Lay Ministers* to include the words: “direct the General Secretary to establish a program to encourage reconciliation of the broken relationships between the different streams of ministry and to” at the beginning of the motion. The Facilitation Team noted that this was a friendly amendment.

NOT COMPLETED (see closing motion re: unfinished business)

In the midst of this work, Daniel MacDonald and Penny Nelson presented the following proposal from the point of order microphone.

GC43 09 SEEKING FORGIVENESS

Motion: Daniel MacDonald/Penny Nelson

That the 43rd General Council seeks forgiveness from our racialized siblings in Christ and furthermore commit to transforming our business practice and procedures for the remainder of this meeting, from this point forward.

NOT COMPLETED (see closing motion re: unfinished business)

Formal proceedings were suspended for an extended time to hear from members of the Council who shared their experiences of racism, discrimination, and prejudice, as well as prayers and hopes for the United Church as an intercultural church.

The Moderator offered her thanks to those who shared their stories and exposed their own vulnerability. She chose not to ask for a vote on the motion that had launched this time, in

order that Commissioners could absorb and reflect on all that they had heard. She repeated that we as a church need to learn how to open this gift and receive it. The Moderator announced that there would be no further business until after the supper break, which had been delayed, and then invited all into prayer.

GC43 CLOSING PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

Motion: Nora Sanders/Larry Doyle

GC43 2018-57

Authority of the Interim Sub-Executive

That the Interim Sub-Executive of the General Council be given all authority of the Executive of the General Council as described in *The Manual*.

Authority of the Executive of the General Council

That the authority of the Executive of the General Council be as described in *The Manual*.

Referral of Business from the 43rd General Council

That all unfinished business of the 43rd General Council be referred to the Executive of the General Council together with all reports of the Discussion Groups and Facilitation Group.

Preparation of Remits

That all of the remits necessary to test the will of the church on the decisions made by the 43rd General Council be authorized, and 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.

Digest of Minutes of the Executive and Sub-Executive of the General Council

That a digest of the actions of the Executive and Sub-Executive of General Council be made available to Commissioners to the 43rd General Council 2018 between the meeting of this General Council and that of the 44th General Council 2021 and that this digest be included in the documentation for the 44th General Council 2021.

Authority for Changes in The Manual and Record of Proceedings

That the General Secretary, General Council be authorized to prepare the *Record of Proceedings of the 43rd General Council* and to make necessary changes in *The Manual* resulting from the actions of this General Council, with such changes taking effect upon the publication of *The Manual* on January 1, 2019.

Publication of the Record of Proceedings

That the General Secretary, General Council be authorized to publish the *Record of Proceedings* in such format(s) as deemed appropriate for the communication of the actions of the 43rd General Council throughout the church.

Adjournment

That the meeting of the 43rd General Council be closed at the end of the Service of Installation on Friday, July 27, 2018.

Carried

The 43rd General Council shared in closing worship led by Barb Janes, which included the installation of the new Moderator, Rev. Dr. Richard Bott.

Appendix: Facilitation Group Report on Administration of Sacraments

Because of time constraints during the meeting, the General Council did not have time to discuss the theme Administration of Sacraments. Following is the Facilitation Group's report on this theme; all other Facilitation Group reports are incorporated into the minutes above.

GENERAL COMMENTS**What We Heard**

- Groups have concern for communities of faith who are not able to participate in sacramental life and the church needs to provide the sacraments to them.
- We need contextualized understanding of local ministry needs: there is a shortage of ordained ministers and that is changing the nature of diaconal ministry. Active and retired diaconal ministers are treated differently.
- A group identified sacraments as at the core of congregational life, and we need to administer the sacraments with proper training.
- Several groups felt this is theme is coming to us because the One Order of Ministry Remit (6) failed.
- Some groups suggested reviewing previous studies (e.g. the report that went to GC41) or engaging in a new study on this issue.
- There is pastoral concern for diaconal ministers, some of whom feel devalued by not being able to administer sacraments.
- We allow sacrament elders, but do not always allow diaconal ministers to administer sacraments.
- These proposals have implications for our relationships with global and ecumenical partners.

GCE 20 SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR DIACONAL MINISTERS**What We Heard**

- General affirmation for the proposal from most groups.

- One group would be in favour of affirming this proposal because proposal ANW 04 would take time because it requires a remit.
- Is this a polity question or a policy issue?
- What about our global/ecumenical partners?
- Why is there no national policy already?
- Support for a larger conversation.
- Some groups needed clarification.
- Agreement because it would only be given when a diaconal minister was in a covenanted call or appointment (as opposed to ANW 04 where it would be at commissioning)
- Favours a study and remit.
- One group divided and uncomfortable.
- One group thought this was the compromise for the church.

Suggested Way Forward

1) That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal GCE 20 – Sacramental Licence for Diaconal Ministers and directs the General Secretary to implement.

Moved:

Seconded:

ANW 4 THE GRANTING OF THE RIGHT TO ADMINISTER SACRAMENTS TO ALL DIACONAL MINISTERS AT THE TIME OF THEIR COMMISSIONING

What We Heard

- Groups were mixed in response to this proposal. Some supported, some did not.
- Sometimes orders of ministry want to be different, sometimes want to be the same. They are not the same—different training, different processes.
- We have a need to serve communities who don't have access to the sacraments, but don't see a national policy or strategy to make that happen.
- Need for consistency across the country.
- Administration of sacraments is a calling, not a task, and has implications for our relationship with global and ecumenical partners.
- People in the pews often don't make a distinction between orders of ministry—if their minister is ordained or diaconal.
- Conferences give the licence because of the need; there are times when licensing is necessary.
- Several groups asked for a study on this issue.
- Several groups noted we are trying to fix a big problem with a band-aid.

ANW 10 SACRAMENT ELDERS POLICY**What We Heard**

- Some groups were in favour, some were not.
- The creation of sacrament elder was specific to a certain need and time-bound.
- Questions from groups included:
 - If there is already ministry personnel, why the need for a sacrament elder?
 - Why is this needed?
 - How frequently would this be needed and what other options are available?
- Would be helpful for busy ministers and for small/rural communities of faith.

MNWO 03 SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR RETIRED DIACONAL MINISTERS**What We Heard**

- One group suggested the court consider using this wording in ANW 04.
- Need further education about the different streams of ministry.
- One group suggested this should be also extended to diaconal ministers retained on the roll.
- Many groups felt their comments were addressed in response to other proposals.
- Not prepared to give a license to retired diaconal ministers when we might not give license to active diaconal ministers.
- While some groups affirmed this proposal, there was a large degree of uncertainty and a wide spectrum of opinion.

Suggested Way Forward

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to conduct a comprehensive study on these issues (including all issues raised in proposals MNWO 01 and MNWO 02 on rural and small church ministry) and develop a strategy for meeting the ministry needs of all communities of faith, including access to the sacraments; and

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposals ANW 04, ANW 10, and MNWO 03.

Moved:

Seconded:

BUSINESS OF THE 43RD GENERAL COUNCIL

Proposals to the 43rd General Council

THEMES AND RELATED PROPOSALS

Care for Creation

The three proposals that have been grouped together here relate in one way or another to our responsibilities as faithful stewards of creation. There is a call to work collaboratively with those of other faiths on many issues concerning the environment; a more specific call for action in relation to the Trans Mountain Pipeline; and a request for comprehensive emergency planning and response for situations that, increasingly often, arise from climate-related natural disasters.

- ANW 03 - Disaster Assistance Strategy
- BC 08 - Support to Terminate Plans to Expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline
- LON 01 - In Our Common Interest - Indigenous Peoples and Abrahamic Faiths

Identity and Vision

What we believe is foundational to who we are, what we choose to do, and how we operate. Grouped together under this heading are two proposals about developing a clear vision for the church, and clearly linking vision and mission to our decisions and actions, along with specific proposals about the meaning of membership in our church today, and the relationship between our Christian faith and Hinduism. All of these relate in some way to a wish to be clear about the identity that connects us within The United Church of Canada.

- BC 03 - Leading on Purpose
- BC 05 - A Vision to Ground Us
- TICIF 01-GCE 17 - Report on Membership
- TICIF 02-GCE 18 - Honouring the Divine in Each Other - Hindu-United Church Relations

Remit Implementation

The enactment of the “Comprehensive Renewal” remits does not cover all the details necessary to implement the changes that they represent. Various things need to be done to implement the desired changes. These proposals all clarify or expand on aspects of the structural changes that the enactment of the remits would have us move into. Other proposals related to remit implementation are suggested to be dealt with in consent, but it is expected that Commissioners might want to have more thorough discussion before making decisions on the topics grouped together here.

- HAM 01 - Maintaining the Term General Council
- BQ 01 - Maintaining the Name General Council
- ANW 08 - Prioritizing Clusters and Networks
- MAR 03 - Action on the Formation of an Association of Ministers within the New Three Council Model
- GCE 19 - Assessment Rate (2019-2021)

Advocacy

The United Church of Canada has a long history of advocacy on a range of social justice topics. Several distinct issues are represented in the proposals included in this grouping. Some suggest new steps in relation to issues that have been considered at previous meetings, and others are new topics for this Council. All seek to help us define our public witness role.

- BC 01 - Advocacy for the Decriminalization of Drug Possession for Personal Use
- GCE 14 - PMM 17 LGBTQ+ Pride Sunday
- M&O 02 - Accessing the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise
- MTU 02 – Proposal - Korean Peninsula
- TOR 03 - An Urgent Call for Peace Accord in the Korean Peninsula
- TOR 07 - Seeking Peace in the Middle East with Methods Applied in South Africa

Administration of Sacraments

These proposals seek a broadening of the circumstances in which someone may be authorized to administer the sacraments. Another proposal that would mean that the commissioning of diaconal ministers entitle them to administer the sacraments has been recommended for consideration in consent, but two proposals included here under this theme would go a step further to provide that Diaconal Ministers would automatically retain the right to administer sacraments after retirement, even if not in a call or appointment. The other proposal would create the possibility of Sacraments Elders being authorized to administer sacraments even where there is a settled or appointed minister serving the congregation. This proposal also is related to the “Small and rural ministries” theme.

- MNWO 03 - Sacramental Licence for Retired Diaconal Ministers
- ANW 04 - Granting Right to Administer Sacraments to Diaconal Ministers at Time of Commissioning
- ANW 10 - Sacraments Elders Policy
- GCE 20 - Sacramental Licence for Diaconal Ministers

Governance

Proposals under the theme of Governance cover a range of possibilities for how governing bodies are constituted, and how they meet and make decisions. Those about the composition of the General Council Executive would revisit certain aspects of decisions made at GC42. Others would offer change to meeting and decision-making processes. One relates to regional councils, and will require Commissioners to consider how specific, or how flexible, General Council should be in setting requirements for regional bodies.

- ANW 02 - Constitution of a Meeting
- ANW 11 - UCW Representation on Regional Councils
- GCE 12 - PMM 13 Faithful Decision Making on Social Justice Issues
- M&O 01 - Francophone Representation on Denominational Council and Denominational Council Executive
- MTU 01 - Change to Current Remit Process
- MTU 03 - Executive of Denominational Council

- NL 01 - Representation and Accountability within the Executive of the Denominational Council
- TOR 05 - The Manual Item 5.3.3 Mandatory Meetings of the Pastoral Charge

Leadership

The work of the Working Group on Leadership for Ministry, which was presented but not endorsed at GC42, has been substantially revised by the Competency Based Task Group appointed by the General Secretary during this triennium. This proposal represents steps away from the pure “competency based” model, and represents closer collaboration with the United Church theological schools. Commissioners at GC43 will need to discuss whether to accept these recommendations or direct further work representing some different direction.

- GCE 06 - GS 66 Formation for Church Leadership

Small and Rural Ministry

Several proposals speak of different aspects of the challenges faced by small and rural ministries within the United Church. One proposal lifts up the need to balance between offering guidelines while maintaining flexibility to respond to local contexts, and others offer specific solutions.

- BC 06 - Ministry Support and Supervision
- BQ 06 - Alternate Relationships and Governance Structures
- MNWO 01 - Rural Prairie Marginalization
- MNWO 02 - Funding Rural Ministry
- MNWO 04 - Access to Technology for Effective Communication

Ministry Personnel

Grouped under this theme are several proposals that suggest changes in policies or practices that apply to ministry personnel. Each is quite specific, but the common element is that they would alter the rules relating to some aspect of ministry.

- BC 04 - Creative Rights
- MNWO 05 - Moving Expenses for Ministry Personnel
- MNWO 06 - Appointments of Congregational Designated Ministers
- MNWO 07 - Equal Pay for Designated Lay Ministers
- SK 01 - Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy & Procedures Accessibility
- SK 03 - Eliminating Appointments for Designated Lay Ministers
- M&O 04 - Mandatory Training for all United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel

Engaging Mental Health in the Church

General Council is being invited into a new conversation around our engagement with Mental Health in the Church. The two proposals suggest advocating for issues related to mental health, developing or sourcing resources on the subject, and introducing training for ministry personnel. If the remits are enacted, required and recommended training for ministry personnel will be considered as the Office of Vocation is set up.

- ANW 07 - Mental Health and the Mission of the Church

- MAR 01 - Mental Health Training

Pension Matters

Proposals from several different places introduce a clear request to seek ways to improve the situation of United Church pensioners. In this complex field, specific ideas for reform are likely to require expert advice and study. The variety of solutions put forward suggests a desire to consider creative approaches, while recognizing the possibility of tax, legal, and fiduciary limitations.

- BC 02 - Concern over Present and Future United Church Pensioners
- HAM 02 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - 10% from the Sale of Properties
- HAM 03 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - United Church Pensioners
- SK 04 - Fair Pension Outcomes
- TOR 06 - Inflation Affects Pensioners Too - Adding Cost of Living Allowance to Retirees' Pension as with Active Members' Salary

Theology

Theology relates in some way to almost every conversation we have in the church, but certain proposals that require examination of our theology have been grouped together here. Two of them would change what candidates are asked to commit to in order to enter into ministry, and the other suggests a broad study and discussion about Social Gospel Theology.

- MAR 02 - 1925 20 Articles of Faith
- SK 02 - Change of Wording to Questions Asked of Candidates for Ministry
- TOR 04 - Rethinking and Updating the Social Gospel Theology

Right Relations

As we continue to commit ourselves to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, several proposals invite us into a conversation as to how we might live in right relations. Three of these seek to ensure specific on-going support for the Living in Right Relations Network in regions and the denomination. Two of them make proposals about training for ministers (which will relate to decisions to be made as the Office of Vocation is created), and another brings forward a new suggestion for the use of local Indigenous languages in identifying The United Church of Canada. (It is intended that the Calls to the Church from the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle, and the implementation proposal related to the Caretakers report, will be dealt with separately on the first day of the General Council meeting.)

- ANW 06 - Living Into Right Relations Network
- BQ 02 - Steps Toward Reconciliation
- M&O 03 - Enhancing Right Relations through the Use of Indigenous Languages to Name Our Church
- SK 06 - Ministerial Training in Response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 60
- TOR 01 - Funding and Support for LIRR Network Beyond 2018
- TOR 02 - TRC Call 60 - Blanket Exercise

Intercultural and Dominant Privilege Lenses

These proposals invite us into discussion about what it means to disengage dominant privilege and move toward being a more equitable and accessible church. A variety of approaches are brought forward: some as specific as creating the role of “Equity Monitor” at meetings and investigating the use of “text to speech” technology on the United Church website, and others more comprehensively laying out a list of actions for all levels of the church. Some of the proposals will require Commissioners to consider how directive they want the General Council to be with other councils of the church. The proposal on Migration, which has been grouped with these proposals, would address racism and privilege from a different perspective.

- ANW 09 - Racism, Racial Discrimination, Racial Justice and White Privilege
- BQ 03 - Equity Monitor
- BQ 04 - Descriptive Video
- BQ 05 - Integrated Accessibility-Equitable Standards
- BQ 08 - UCC to Work with UNESCO’s Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism & Discrimination
- GCE 16 - PMM 19 Migrant Church Migration
- SK 05 - Living Into Transformation - Continuing the Journey as an Intercultural Church

CONSENT AND OTHER ITEMS

Consent

- ANW 01 - Adding Line Numbers to A Song of Faith Section 2.6 (Basis of Union)
- ANW 05 - Language in The Manual
- BC 07 - Assessments for Ecumenical Shared Ministries
- BQ 07 - Fairness in the New Funding Assessment
- BQ 09 - Not Limiting Grant Applications to One per Pastoral Charge
- GCE 02 - G&A 27 Three Council Model Governance Requirements
- GCE 03 - G&A 29 Conflict of Interest Policy
- GCE 04 - G&A 30 Nominations Committee, Mandate and Membership
- GCE 05 - G&A 31 Judicial Committee Membership
- GCE 08 - GS 84 Remit Related Revisions to the Basis of Union
- GCE 09 - MEPS 25 Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board
- GCE 10 - MEPS 27 Policy Change Ministry Positions Accountable to the Governing Body
- GCE 11 - MEPS 30 New Pastoral Relations Covenant Policy
- GCE 13 - PMM 15 Iridesce the Living Apology Project
- GCE 15 - PMM 18 LGBTQ+ Communities and Human Rights
- GS 04 - The United Church of Canada Act
- GS 05 - Regional Council Transitional Commissions
- GS 06 - Communities of Faith and Covenants
- GS 07 - Assets of Presbyteries, Districts and Conferences
- GS 08 - Formal Hearings and Appeals
- GS 09 - Reviews of Ministry Personnel and or Pastoral Charges
- NOM 02 - Recommendations for Appointment to the Committees of the General Council
- SK 07 - Admission Process Questions Be Reviewed for Today's Reality of More Intercultural Ministers

Items to Be Dealt with Individually, in a Separate Process

- AMC 01/GCE 01 - Caretakers Report, Calls to the Church
- AMC 02 - Implementation of the Calls to the Church
- GC43 01 - Non-Prioritized Proposals
- GCE 07 - GS 83 Full Communion with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
- GS 01 - Opening Procedural Motions
- GS 02 - Enacting Remits Authorized by the 42nd General Council 2015
- GS 03 - Plenary Consent
- NOM 01 - Appointment of the Denominational Council Executive

PRIORITIZATION RESULTS

Greetings Commissioners,

My thanks to the 243 of you that made the time to participate in the prioritization process. The following table contains the results of the prioritization. The score was calculated by giving items ranked first 14 votes, second 13 votes, etc. with those ranked fourteenth 1 vote, divided by the number of respondents.

Rank	Theme	Score (rounded)
1	Remit Implementation	10.11
2	Identity and Vision	10.07
3	Governance	9.13
4	Right Relations	8.78
5	Small and Rural Ministry	8.19
6	Ministry Personnel	7.70
7	Theology	7.61
8	Leadership	7.42
9	Intercultural and Dominant Privilege Lenses	6.70
10	Administration of Sacraments	6.66
11	Advocacy	6.25
12	Care for Creation	5.79
13	Engaging Mental Health in the Church	5.57
14	Pension Matters	5.31

The top 10 will now be added to the Listening Sessions in the agenda hopefully today or tomorrow. The ranking here does not indicate the order they will be placed in the agenda.

Today you will also find in the workbook proposal GC43 01, which will indicate the Business Table's recommendation on how to deal with the remaining proposals.

Thanks to you all for the various ways you have participated in the process thus far. Good luck in your continued preparation.

Allan Buckingham
GC43 Business Coordinator

THEME: UNASSIGNED**AMC 1/GCE 1 CARETAKERS REPORT: CALLS TO THE CHURCH****Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

The United Church of Canada has committed to living out the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes recognition that Indigenous Peoples have the right to make their own decisions, and to make those decisions in their own ways.

2. Why is this issue important?

This is part of how we seek to fulfill the words of our apologies, and to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Receive the report of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, discuss it to ensure that it is understood and embraced, and approve it for implementation.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Comprehensive Review Task Group which reported to the General Council in 2015 had engaged in consultations with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and its members, but realized that the conversations needed more time. The 42nd General Council directed that the Executive establish a process to continue these conversations.

At the November 2015 GCE meeting, the Aboriginal Ministries Council proposed a framework that would begin with conversations among the Indigenous groups that make up the Aboriginal Ministries Council, with executive members to be invited as listeners, and would follow with occasions for joint conversation and collaboration. This process was accepted by the GCE and the resulting work of the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle has been shared with the GCE in an earlier form, discussed at the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, and worked on further by the Caretakers to reflect the input of the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work?

GC42: CR 2 – Aboriginal Ministries

AMC 2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALLS TO CHURCH

Origin: Aboriginal Ministries Council

1. What is the issue?

The implementation of the Calls to the Church of the Indigenous Circle provides a strategy by which the church can achieve, “in sincerity and action,” God’s call to good and right relations.

The United Church of Canada has been on a journey that is seeking to reconcile its relationship with Canada’s Indigenous Peoples for more than 30 years. In 1986, the Church responded to a call from Indigenous Peoples to apologize for its role in colonization and the destruction of their cultures and spiritual practices. The Apology was acknowledged by the Indigenous church two years later in the hope that the Church would live out the Apology in “action and sincerity.”

On March 31, 2016, the United Church released a “*Statement on UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*” (UN Declaration) which acknowledged that the church’s practices “for many years resulted in the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from visioning, leadership and decision-making.” (*The Manual*, 2013, p. 4).

In that same statement the church recognized “that this work will be neither quick nor easy. The settler church is only beginning to absorb the shock of its complicity in creating the inequities facing Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous church is also facing the challenge of decolonization. The 1986 Apology shifted us as a denomination; it impacted our identity in ways that we couldn’t understand at the time. Adopting the UN Declaration as the framework for reconciliation brings us to a similar moment now. Yet we know, not just in our hearts and minds, but where our faith resides, that this is the path we are meant to be on together. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.” (2 Corinthians 5:18–19)

We are not sure what lies ahead as we complete this turn towards justice and deepen our commitment to a new identity, a new relationship, and a new way of being, both in the church and in the world.

A new relationship is waiting, and we turn our faces towards it.”

The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle, a group of Indigenous leaders from across The United Church of Canada, gathered throughout 2016 and 2017 to discern concrete actions for the Indigenous church. This resulted in the development of the ***Calls to the Church*** document (see page 440). The Caretakers also gave oversight to a process of consultation with Indigenous Communities of Faith during that same period. The final document was reviewed by caucus groups at the July 2017 National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering in Pinawa, Manitoba. On the last day of this three-day gathering, the document was affirmed through a process of consensus.

The Indigenous church recognizes that the church's long history with Indigenous Peoples also includes spaces of "bright beginnings." Indigenous Peoples of the United Church, through the framework of the UN Declaration and the ***Calls to the Church***, are hopeful that another Kairos moment is upon the church.

The ***Calls to the Church*** include:

1. The establishment of an Indigenous office or department within the Office of Vocation so that ministry personnel in Indigenous communities have services provided by people who are knowledgeable of Indigenous ways of being and working; and, that this office or department have an advisory group that is engaged in the development of Indigenous ministry policy;
2. Indigenous ministry formation, accompaniment and oversight processes;
3. Indigenous Communities of Faith approved ministry;
4. The development of an Indigenous Testamur;
5. The creation of National Indigenous Organization for Support and Fellowship;
6. Belonging: the right for Indigenous church communities to choose their relationships within a three court structure;
7. Indigenous community leadership and consensus building;
8. Sustainable support;
9. Affirm sexual orientation and diversity – to be promoted through education and by accompanying Indigenous communities to support LGBTQ2A+ members and youth.

2. Why is this issue important?

The ***Calls to the Church*** document outlines pathways for the whole church to continue to walk in the Spirit of Christ toward justice, healing, and reconciliation. It provides clear strategies and principles for the ongoing development of The United Church of Canada's Indigenous church's vision of mission and ministry. The document communicates how *"Our 'roots' as Indigenous peoples are what the Creator has made us to be. We are embracing who we are as Creator made us. The Indigenous church will be an instrument of healing our identity and a place of renewal of our cultures. Our roots have been broken by colonialism and we will restore them."*

The ***Calls to the Church*** uphold the norms, principles, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which our church publically committed to adopting and complying with as a framework for reconciliation on March 31, 2016.

We have understood these principles, norms, and standards to be reflected in:

- The right to self-determination
- The right to cultural and spiritual identity
- The right to participate in decision-making
- The right to lands and resources
- The right to free, prior, and informed consent
- The right to be free from discrimination

3. How might the General Council respond to this issue?

Receive with approval the *Calls to the Church*, and

- a) Endorse and commit The United Church of Canada to the *Calls to the Church*, named in the report of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, and authorize and direct the following steps towards fulfilling these Calls:
 - a. Approve the creation of a National Indigenous Elders Council (Elders Council) to provide spiritual advice to the Denominational Council; Denominational Executive; Indigenous Organization; National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering; Regional Councils; Office of Vocation; and Working Groups of the Church, as capacity allows:
 - i. The Moderator may call upon this Council from time to time for advice and guidance.
 - ii. The National Indigenous Elders Council will consist of eight (8) members that will reflect an equitable representation from across Canada and will include the urban Indigenous and LGBTQ2 Spirit Communities;
 - iii. Indigenous Communities of Faith will lift up Elders they know to be suitable for this work, including Elders who follow traditional Indigenous spiritual paths as well as Elders who identify themselves as Christian.
 - iv. The Elders Council will meet face-to-face during its formation to develop protocols, build relationships, and deepen their knowledge of the mission and ministry of the church and the vision for the Indigenous Church. There will be one face-to-face meeting per year, thereafter.
 - b. Approve the creation of a National Indigenous Organization, which will be a decision making body which will:
 - i. Receive spiritual direction on matters of ministry and mission from the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering and the National Indigenous Elders Council;
 - ii. Provide presence and voice to the Denominational Council, its Executive, Regional Councils, and the Office of Vocation;
 - iii. Have responsibility for decision-making on matters of Indigenous Real Property; Stewardship, including Mission Support Granting to all Indigenous Communities of Faith; Healing Fund; Youth and Congregational Support and development; Provide oversight of Leadership/Congregational Development Funds;
 - iv. Glean best practices from the rich history of the All Native Circle Conference, Ontario-Quebec Native Ministries, and British Columbia Native Ministries;
 - v. Consist of representatives from the National Elders Council, youth, strategic thinkers, knowledge keepers, and carriers of history; urban Indigenous and LGBTQ2 Spirit communities, for a total of 8-10 members;
 - vi. Meet face-to-face once each year;
 - vii. Provide guidance to the Indigenous Justice Working Group;

- viii. **Promote and honour local protocols (as determined by the local Communities of Faith) and will honour Elders;**
- ix. **Develop and implement strong communications strategies and resources necessary to accomplish the work of a National Indigenous Organization;**
- x. **Provide continued opportunities for the gathering, working together, and supportive work of all the Indigenous faith communities in the United Church. The following gatherings will honour the cultural and linguistic regions of the Indigenous communities and support a national network of urban Indigenous ministries:**
 - 1. **A National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering to be held every three (3) years, with the first National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering to be held in August 2019 at the Geneva Park Convention Centre, the traditional territories of the Williams Treaties (Orillia, ON) to mark the inauguration of the new National Indigenous Organization;**
 - 2. **Cluster gatherings to provide continued opportunities for local networking, discussion, common issues of concern, fellowship, and collaboration;**
 - 3. **A national network of urban Indigenous ministries.**
- xii. **Work in collaboration with other parts of the church to strengthen relationships between the Indigenous communities of faith and the wider Church through Indigenous representation in the areas of education of all United Church personnel, including Indigenous history, culture, and contemporary issues; groups who look to strengthen relations with Indigenous Communities of Faith; and reignite the spiritual, cultural, holistic, and healing renewal of the whole church.**
- c. **Authorize the Indigenous members of the current Aboriginal Ministries Council to serve as the National Indigenous Council until such time as the new organization is established, which shall be no later than August 2019.**
- d. **Authorize and direct the General Secretary, working with the National Indigenous Council, the Executive of the Denominational Council, and the Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries, to support and facilitate such further steps as may be needed to implement the Calls to the Church.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Comprehensive Review Task Group reported to the 42nd General Council in 2015 that they had engaged in consultations with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and its members, and realized that the conversations needed more time. The 42nd General Council directed that the Executive establish a process to continue these conversations.

At the November 2015 General Council Executive (GCE) meeting, the Aboriginal Ministries Council proposed a framework for conversations to take place among the Indigenous groups that make up the Aboriginal Ministries Council. General Council Executive representatives were invited to participate as listeners. Subsequently, GCE representatives occasionally met with Indigenous leaders for joint conversation and collaboration. The General Council Executive

accepted this process and the resulting work of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, the document entitled *Calls to the Church*, has been shared with the General Council Executive in an earlier form, discussed at the 2017 National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, and worked on further by the Caretakers to reflect the input of the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering.

The Executive of the General Council received the ***Calls to the Church*** document. Consensus was reached to proceed with Phase II of the consultation process: *Calls to the Church/Remit Implementation Project*.

The November 2017 Executive of General Council received the ***Calls to the Church*** document (AMC2) and recommended it for approval at the 43rd General Council of The United Church of Canada.

The Indigenous Church has taken time to remember with gratitude:

- The 1980s national Aboriginal ministry consultations that eventually became the current National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering;
- Keewatin Presbytery as the first Indigenous presbytery in The United Church of Canada in 1982;
- The establishment in 1982 of the National Native Ministries Council in The United Church of Canada to oversee the work of the first National Native Ministries Coordinator, Rev. Stan McKay Jr.;
- The local work that led to the formation of All Tribes, Plains, and Great Lakes presbyteries that were the basis of All Native Circle Conference;
- The historic establishment of All Native Circle Conference, the first Indigenous conference and one that crossed colonial boundaries in 1988;
- The establishment of British Columbia Native Ministries in 1988;
- The establishment of Ontario and Quebec Native Ministries in 1989;
- The establishment of the Aboriginal Ministries Council and its staff, the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, at General Council Office and beyond in 2008;
- The Ecumenical gatherings over the decades;
- That urban Indigenous ministry often differs from that in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities;
- That according to the 2006 Census, more than half of people identifying themselves in some way as Indigenous reside in urban areas; and
- That the time has come to foster and support the creation of more urban Indigenous ministries.

GC43 01 NON PRIORITIZED PROPOSALS**Origin: General Council 43**

Recognizing that a referral of these proposals in no way reflects on their importance, but rather the Council's desire to spend its limited time in conversation about other matters;

That the 43rd General Council 2018 refer the following proposals to the Executive of the General Council:

BC 01 - Advocacy for the Decriminalization of Drug Possession for Personal Use**GCE 14 - PMM 17 LGBTQ+ Pride Sunday****M&O 02 - Accessing the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise****MTU 02 - Proposal - Korean Peninsula****TOR 03 - An Urgent Call for Peace Accord in the Korean Peninsula****TOR 07 - Seeking Peace in the Middle East with Methods Applied in South Africa****ANW 03 - Disaster Assistance Strategy****BC 08 - Support to Terminate Plans to Expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline****LON 01 - In Our Common Interest-Indigenous Peoples and Abrahamic Faiths****ANW 07 - Mental Health and the Mission of the Church****MAR 01 - Mental Health Training****BC 02 - Concern over Present and Future United Church Pensioners****HAM 02 - Supplementing Pension Benefits - 10% from the Sale of Properties****HAM 03 - Supplementing Pension Benefits – United Church Pensioners****SK 04 - Fair Pension Outcomes****TOR 06 - Inflation Affects Pensioners Too-Adding Cost of Living Allowance to Retirees' Pension as with Active Members' Salary****GCE 7 FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA****Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada share a rich history in North America. This includes two joint United-Disciples congregations—one in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and one in Calgary, Alberta. Both churches recognize that greater opportunities for shared common witness can be explored in the context of a full communion agreement. In this covenantal relationship, we commit to being one Church, not in merger but in God's gift of unity that serves the world that God so loves. The two churches will learn how to live in this covenantal relationship through rich theological conversations, enhanced witness and mission, and diverse spiritual life and worship. This proposal invites The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to

explore and give vision to living in full communion in the twenty-first century and beyond. This is a vision of oneness in Christ.

2. Why is this issue important?

In his last prayer with his disciples, Jesus prayed, “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, NRSV). The desire for unity and visible unity is at the heart and commitment of the ecumenical movement.

The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada affirm this biblical understanding of unity that continues to guide ecumenical commitment and engagement with other churches. This call is the essence of the ecumenical movement that seeks to find unity-in-diversity, creating the space to engage divergences and convergences through on-going dialogue and engagement.

The two churches envision full communion as a dynamic and growing relationship that is more than just accepting one another as we now are. It is a mutual commitment to grow together toward a vision of the church that enriches our theological traditions, enhances service and mission, and deepens worship. The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will find diverse expressions of what it means to live in full communion in Christ as we experience life together.

Unity and mission are inseparable. Christ calls us to unite in one mission in and to a suffering and divided world. In declaring full communion, these two churches acknowledge that they are partners together in God's mission to and for the whole world.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- 1. At its meeting on Oshawa, Ontario (July 21-27, 2018) make the following mutual declaration with the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Des Moines, Iowa (July 20-24, 2019):**

That the 43rd General Council:

***Acknowledge and celebrate* before God that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is an authentic, faithful part of the one, universal body of Christ.**

***Declare and celebrate* that a relationship of full communion now exists between The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, by which is meant that both churches will pursue with intention ways of expressing the unity of the Church. This includes commitment to mutually recognizing ordered ministers of each partner church, and ways of manifesting the common mission of witness and service.**

Commit itself to work, with God's help and together with its partner churches, to effect greater unity in the whole church of Jesus Christ, and

2. **The 43rd General Council together with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada:**
 - a. *Receive the final report of the planning group, including the possibilities presented for common life and witness together,*
 - b. *Encourage* study of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of the full communion agreement,
 - c. *Direct* the General Secretary, General Council to work collaboratively with the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to establish a Partnership Committee to give guidance to this process, and
 - d. *Agree* to commence the full communion agreement with the signing of the common agreement by the two Heads of Communion at a joint service of celebration that will include opportunities for people across the two churches to celebrate in meaningful ways.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

For the Report of the Planning Group for Disciples of Christ – United Church of Canada Full Communion Agreement, which includes reflections on the local congregation as the incarnation of full communion, and national, bi-national, and international possibilities for partnership see the Report on the Full Communion with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Reports section of the meeting materials.

Members of the Planning Group from The United Church of Canada

Nora Sanders, General Secretary, General Council

John H. Young, Executive Minister, Theological Leadership

Gail Allan, Coordinator, Ecumenical, Interchurch and Interfaith Relations

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Secretary, Alberta Northwest and Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Conferences

Heather Leffler, Minister

Daniel Hayward, Minister, Chair of Theology and Interchurch Interfaith Committee

GS 1 OPENING PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**General Secretary, General Council****Bounds of Council**

That the bounds of the plenary for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Gymnasiums 3, 4 and 5 in the Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre College of Durham College & University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Oshawa, Ontario, excluding the visitor seating and unnumbered tables.

Corresponding Members

That the following persons who are in attendance be corresponding members of the 43rd General Council 2018 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 43rd General Council 2018;
- Youth Forum participants who are not Commissioners;
- Participants of the Children and Young Teens;
- 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 Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker;

Resource People***Business Committee Membership***

- Allan Buckingham, Chair
- Jordan Cantwell, Moderator
- Larry Doyle, Chair, General Council Planning Committee
- Nora Sanders, General Secretary, General Council
- Shannon McCarthy, Executive Secretary, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- David Allen, Remit Implementation Project Leader
- Cynthia Gunn, Legal/Judicial Counsel
- Bev Kostichuk, Chair, Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda

Friends in Council

That the Friends in Council for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Lawrence Moore, Cathie Cunningham, Cheryl Jourdain, Ryan McNally, Kim Heath, and Bill Smith.

Scrutineers

That the Scrutineers for the 43rd General Council 2018 be:

- Norma Thompson, Chief Scrutineer
- Wendy Lowden
- Patti Rodgers

- Heather Leffler
- Charles McMillan
- Laurie O’Leary
- Robert Hayes
- Paul Wright

Facilitation Group

That the Facilitation Group for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Marion Best, Hewitt Holmes, Jamie Scott, Betty Kelly, and Carmen Lansdowne.

Business before the 43rd General Council 2018

That the reports and proposals provided in the Workbook (online and including additions and updates), along with any change pages, and any new business received by the deadline for new business, be received for consideration by the 43rd General Council 2018.

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. **Listening phase:** Information sessions will inform Commissioners about the issues on the agenda. This continues the listening phase that began prior to the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018. Information sessions may be held in plenary or concurrently in breakout rooms, with Commissioners choosing which listening sessions to attend.

2. **Discussion phase:** Commissioners and corresponding members who are seated at table groups will meet in discussion groups with a pre-named chair/host and a note-taker. 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. Note-takers record comments, affirmations, and suggestions, and the discussion groups confirm the information to be recorded and shared. Reports from all discussion groups are available for viewing by the entire court and the Facilitation Group.

3. **Decision-making phase:** The Facilitation Group’s refined proposals are made available to the court. There is final debate and refinement of the proposal in plenary, with the Facilitation Group returning to do more refinement as necessary. The process concludes with a motion in response to the proposal and a vote on the motion.

During the decision-making phase in plenary, the Moderator will apply the Rules of Debate and Order (*The Manual Appendix*).

Speakers will:

- Speak from designated microphones in the court;
- Be recognized by the Moderator prior to speaking;
- Begin comments by identifying themselves by name, role, and Conference (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 floor microphone to raise a point of order, that is to raise a specific question of procedure with the Moderator;
- Use the floor microphones to raise points of personal privilege, which will be understood to be limited to comments noting that the individual raising the point has been insulted or maligned in the current debate.

Note: General concerns about the meeting (inability to hear, temperature of the room, 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 co-ordinate these for “community moments.”

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

Prioritizing Work

The work of the 43rd General Council 2018 will be assigned based on the priorities named by Commissioners of the 43rd General Council 2018 as determined through consultation in advance of the meeting. Proposals will be reviewed and grouped by theme/issue. The top 10 proposal themes/issues named by them will serve as the priority agenda for the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018. 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 an Omnibus or Consent Motion

The 43rd General Council 2018 will adopt the following procedure in the event that a Commissioner desires that a proposal be withdrawn from an omnibus or 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, indicating the piece of business they wish to have removed in its stead.
- 2) The request will be granted only if a majority of Commissioners vote in favour of it.
- 3) If an item of business is removed from an omnibus or consent motion, the Moderator will direct the Business Committee to find a place for the work consistent with the request.

New Business

All 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 recommendations for incorporation into the agenda for the decision of the court.

Items of new business will not be ordered on a first come-first presented basis, but with preference to items:

- a. arising unexpectedly in response to the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018;
- b. arising in response to global or national matters that occur during the meeting of the 43rd General Council 2018; and
- c. as determined by the court on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

New business that cannot be dealt with by the General Council 2018 due to time limitations 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 43rd Moderator of The United Church of Canada:

- 1) Nominations may be made from the floor until 4:20 p.m. on Sunday, July 22, 2018. There must be a mover and a seconder, and the nominee must indicate willingness to stand for election. The Moderator will call for any further nominations just before the official close of nominations.
- 2) Nominations from the floor of the 43rd General Council 2018 will be declared closed at 4:20 p.m. on Sunday, July 22, 2018.
- 3) The nominees will be introduced to the 43rd General Council 2018 and presented with their nominee stoles before the supper break on Sunday, July 22, 2018.
- 4) Nominees will address the 43rd General Council 2018, individually, on Monday, July 23, 2018.
- 5) Voting will be by ballot and take place on Thursday, July 26, 2018.
- 6) Anyone who receives 50% plus one of the votes cast will be declared elected as the new Moderator.
- 7) If there are ten or more names on the ballot, the four with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are seven, eight or nine names on the ballot, the three with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are five or six names on the ballot, the two with the lowest numbers of votes cast in their favour will be released from the subsequent ballots; if there are four or fewer names on the ballot, the one with the lowest number of votes will be released from subsequent ballots.
- 8) When there are four or more names on the ballot and there is a tie in the number of votes cast for the candidates with the lowest number of votes in their favour as set out in the preceding paragraph, the candidates who are tied will be released from subsequent ballots. This could mean that more candidates are released from a ballot than as specified in the preceding paragraph.

- 9) Voting on any ballot with more than ten names will be done by paper ballot. Voting on ballots with ten or fewer names will be done by electronic ballot.
- 10) Announcements of the results of the ballots will take place at times determined by the Moderator with advice from the Business Committee.
- 11) Tallies of votes will not be announced.

Minutes of the 42nd General Council 2015

That the minutes of the 42nd General Council 2015 be approved.

Minute Secretary

That the Minute Secretary for the 43rd General Council 2018 be Susan Fortner.

Reports

That the 43rd General Council 2018 accept the accountability report of the Executive of the General Council.

That the 43rd General Council 2018 receive for information the following reports:

- Moderator's Accountability Report
- Moderator's Advisory Committee Report
- General Secretary's Accountability Report
- Report from the Remit Implementation Task Group
- Aboriginal Ministries Council Accountability Report
- Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle Report
- Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools Report
- United Nations Declaration Task Group Report
- Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Accountability Report
- Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships Report
- Manual Committee Report
- Nominations Committee Report
- General Council Judicial Committee Report
- Conference Records Review 2012-2015
- Archives and History Committee Report
- Report on the Full Communion with the Disciples of Christ
- Faithful Decision Making on Social Justice Issues
- Audit Committee Report
- Report of the Boundaries Commission
- UCW Report
- Newfoundland and Labrador Conference Report
- Maritime Conference Report
- Synode Montreal & Ottawa Conference
- Bay of Quinte Conference Report
- Toronto Conference Report
- Hamilton Conference Report

- London Conference Report
- Manitou Conference Report
- All Native Circle Conference Report
- Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Report
- Saskatchewan Conference Report
- Alberta and Northwest Conference Report
- British Columbia Conference Report
- The United Church Foundation Report
- Rulings and Opinions of The General Secretary, General Council – July 2015 to June 2018
- Minutes of the Executive of the General Council – June 2015 to June 2018 (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 43rd General Council 2018 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 43rd General Council 2018, 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.

GS 2 ENACTING REMITS AUTHORIZED BY THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL 2015

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

The 42nd General Council 2015 authorized eight remits. Seven of those remits have been approved by a majority of the presbyteries and also, where applicable, a majority of the pastoral charges.

Here are the voting results based on 84 presbyteries and 2,134 pastoral charges eligible to vote:

Remit 1: Three Council Model

Presbyteries: Yes: 74 No: 7 Pastoral charges: Yes: 1,672 No: 222

Remit 2: Elimination of Transfer and Settlement

Presbyteries: Yes: 74 No: 7 Pastoral charges: Yes: 1,792 No: 89

Remit 3: Office of Vocation

Presbyteries: Yes: 69 No: 12

Pastoral charges: Yes: 1,681 No: 190

Remit 4: Funding a New Model

Presbyteries: Yes: 70 No: 12

Pastoral charges: Yes: 1,472 No: 398

Remit 5: Mutual Recognition of Ministry

Presbyteries: Yes: 83 No: 0

Remit 6: One Order of Ministry

Presbyteries: Yes: 26 No: 50

Pastoral charges: Yes: 713 No: 950

Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway

Presbyteries: Yes: 77 No: 5

Remit 8: Towards a New Model of Membership

Presbyteries: Yes: 76 No: 7

The final step in the remit process is for the 43rd General Council 2018 to decide whether to enact these remits.

2. Why is this issue important?

The remit process is the process by which the United Church makes fundamental changes to its Doctrine, Polity, Order of Ministry, and Administration as set out in the Basis of Union.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might enact the following remits authorized by the 42nd General Council 2015, all of which have been approved by a majority of the presbyteries and pastoral charges [Remits 1, 2, 3 and 4] or a majority of the presbyteries [Remits 5, 7 and 8]:

- Remit 1: Three Council Model**
- Remit 2: Elimination of Transfer and Settlement**
- Remit 3: Office of Vocation**
- Remit 4: Funding a New Model**
- Remit 5: Mutual Recognition of Ministry**
- Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway**
- Remit 8: Towards a New Model of Membership**

GS 3 PLENARY CONSENT

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that:

The 43rd General Council 2018 approve the following in response to the requests for action in the following proposals and direct the Executive of the General Council (Denominational Council) to ensure that such actions are taken as outlined below:

Proposal	Notes
<p>ANW 01 - Adding Line Numbers to A Song of Faith Section 2.6 (Basis of Union) Edit the Basis of Union by adding line numbers in the margin of Section 2.6 “A Song of Faith” in future editions of <i>The Manual</i>, so as to increase its usability in devotional and instructional applications.</p>	<p>Explanation of inclusion and/or changes Considered an edit to <i>The Manual</i>. The language was changed to reflect as much.</p>
<p>ANW 05 - Language in The Manual Adopt the principles of clarity and simplicity of language to guide the writing of all future editions of <i>The Manual</i>.</p>	<p>Responds to the desire for easy to understand language in <i>The Manual</i> while recognizing that some words of Latin origin are used in a legal context and are part of the English language.</p>
<p>BC 07 - Assessments for Ecumenical Shared Ministries Affirm the principle that there be a reasonable and equitable assessment for ecumenical shared ministries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of how pastoral charges that are ecumenical shared ministries are presently assessed by all their judicatories, and • clear communication of all assessment procedures. 	<p>Changed to clarify the original language. Considered a worthwhile consideration in determining assessments.</p>
<p>BQ 07 - Fairness in the New Funding Assessment Affirm that money given by individual communities of faith towards significant capital projects is not assessed in the new funding assessment model.</p>	<p>No change. This is already an aspect of the assessment formula.</p>
<p>BQ 09 - Not Limiting Grant Applications to One per Pastoral Charge Initiate a review of all available grants and change the granting criteria to limit the number of applications to one per community of faith instead of one per pastoral charge.</p>	<p>No change. Considered a reasonable request as our structures are changing.</p>
<p>GCE 02 - G&A 27 Three Council Model Governance Requirements</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>

<p>Approve the policies set out in the appendix to GCE 02, for each of the three councils.</p>	
<p>GCE 03 - G&A 29 Conflict of Interest Policy Approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy appended to GCE 03.</p>	<p>No change. Update to existing policy.</p>
<p>GCE 04 - G&A 30 Nominations Committee, Mandate and Membership Approve the mandate, responsibilities, membership and terms of appointment of the Nominations Committee as outlined below:</p> <p>Mandate The Nominations Committee recommends appointments for the Denominational Executive, and other committees, boards, task groups, or United Church representatives, as requested by the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary.</p> <p>Responsibilities The Nominations Committee is responsible for reviewing nominations and submitting to the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary, as appropriate, recommendations for appointment. In carrying out this responsibility, the committee will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reflect theologically on the basis for appointed member participation in the church 2. discern who is equipped to serve 3. develop and test processes for selecting individuals and developing effective groups 4. strive to meet the church's commitments to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becoming an intercultural church • the full inclusion of people with disabilities • ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of our identity • developing new and young leadership • the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • any future commitments regarding the appointed leadership of the United Church 	<p>Addition to the list under responsibility number 4 of the churches commitment to ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of our identity.</p> <p>Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>

<p>Members of the Nominations Committee will actively seek out and encourage nominations from across the diversity of the church and its geographic regions.</p> <p>Membership The Nominations Committee will consist of eight members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two members of the Executive • six members of the United Church not serving on the Executive <p>The composition of the Nominations Committee will reflect the intercultural church.</p> <p>The members and chair of the Nominations Committee will be appointed by the Denominational Council. Vacancies on the committee may be filled by the Executive until the next meeting of the Denominational Council.</p> <p>For the Nominations Committee that will serve from July 2018 to July 2021, the two members of the Executive will be from those appointed to the incoming Executive (2019–2021). Members will be appointed by the 43rd General Council.</p> <p>Terms of Appointment Members will serve for a term of three years, corresponding with the term of each Denominational Council, with the possibility of reappointment for a second term.</p> <p>Meetings The Nominations Committee will meet as needed, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the committee may meet in person.</p>	
<p>GCE 05 - G&A 31 Judicial Committee Membership Approve the actions outlined in GCE 05.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 08 - GS 84 Remit Related Revisions to the Basis of Union Approve the revisions to the Basis of Union appended to GCE 08.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>

<p>GCE 09 - MEPS 25 Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board Approve the recommendations in GCE 09.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 10 - MEPS 27 Policy Change Ministry Positions Accountable to the Governing Body 1) Change the Lay Ministry policy of the United Church, such that members of the order of ministry may not be appointed to positions “accountable to the governing body rather than the presbytery,” resulting in policy that serves rather than conflicts the Church; and 2) Remove section I.1.8.3 (a) from <i>The Manual</i>.</p>	<p>No change. Clarifying the policy for Filling Positions Accountable to the Governing Body, found in <i>The Manual</i> at section I.1.8.3.</p>
<p>GCE 11 - MEPS 30 New Pastoral Relations Covenant Policy Make the policy changes to allow for a new pastoral relations covenant policy and process as outlined in GCE 11.</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>
<p>GCE 13 - PMM 15 Iridesce the Living Apology Project 1) Recommit The United Church of Canada to the full inclusion of all people. 2) Extend The Living Apology Project, to report to the spring 2020 meeting of the Executive of the General Council 3) Request the Executive/General Secretary to appoint a group to work with the outcomes of The Living Apology Project, to offer an apology to the LGBTQ2+ community at the Denominational Council in 2021 4) Reaffirm the church's endorsement of the Affirming Ministries Program and invites all communities of faith to participate. 5) Direct the General Secretary, General Council to develop resources for ministers, church leadership, and the wider church in their ministry with LGBTQ2+ communities that: a. offer pastoral care b. create opportunities for healing and reconciliation c. demonstrate respectful engagement in conflict/disagreement</p>	<p>No change. Continuation of the project initiated by GC42 2015-060.</p>
<p>GCE 15 - PMM 18 LGBTQ+ Communities and Human Rights Affirm a commitment to: 1) Naming LGBTQ 2+ Solidarity and Human Rights solidarity as a key component of the Global &</p>	<p>No change. Affirming our continued support of this work as requested by our Partner Council.</p>

<p>Canadian Partnership Program of The United Church of Canada,</p> <p>2) Affirming The United Church of Canada participation in and support of the Dignity Network, a network of organizations and individuals from across Canada that encourage a stronger Canadian voice on human rights issues facing LGBTQI2+ communities around the world. The initiative has the twin objectives of strengthening solidarity work by Canadian civil society groups and Canada’s foreign policy commitment to the realization of human rights for LGBTQI2+ people internationally. (See: www.dignityinitiative.ca/en/)</p> <p>3) Supporting Aboriginal Ministries Circle and Council in their work towards full inclusion and support work towards an Indigenous Two Spirit consultation within Aboriginal Ministries</p> <p>4) Paying particular attention to supporting Migrant Church communities on their journey of full inclusion</p>	
<p>GS 04 - The United Church of Canada Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request Parliament and provincial legislatures to make the legislative changes to their respective acts that are necessary to reflect the three-council restructuring. Declare and affirm that, during the interim period until the revisions to the Acts are all in effect, the regional council is the successor to the presbytery and performs all functions of the presbytery with respect to the Model Trust Deed and property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council. 	<p>No change. Request needed to move forward with the structural changes.</p>
<p>GS 05 - Regional Council Transitional Commissions Appoint a commission for each of the regional councils with membership and mandate as outlined in GS 05.</p>	<p>No change. Creation of the structure needed to move into structural changes.</p>
<p>GS 06 - Communities of Faith and Covenants Declare that all applicable existing requirements for membership, meetings, governance body and organizational matters set out in the by-law portion of <i>The Manual</i> and as approved by the presbytery for the community of faith will continue to apply and will be deemed to be the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council unless and until modified</p>	<p>No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.</p>

with the approval of both the community of faith and regional council.	
<p>GS 07 - Assets of Presbyteries, Districts and Conferences Establish the process for the transition of presbytery/district and Conference assets to regional councils as outlined in GS 07. This process must be followed by presbyteries/districts and Conferences that will still own assets on December 31, 2018.</p>	No change. Policy needed as we move into the new structure.
<p>GS 08 - Formal Hearings and Appeals Provide for the transition to the new structure of formal hearings and appeals that are outstanding as of December 31, 2018 as outlined in GS 08.</p>	No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.
<p>GS 09 - Reviews of Ministry Personnel and or Pastoral Charges Approves that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. responsibility for all reviews of ministry personnel that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the Office of Vocation as of that date; and b. responsibility for all reviews of pastoral charges that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the regional council with oversight of that pastoral charge. 	No change. Basic policy changes needed as we move into the new structure.
<p>NOM 02 - Recommendations for Appointment to the Committees of the General Council Approve the recommended appointments and reappointments in NOM 02.</p>	No change. Affirming the work of the Nominations Committee.
<p>SK 07 - Admission Process Questions be Reviewed for Today's Reality of More Intercultural Ministers Direct a review of the general process of admission from the intercultural perspective including the suggested questions for interview.</p>	Considered a reasonable request for a policy review. Language changed to be clear and directive.

NOM 1 APPOINTMENT OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**Origin: The Executive of the General Council, Nominations Committee****1. What is the issue?**

Through the remit process, the United Church has voted to embrace a new three council model of governance which includes a 12–18 person Executive of the Denominational Council. We believe the church is called to bring together a diversity of skilled members to serve as the Executive on behalf of the whole church.

The 42nd General Council asked the Nominations Committee to bring forward 15 names to serve alongside the Moderator, past Moderator, and General Secretary as members of this Executive.

2. Why is this issue important?

The change to a three council model of governance includes an Executive that is made up of members who can serve on behalf of the whole of the church, rather than as representatives from any one part of it. As set out by the 42nd General Council, this new smaller Executive requires competencies in theology, governance, finance, and vision and should reflect the diversity of an intercultural church, lay/ministry personnel and geography.

No group of 18 people could completely reflect the full diversity of the United Church. 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 in the church, and those who would provide a complement and balance to each other. Throughout their discernment, the Nominations Committee is guided by this passage from Romans 12:4: *For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.*

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Appoint the following members to serve as the Denominational Council Executive beginning January 1, 2019, with terms as stated:

Positions by office

- To be elected, *Moderator*
- Jordan Cantwell, *Immediate Past Moderator*
- Nora Sanders, *General Secretary*

To serve until the in-person gathering of the denominational council in 2021 (3-year term)

1. Sharon Aylsworth
2. Katie Curtis
3. Deb Hinksman
4. Ha Na Park

5. Deborah Richards
6. Andrew Richardson
7. Janet Sigurdson

To serve until the in-person gathering of the denominational council in 2024 (6-year term)

1. Teresa Burnett-Cole, *as chosen by the Aboriginal Ministries Council*
2. Mitchell Anderson
3. Kathy Brett
4. Samuel Dansokho
5. Paul Douglas Walfall
6. Larry Doyle
7. Jane McDonald
8. Arlyce Schiebout

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Nominations summary

The Nominations Committee received 43 nominations for the Executive, each of whom had been nominated by their Conference or selected by the Aboriginal Ministries Council. Needless to say, this created a rich pool of skilled and faithful church members.

In many areas this pool was broad and diverse, while in other areas—notably laity, and francophone members—there were few nominees. The pool of nominees included 23 men and 20 women, 33 ministry personnel (28 ordained, 3 diaconal, 1 candidate, 1 designated lay minister), and 10 lay people. Twelve of the 13 Conferences sent in nominations, representing 14 of the 16 proposed regions.

The church responded to the Moderator’s call to nominate from groups traditionally marginalized in decision-making. Among those nominated: 12 of the 43 nominees identified as racialized or Indigenous; 1 as francophone; 5 as people with disabilities; 3 as under the age of 30. Eighteen of the 43 claimed one of these identities.

There were far more people who had the gifts to serve than could have been recommended. The Nominations Committee offers heartfelt appreciation to all 43 individuals who were willing to serve.

Discernment process

The Nominations Committee met for two days of prayerful discernment in mid-June. The committee lifted up each nominee by name and the skills, competencies, characteristics, identities, and other gifts that each brought.

In addition to the competencies named by the General Council, the Nominations Committee considered the areas of knowledge and expertise requested by the Executive: finance, pension,

human resources, governance, global or ecumenical experience, different forms of ministry, francophone church experience, and theological leadership.

The Nominations Committee held in mind the church's commitments to becoming an intercultural church, the full inclusion of people with disabilities, and the presence of younger leaders. The committee was assisted by two intercultural observers from the Canadian Council of Churches—Jonathan Schmidt and Paulo Hyung Jin Kim Sun—who helped the committee pay attention to our understandings and biases as we worked to create an Executive inclusive of the diversity of our church.

Apart from the gifts of each member, the committee considered the balance of the Executive as a whole, including geographic distribution and urban and rural inclusion. Although there are Regions not represented on this slate, the Nominations Committee noted where Regions are connected with each other through shared staffing or other means and kept these affinities in mind in assembling this slate.

Through it all, we looked for those who could serve on behalf of the entire church, with awareness that the Executive may also need to seek input from people not at the table.

The Nominations Committee consisted of one member of the current Executive from each Conference and one of the French Ministries representatives. The committee reached consensus on this recommended slate.

Recommendation summary

We believe we are recommending a well-rounded, fully capable group to guide The United Church of Canada into the beginning of this next chapter.

The proposed slate is made up of 10 women and 5 men; 9 ordained ministers, 1 candidate, 1 diaconal minister and 4 lay people; and members of 12 of the 16 proposed regions. Collectively they bring a wealth of experience in all areas of expertise and knowledge named above.

The recommended 15 members have lived and served in 12 of the 13 Conferences, in urban and rural areas, and in 11 countries outside of Canada. Seven of the 15 members identify themselves as racialized or Indigenous, one as francophone, two as people with disabilities, and two as under 30 years of age. In total 10 of the 15 members named themselves with at least one of these marginalized identities.

Recommended members

The following offers a brief sketch of each of the members of the team that the Nominations Committee is recommending as the Executive.

Sharon Aylsworth – Sharon Aylsworth is a layperson from Toronto who has recently served as chair of her local church council, is serving on the executives of both her presbytery and Conference and was Toronto Conference's representative on the Sessional Committee at the

42nd General Council. She brings extensive knowledge of what happens and how it happens at the congregational level. She uses a wheelchair and brings a particular interest in disability and accessibility issues. She attends Kingston Road United Church in Toronto, Ontario.

Katie Curtis – As a proud PK (Preacher’s Kid), Katie grew up in the United Church. She has served the church in many different ways, primarily with a focus on Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and is now seeking ways to be part of the changing church and the exciting work and decisions that will happen within the denomination in the years to come. Katie is a lay person under the age of 30 who grew up in rural Saskatchewan and now attends at Humboldt United Church.

Deb Hinksman – Deb has served the church in diaconal ministry since 1980 and has worked with congregations through significant transitions. She is a process-oriented planner who sees the bigger picture and helps find new solutions to challenges. She brings more than 37 years of experience in congregational and community leadership in British Columbia, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, and Hamilton Conferences. She currently serves as retired supply with Delhi United Church in Delhi, Ontario.

Ha Na Park is a young, racialized woman who has a faith—and sees the United Church as having a faith—rooted in justice and empowerment of the voices from the margins. She is passionate about the remaking of the United Church to be truly intercultural. Ha Na’s gift of creating accountable theologies from lived experiences and her passion for the call toward equity add to the voices of reason and experience. She immigrated to Canada from Korea in 2007 and studied at Vancouver School of Theology. She is currently the Ordained Minister at Immanuel United Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Deborah Richards has been an active lay member of Northwood Pastoral Charge, Surrey, BC, since 1995. During that time she served in children’s ministry, ministry and personnel, and as Chair of the Ministry Board from 2010–2017. Deborah has strong administrative and project management skills through years of public sector and public post-secondary work experience in Canada and the Caribbean. She has an interest in intercultural ministries, governance within the church, and feels called to provide leadership that supports the future sustainability and ministry of The United Church in Canada.

Andrew Richardson is a well-respected church and community leader with years of experience and a passion for ministry. He has served as an ordained minister in a variety of pastoral charges: large urban, small rural, new church development. He has experience across all courts of the church. Most recently, he served as chair of the Boundaries Commission. He is currently the minister at Trinity Summerside, Prince Edward Island. He is enthusiastic and hopeful about the future of the church and the United Church in particular.

Janet Sigurdson is a proud ordained First Nations woman who has diligently served her church and people. She has served congregations in both Saskatchewan and All Native Circle Conference, now attending at Wanakapew United Church. She has been a delegate of the

United Church to the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. She is a member of the current Executive of the General Council and the Aboriginal Ministries Council. Janet is a woman who never hesitated to accept a challenge.

Teresa Burnett-Cole – Excited about the possibilities for UCC 2.0, Teresa is a Two-Spirited Irish/Scot/Mohawk ordained minister currently serving in Ottawa. Her ministry is one of building bridges between diverse communities, and she does so by writing, preaching, teaching, and social activism. The Aboriginal Ministries Council selected Teresa as an individual who is excited to create a new way of being a church together in light of The United Church of Canada's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Apologies to Indigenous Peoples.

Mitchell Anderson is a dënesuliné man currently serving the Lanigan-Nokomis Pastoral Charge as part of his St. Andrew's College ministry residency in Saskatchewan. He was raised in rural Saskatchewan and now serves two small rural congregations. Called to bivocational ministry, Mitchell also works as a management consultant in the areas of strategy and governance and serves on boards in the credit union system. Mitchell is passionate about building up a church with purpose that equips disciples of Jesus Christ to serve the mission of God. He is under the age of 30 and a candidate for ordained ministry.

Kathy Brett – The United Church has been home to Kathy since she was a child. Kathy studied sociology and psychology and worked for a period of time as a social worker. She is an Early Childhood Educator and after a call to ministry has served in several congregations both on the island of Newfoundland and in Labrador. Kathy worked for a period of time as a student minister with the Botswana Christian Council in Gaborone, Botswana as well as Christian Development Director at George Street United Church, St. John's and St. James-Bond United Church in Toronto. She is currently at Gander United Church in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Samuel Dansokho is highly respected as one who has chosen the United Church. He is fluent in many languages, including English and French, and creates ministry in both. Samuel was born in Senegal and served at the head of the Protestant Church of Senegal. During this time he was blessed with experiences and responsibilities in the local, continental, and global Church. He is an excellent teacher with a gentle encouraging manner, and has studied and taught in theological schools in the United States and France. He is now the pastor of Plymouth-Trinity United Church in Sherbrooke, Quebec and the co-president of la Table des Ministères en français (MIF).

Paul Douglas Walfall – Paul Douglas Walfall, currently serving First United Church in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, brings experience with pastoral charge, camp, presbytery and Conference governance, as well as technological expertise. Paul has deep passion for the ministry, mission, and witness of The United Church of Canada; a desire for the church to be truly a multiracial community, where racism does not exist and where each person is valued not by the colour of their skin but because they are made in the image of God; and a commitment to the journey towards Right Relations with the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Larry Doyle – Larry serves the wonderfully vibrant Faith United in Courtice, Ontario, and is passionate about deep spirituality, theology, and church as a hothouse for nurturing spiritual growth. Larry is a current member of the Executive of the General Council and chair of the General Council Planning Committee. He has been key in reimagining the ways in which the Executive and the General Council can have “better conversations about important things.” He’s a musician, songwriter, soccer fan, and has never met a chocolate chip cookie he didn’t like!

Jane McDonald – Jane has developed many skills throughout her 35+ years in the federal government and as a lifelong lay member of The United Church of Canada. She brings in-depth knowledge of finance and organizational systems as well as the ability to relate to grassroots members and speak to the concerns and anxieties that come with change. Jane has a strong interest in social justice and helping to better the lives of those who seek help. She has served on the Executive, the Finance Committee, and the Property Committee of Maritime Conference. She names being disabled as one of her identities. She attends at Orchard Valley United Church in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

Arlyce Schiebout – Through more than two decades of ordained ministry, Arlyce has demonstrated gifts of compassion, thoughtfulness, faithfulness, and commitment. She has gained knowledge and experience in ministry at all levels of the Christian Church, both within and outside The United Church of Canada. Her training and experience in leading through change, dealing with conflict, working with others, and thinking deeply and prayerfully about the faith make her a leader ready to face the challenges that confront The United Church of Canada at this critical moment of time. Arlyce previously served on the Executive as the chair of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee. She is a volunteer associate minister at Glen Cairn Pastoral Charge in Kanata, Ontario.

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

THEME: CONSENT**ANW 1 ADDING LINE NUMBERS TO BASIS OF UNION SECTION 2.6, “A SONG OF FAITH”****Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

While the Twenty Articles of Doctrine (1925) are structured in articles, and the Statement of Faith (1940) is structured in sections, the Song of Faith (2006) is intentionally without subject headings or section demarcations.

2. Why is this issue important?

Quick reference to A Song of Faith, as well as focused teaching about it, are made more difficult due to the intentional lack of headings or demarcations.

We affirm the decision to not include headings or demarcations, but acknowledge there are other ways to improve navigation through a lengthy document.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council 43 might approve the editing of the Basis of Union by adding line numbers in the margin of Section 2.6 “A Song of Faith” in future editions of *The Manual*, so as to increase its usability in devotional and instructional applications.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Presented by Foothills Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference. Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

ANW 5 LANGUAGE IN *THE MANUAL***Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to do something about making *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada more user-friendly document.

2. Why is this issue important?

All pastoral charges are expected to abide by the rules of *The Manual*.

The Manual is seen as a document that aids us in carrying out God’s will to the best of our ability.

The Latin phrases (e.g., page 213, 7. Procedure on Voting: (a) the term “viva voce” is used, and (c) the term “ultra vires” is used) are not understood by everyone and are therefore a problem.

People cannot abide by the rules in a document if they do not understand the meaning of the words.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council 43 might adopt the principles of clarity and simplicity of language to guide the writing of all future editions of *The Manual*.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by Hardisty-Hughenden Pastoral Charge to Coronation Presbytery.

Transmitted by Coronation Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

BC 7 ASSESSMENTS FOR ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to be supportive of ecumenical shared ministries in these times of transition in The United Church of Canada by raising awareness about the need for a transparent and equitable process for the assessments that will be required from these communities of faith.

2. Why is this issue important?

- In The United Church of Canada, there are over 60 pastoral charges that are ecumenical shared ministries, which means that they are affiliated with at least one denomination other than The United Church of Canada.
- Throughout the entire process of the current restructuring of The United Church of Canada, there has been very little information or discussion about how the changes could impact ecumenical shared ministries.
- Ecumenical shared ministries provide funds either through assessments or contributions to all the judicatories to which they have a relationship.
- In at least one presbytery, there was work done so that the process for determining a reasonable and equitable assessment for ecumenical shared ministries has been included in the written policies of another denomination.
- Consideration is currently given to ecumenical shared ministries in the collection of data through the annual Statistical Forms, which may then be used in calculating

assessments, but there is no note of this in the actual Statistical Forms and Instruction Booklet.

- As a justice issue, an ecumenical shared ministry should not be required to pay a total assessment to all its judicatories that is higher than what its assessment would be if it was only a United Church of Canada community of faith.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council could affirm the principle that there be a reasonable and equitable assessment for ecumenical shared ministries, including:

- **consideration of how pastoral charges that are ecumenical shared ministries are presently assessed by all their judicatories, and**
- **clear communication of all assessment procedures.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Funding Implications

- staffing time to contact presbyteries and/or individual ecumenical shared ministries to determine what is already in place for determining assessments for ecumenical shared ministries

BQ 7 FAIRNESS IN THE NEW FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

Our denomination has spent considerable energy and time in its commitment to the principle of equitable treatment for all. The new funding assessment model includes the money given towards significant capital projects in the income line on which the assessment for individual communities of faith is determined. This interpretation of the model will put a high stress over a period of three years on any such congregation.

2. Why is this issue important?

- Implementation of this policy will discourage congregations from investing in major projects for the maintenance and improvement of their church buildings. This could result in the deterioration of buildings and create potential safety issues.
- It would make the planting of a new congregation in a new building virtually impossible.
- This policy will be seen as a punishment of those faith communities who choose to improve the quality of their buildings to better serve their congregations and strengthen the sustainability of their chosen missions.
- It will negatively impact their ability to serve the disadvantaged who use their buildings for self-help groups and the many other outreach ministries of faith communities.

- It seems strange that a congregation could be “taxed” on improvements or major maintenance to a building that is held in trust for the United Church.
- It will deter potential donors from outside the congregation from participating in a capital financial campaign when all such funds are not being directed to the intended purpose.
- The current policy does not line up with the values that are part of The UCC faith tradition:
 - Equitable treatment of all – this will favour some, while discriminating against others. We realize that the issue of what is a fair assessment is difficult, but the current policy will have long-term negative effects on many communities of faith.
 - Stewardship of resources – this policy will discourage the stewardship of physical locations (church buildings) to the detriment of the community and could possibly result in unsafe spaces. As part of outreach initiatives, by communities of faith to the surrounding community, many community groups use church buildings.
- Some may think that this “financial issue” is not worthy of consideration by the General Council given the other major issues at hand. Given our conciliar court structure, raising this issue as a proposal is a way for the “grassroots” of the denomination to raise an issue that will have a negative long-term effect on the denomination.
- This should be an easy policy error to fix.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council might direct a review of how money given by individual communities of faith towards significant capital projects is treated in the new funding assessment model, with a view to ensuring the principle of equitable treatment is honoured in the model.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 7 to the General Council, with approval.

BQ 9 NOT LIMITING GRANT APPLICATIONS TO ONE PER PASTORAL CHARGE

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

In its many courts, the United Church offers opportunities for funding grants from the General Council based on the criteria of conformity to the purpose of the grant and/or the merits of the application. Many of these grants limit applications for funding on a per pastoral charge basis, rather than allowing all preaching places to apply for the same grant.

2. Why is this issue important?

Many, if not a majority of multiple-point pastoral charge, have arisen due to financial constraints and/or dwindling memberships. Thus, it could be said that, in general, multiple-point pastoral charges are an identifiable, disadvantaged group. Limiting grant applications to one per pastoral charge compounds their disadvantage.

Case in point: The technology grant

The “language” of communication in contemporary North America utilizes words, videos, graphics, infographics, icons, emojis to such an extent that modern business practices assume them to be a necessary component. How can any congregation survive without speaking the language of those outside its walls? Diminishing the opportunity for congregations to leave behind the congregational mergers and pastoral charge realignments of the 1960s, when “language” was limited to words, delivered orally or in text, by dividing available grants by the number of points within a pastoral charge, not only adds to their disadvantage but enlarges the probability of disbanding.

All Christians, all congregations, have the same mandate—to communicate the love of God to all who will listen. Every congregation that fades into history closes a door of opportunity to fulfill that mandate.

All members and adherents of The United Church of Canada may legally exist within the framework of a pastoral charge. However, they live out their faith, ministry, and mission within the context of a congregation.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council could initiate a review of all available grants and change the granting criteria to limit the number of applications to one per community of faith instead of one per pastoral charge.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 10 to the General Council, with approval.

GCE 2 THREE COUNCIL MODEL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

Remit 1 provides the basic framework for a three council structure. Beyond this basic framework, there are areas of governance that have not yet been established; for example, the membership of the denominational council, the lay membership of the regional council, quorum requirements for council meetings, and composition of the council executive.

2. Why is this issue important?

The church must have governance policies so that the three councils can function in a fair and orderly way. It is important to strike a balance between enough regulation for a level of consistency across the church and enough flexibility to allow for regional contexts.

It is also important to have transitional governance requirements that provide clarity on how the shift will be made to the new structure.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve the policies set out in the attached appendix for each of the three councils.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

Appendix: Proposed Governance Policies**Communities of Faith**

1. *For communities of faith that are congregations and pastoral charges*, all existing requirements for membership, meetings, governance body, and organizational matters set out in the by-law portion of *The Manual* will continue to apply. These requirements may be modified with the approval of both the congregation/pastoral charge and the regional council, and included in the covenant between the congregation/pastoral charge and the regional council.

2. *For all other communities of faith*, the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council must set out the requirements for membership, meetings, governance bodies and organizational matters for that community of faith. If there are existing requirements that have already been approved by the presbytery for the community of faith, they will continue to apply. These requirements may be modified with the approval of both the community of faith and the regional council, and included in the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council.

3. *For all communities of faith*, all existing requirements will be understood as automatically including the changes made through Remit 1. For example, references to “the presbytery” in the existing requirements will be understood as meaning “the regional council.”

Regional Council

4. *Membership:*

The lay members of the regional council will be elected by the community of faith on the basis:

- a) one representative from each community of faith with 100 or fewer members;
- b) two representatives from each community of faith with between 101 and 200 members;
- c) three representatives from each community of faith with between 201 and 300 members; and
- d) four representatives from each community of faith with 301 or more members.

The regional council will include additional lay members as determined by the regional council if necessary to respect a balance of ministry personnel and lay members who are not ministry personnel.

5. *Composition of Regional Council Executive:*

The executive will consist, to the extent possible, of a balance of ministry personnel and lay members who are not ministry personnel.

6. *Governance:*

The regional council may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of officers, committees, commissions, and other bodies, as determined by the regional council.

7. *Meetings:*

The regional council will decide on the frequency, time, place of its meetings provided it meets the minimum requirement set out in Remit 1 of meeting at least annually as the full regional council or through its Executive. All meetings must be called by the leading elder, presiding officer or secretary (or their equivalents within the regional council structure). Special meetings may be called for urgent business.

8. *Quorum:*

For meetings of either the regional council or its executive:

- a) if there are fewer than 60 members, at least 1/3 of them must be present;
- b) if there are 60 or more members, at least 20 members must be present; and
- c) there must be at least one ministry personnel and one lay member who is not ministry personnel present.

Denominational Council

9. *Membership:*

The Denominational Council will consist of the following 260 members, all of whom must be ministry personnel or lay members:

- a) the Moderator;

- b) the Immediate Past Moderator;
- c) the General Secretary;
- d) the leading elder or presiding officer of each regional council;
- e) 204 members elected by the regional councils, where possible, at least a year before the next regular in-person meeting of the Denominational Council, with each regional council electing:
 - i. 5 members PLUS an additional number of members allocated in proportion to the number of communities of faith in that region
 - ii. a minimum of 1/3 ministry personnel and a minimum of 1/3 lay members who are not ministry personnel
 - iii. with attention to diversity of gender and age, racial and cultural identities and sexual expressions, as provided in policies set by the Denominational Council;
- f) 15 members chosen by the national Indigenous organization (yet to be named) who are in addition to any Indigenous members elected under paragraph 9 e) above;
- g) the members of the Denominational Council Executive who will be continuing to serve on the Denominational Council Executive following that meeting of the Denominational Council; and
- h) a number of members to be elected by the Denominational Council Executive, on the recommendation of the Regional Councils, for the purpose of ensuring diversity in the Denominational Council after the members listed in e) have been determined to bring the total number of Commissioner to 260.

There is one exception: for transition purposes, the members of the 43rd General Council 2018 will automatically become the members of the Denominational Council on January 1, 2019 without change to meet the composition requirements set out above.

10. *Term:*

The members of the Denominational Council elected/chosen under paragraphs 9 (e) (f) or (h) above will each serve for a term of approximately three years, starting at the beginning of the regular in-person meeting of a Denominational Council for which they were elected/chosen and concluding at the beginning of the next regular in-person meeting of the Denominational Council.

There is one exception: for transition purposes, the members of the Denominational Council as of January 1, 2019 will continue to serve until the in-person regular meeting of the Denominational Council in 2021.

11. *Vacancies:*

If a member elected/chosen to serve as a member of the Denominational Council under paragraphs 9 (e), (f), or (h) above resigns or cannot complete their term for any other reason, the electing/choosing body may elect/choose another member to complete the term of the vacating member.

12. Regular meetings:

The Denominational Council will meet in person every third year. Between triennial meetings, it will meet annually electronically to fulfill corporate legal requirements or for such other business as determined by the Denominational Council Executive.

13. Special meetings:

The Denominational Council Executive may call a special meeting of the Denominational Council between regular meetings in exceptional circumstances.

14. Quorum:

The Denominational Council may only meet if a minimum of at least 1/5 of the commissioners are present.

15. Moderator and General Secretary:

All existing requirements with respect to the Moderator and General Secretary of the General Council as set out in the by-law portion of *The Manual* will continue to apply and will be understood as automatically including the changes made through Remit 1. For example, references to “the General Council” in the existing requirements will be understood as meaning “the Denominational Council.” There is one exception: the Moderator must be a member of the United Church but is not required to be a commissioner of the Denominational Council that elects them.

16. Governance:

The Denominational Council and its Executive may fulfill their responsibilities with the help of officers, committees, commissions, and other bodies, as determined by the Denominational Council and its Executive, respectively.

17. Signing of documents for The United Church of Canada:

The existing requirements for the signing of documents by The United Church of Canada will continue to apply and will be understood as automatically including the changes made through Remit 1. For example, references to “the General Council” in the existing requirements will be understood as meaning “the Denominational Council.”

Denominational Council Executive**18. Membership:**

[Note: this would be in addition to the requirement adopted by the 42nd General Council at the September 2017 special meeting: the Denominational Council Executive will consist of 15 members elected by the Denominational Council plus the Moderator, Past Moderator, and the General Secretary.]

Fifty (50%) percent of the members of the Denominational Council Executive must be members of the United Church Pension Plan.

19. Term:

The 15 elected members of the Denominational Council Executive will each serve for a six-year term. The terms will be staggered so that every three years, approximately half of the elected members will have completed their terms. For the first Denominational Council Executive that takes office on January 1, 2019, the Denominational Council will elect seven members to serve for a term ending with the in-person meeting of the 44th General Council 2021, with the remaining eight members to serve until the in-person meeting of the 45th General Council 2024.

20. Vacancies:

The Denominational Council Executive may fill any vacancies in its membership pending the next regular meeting of the Denominational Council. A member elected to fill a vacancy on the Denominational Council Executive will serve for the balance of the term of the vacating member.

21. Sub-Executive:

There will be a Sub-Executive of the Denominational Council consisting of the Moderator, General Secretary and three other members of the Denominational Council Executive, as elected by the Executive. The Sub-Executive will be responsible for making decisions on financial or administrative matters on behalf of the Executive where the matter involves assets or expense of less than Two Million (\$2,000,000.00) Dollars, and for such other matters as may be assigned to the Sub-Executive by the Executive. The Sub-Executive may make these decisions at meetings or by signing written resolutions in lieu of meetings as long as the resolutions are signed by all members of the Sub-Executive.

GCE 3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

The issue is avoiding conflicts of interest when courts, committees, and other bodies within the United Church make decisions.

2. Why is this issue important?

It is essential to avoid conflicts of interest in decision-making to ensure the integrity and legality of decisions made within the church.

Having a conflict of interest policy will help to increase awareness of the issue and provide clear rules that can be followed to avoid conflicts.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve the updated Conflict of Interest Policy (appended).

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive

The Manual does not contain any rules regarding conflict of interest yet this is a common topic of concern within the governing body of local ministry units, presbyteries, and Conferences. There is a conflict of interest policy that applies to General Council and to the Executive of the General Council. It would be helpful to extend that policy to apply to all courts of the church.

The Manual Committee created this policy which the Executive of the General Council recommends to the 43rd General Council for approval.

The United Church of Canada Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to members of decision-making bodies of the United Church. When participating in decisions, they must not put themselves in a position where their own interests may conflict with their duty to act in the best interests of the United Church.

Policy

Application of This Policy

1. This policy applies to all members and adherents of the United Church when they are participating in decision-making in communities of faith, governing bodies of communities of faith, regional councils and the Denominational Council, and their respective committees, task groups and commissions, and the denominational Office of Vocation. Each of these bodies is a “Governance Body” in this policy.

Responsibilities

2. Members of a Governance Body must not participate in decision-making where their duty to the United Church is in conflict with the duty they owe to another organization. For example, that could happen where a member of the Body serves another organization as an employee, contractor or in an elected leadership role.

3. Members of a Governance Body must not participate in any decision-making by that Body which could result in direct or indirect benefit to them.

4. Members of a Governance Body must not give, in the performance of their duties for that Body, preferential treatment to relatives or friends or any other organization in which they have an interest.

5. Members of a Governance Body must not benefit from the use of information acquired during the course of their participation in that Body, if that information is not generally available to the wider church.

6. Members of a Governance Body must not accept from a person who has dealings with that Body any reward, advantage or benefit of any kind, either directly or indirectly, that affects decision-making.

7. Members of a Governance Body must not place themselves in a position where they are under obligation to another person who might benefit from special consideration or favour, or who might seek preferential treatment by that Body.

Exceptions

8. There are exceptions to situations that might otherwise be considered a conflict of interest.

- A. Monetary conflicts - A monetary conflict arises where the Governance Body is considering a decision that may have a monetary effect, either positive or negative, on a member of the Body or a person close to the member (relative or friend). It is not a conflict of interest if, in the opinion of the Body, the member's monetary interest is substantially the same as the monetary interest of all other members of the Body.
- B. Non-monetary conflicts - A non-monetary conflict arises in any circumstance where a member of the Governance Body is constrained in any way from acting in the best interests of the church. That could occur where a member of the Body, or person close to the member, stands to gain a benefit in some non-monetary way from a decision that the Body is considering. It is not a conflict of interest if, in the opinion of the Body, the member's conflict is not likely to affect the member's decision.
- C. Membership in a Governance Body through intentional representation from other organizations - It is not a conflict of interest when a member of the Governance Body who represents another organization on the Body brings the perspective of the other organization to the decision-making of the Body. That is a key purpose of having intentional representation from other organizations. As such, it is not a conflict of interest for such a member to participate when the Body is considering a decision that affects the other organization.
- D. Waiver of conflicts - In any situation where a member of the Governance Body has an apparent conflict of interest, the Body may waive the conflict of interest and allow the member to participate in the decision-making. The Body must be satisfied that waiving the conflict will not negatively impact the transparency and integrity of the Body's decision-making.

Practice

9. *Knowledge/awareness of conflicts* - Members of a Governance Body must be constantly aware of the need to avoid situations that might result in a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Orientation and education of members is important.

10. Identifying conflicts - As a member of the Governance Body participates in the work of the Body, they must consider whether any particular item of business presents a conflict of interest for them.

11. Disclosing conflicts - A member of the Governance Body must inform the Body of a conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity once the member becomes aware of it.

12. Refrain from all participation - The conflict of interest may involve a situation where the member of the Governance Body stands to gain personally, or where the member's relatives or friends stand to receive a benefit (either monetary or non-monetary). In such case, the member withdraws from any participation in the decision-making on any matters to which the conflict of interest relates. That includes leaving the room while the matter is under discussion until after the decision is made.

13. Responsibility of other members - If a member of the Governance Body fails to notice, or to declare, a conflict of interest, any other member may raise the matter with the Body. Once the issue has been raised by another member, the member with the potential conflict may acknowledge the conflict and withdraw from participation in the decision-making.

14. Decision by Governance Body - If the member of the Governance Body with the potential conflict of interest disagrees that one exists and/or does not withdraw from participation in the decision-making, it is up to the Body to determine the issue before proceeding with the item of business. If the Body decides that a conflict of interest exists, and makes no decision to waive it, the member is excluded from participation in the decision-making.

16. Documenting - The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Body must record all disclosures of conflict of interest, all exclusions from participation in decision-making based on conflict of interest, and all decisions by the Body with respect to conflict of interest.

GCE 4 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MANDATE AND MEMBERSHIP

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

A nominations committee will need to be established in order to recommend to each Denominational Council members to serve on the Denominational Council Executive, the Board of Vocation, and any other committees to be appointed by the Denominational Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

With the shift to an Executive whose members are no longer elected by Conferences, the Denominational Council will need to establish a new method for selecting and recommending the members of its Executive and other committees. The Board of Vocation is also recommending that its members be appointed by the Denominational Council on the recommendation of a Nominations Committee.

What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue? An alternate method of appointing future Executives and Denomination Council-appointed committees would need to be approved by this General Council.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve the following as the mandate, responsibilities, membership, and terms of appointment of the Nominations Committee:

Mandate

The Nominations Committee recommends appointments for the Denominational Executive, and other committees, boards, task groups, or United Church representatives, as requested by the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary.

Responsibilities

The Nominations Committee is responsible for reviewing nominations and submitting to the Denominational Council, its Executive, or the General Secretary, as appropriate, recommendations for appointment. In carrying out this responsibility, the committee will

1. reflect theologically on the basis for appointed member participation in the church
2. discern who is equipped to serve
3. develop and test processes for selecting individuals and developing effective groups
4. strive to meet the church's commitments to
 - becoming an intercultural church
 - the full inclusion of people with disabilities
 - developing new and young leadership
 - the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
 - any future commitments regarding the appointed leadership of the United Church

Members of the Nominations Committee will actively seek out and encourage nominations from across the diversity of the church and its geographic regions.

Membership

The Nominations Committee will consist of eight members:

- two members of the Executive
- six members of the United Church not serving on the Executive

The composition of the Nominations Committee will reflect the intercultural church.

The members and chair of the Nominations Committee will be appointed by the Denominational Council. Vacancies on the committee may be filled by the Executive until the next meeting of the Denominational Council.

For the Nominations Committee that will serve from July 2018 to July 2021, the two members of the Executive will be from those appointed to the incoming Executive (2019–2021). Members will be appointed by the 43rd General Council.

Terms of Appointment

Members will serve for a term of three years, corresponding with the term of each Denominational Council, with the possibility of reappointment for a second term.

Meetings

The Nominations Committee will meet as needed, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the committee may meet in person.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

GCE 5 JUDICIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

The membership composition and appointment process of the Judicial Committee will need to be amended to reflect the new three court structure, and to be more efficient in its use of volunteer resources

2. Why is this issue important?

Appeals are an essential element within the governance of The United Church of Canada. The Judicial Committee is the body that is responsible for dealing with appeals.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- 1) Amend and combine the “Members” and “Executive” sections of the terms of reference of the Judicial Committee (*Policy 2.04 Judicial Committee*) to read as follows:

Members

8. The Judicial Committee will be composed of up to nine members appointed by the Denominational Council, on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, at least four of whom will be specialists.
 9. Each person will have aptitude for and skills in legal processes and/or the governance of the courts or councils of the church
 10. Those serving as specialists will have related legal or administrative tribunal experience.
 11. Each member shall serve for up to nine years
 12. The Denominational Council will appoint one member of the Judicial Committee as the chairperson
 13. Vacancies occurring between meetings of the Denominational Council shall be filled by the Executive of the Denominational Council, until the next ensuing meeting of the Denominational Council
- 2) Make any other amendments to policy 2.04 required for consistency with the above changes and to reflect the changes made by Remit 1.
 - 3) Amend the terms of appointment of the currently serving members of the Executive of the Judicial Committee to conclude in 2019 at such a time as the Denominational Council convenes for an online meeting. These members to serve as the Judicial Committee until that time.
 - 4) Conclude the terms of appointment of all members of the Judicial Committee, not serving on the Executive, effective with the rise of the 43rd General Council.
 - 5) Direct the Nominations Committee to bring forward to the online meeting of the 43rd General Council in 2019, a slate of up to nine members to serve as the Judicial Committee, with three of the members to be appointed until 2021, three until 2024, and three until 2027.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Judicial Committee is currently composed of four members from each Conference. One of these four is designated to serve on the Executive of the Judicial Committee; the other three serve on the “Judicial Pool,” to be called on if needed. These members are rarely, if ever, called upon, yet, Conferences have been required to recruit and elect members for these roles. The responsibilities laid out in *The Manual* for the Judicial Committee are carried out by the Executive.

In this proposed membership, instead of each Region appointing members to the Judicial Committee, members will be recruited from across the church and appointed based on their

skills for this work. Regional councils will be invited to recommend members who have the required skills and aptitudes to serve. The chair of the Judicial Committee along with staff or other resources will assess those recommended to serve as specialists to ensure that they have the required skills. The Nominations Committee will consider geographical diversity and other considerations in making its recommendations for appointment.

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

Appendix: Policy 2.04 Judicial Committee

The following shows how policy 2.04 would be amended to reflect the proposed changes.

Purpose Statement

Appeals from decisions of a Court or Council of The United Church of Canada or a ruling of the General Secretary shall be heard and decided by members of the Judicial Committee

Manual References (*The Manual, 2016*)

E. General Council

- 4.8.3 c. Judicial Committee: The Judicial Committee is responsible for dealing with all appeals of
- (i) decisions of other courts to the General Council;
 - (ii) decisions of the Executive of the General Council; and
 - (iii) rulings of the General Secretary of the General Council.

Policy

Governed by This Policy

1. This policy applies to the members of the Judicial Committee and all those requiring the services of this Committee.

Terms of Reference

2. The Judicial Committee is responsible to carry out the responsibilities designated in *The Manual*.
3. An appeal within this policy and in compliance with *The Manual, 2016*, of The United Church of Canada, refers to a formal request for reconsideration of a decision made by a court or council or a court or council-appointed Formal Hearing Committee, and includes the process leading to that request; or a formal request for reconsideration of a ruling made by the General Secretary
4. A decision within this policy and in compliance with *The Manual, 2016*, of The United Church of Canada means any disposition of a matter by a court or council, or by a body authorized to act on behalf of the court or council.
5. Decisions that are not subject to appeal are listed in *The Manual, 2016*, section J.13.3.

6. The Judicial Committee ~~Executive~~ is responsible to:
- (1) appoint panels, with at least one member of the Judicial Committee ~~Executive~~ to be a member of each panel, to hear appeals under section J.13.5 of *The Manual, 2016*;
 - (2) provide appropriate orientation, interpretation, and guidance to each panel, which duty shall be the joint responsibility of the member of the Judicial Committee ~~Executive~~ on the panel and the ~~executive secretary of the Conference involved or such other person as the Conference may designate~~; resource staff of the Judicial Committee
 - (3) study the procedures of panels and to make recommendations to the Executive of the ~~General~~ Denominational Council as required, recognizing that the decisions of panels are final;
 - (4) receive the records of all panels and to report to the ~~General~~ Denominational Council all actions of the Judicial Committee

Panel Chairperson

7. The panel of persons hearing each matter shall appoint a Panel Chairperson. The Panel Chairperson shall ensure that:
- (1) a full and correct record of the proceedings of the panel of the Judicial Committee and of its decisions is kept;
 - (2) a copy of the decision of the panel (which is a decision of the Judicial Committee), certified to be correct by the Panel Chairperson, is transmitted to each party concerned; and
 - (3) a complete record of the case, certified by the Panel Chairperson, is filed with the General Secretary ~~of the General Council~~.

Members

- ~~8. After consultation with each Conference, the General Council will elect four persons from each Conference to the Judicial Committee~~
8. The Judicial Committee will be composed of up to nine members appointed by the Denominational Council, on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, at least four of whom will be specialists.
9. Each person will have aptitude for and skills in legal processes and/or the governance of the courts or councils of the church.
10. Those serving as specialists will have related legal or administrative tribunal experience as assessed by the chair and resource staff of the Judicial Committee
- ~~9.~~ 11. Each member shall serve for up to ~~three terms of three~~ nine years each
- ~~10.~~ 12. The ~~General~~ Denominational Council will appoint one member of the Judicial Committee as the chairperson

~~11. 13.~~ Vacancies occurring between meetings of the ~~General~~ Denominational Council shall be filled by the Executive ~~or the Sub-Executive~~ of the ~~General~~ Denominational Council, until the next ensuing meeting of the ~~General~~ Denominational Council

Executive

~~12.~~ The Executive of the Judicial Committee will be composed of up to 13 members appointed by the ~~General Council or its Executive~~

~~13.~~ The persons appointed to this Executive should have aptitude for and skills in legal processes and/or the governance of the courts of the church.

~~14.~~ The duties of the Executive shall be:

- ~~(1) To determine whether an appeal meets the requirements for an appeal hearing~~
- ~~(2) To appoint panels to hear appeals~~

~~15.~~ The General Council Legal/Judicial Counsel is Resource Staff for the committee

Hearing Procedures

~~16.~~ 14. The following procedures apply to the hearing of appeals:

- (1) No member of the Judicial Committee who took part in any aspect of the matter from which an appeal is being taken shall sit on the panel hearing that appeal.
- (2) All members appointed to a panel must be present throughout the hearing for which they are appointed.
- (3) Any person or ~~court~~ council appearing before the Judicial Committee or any panel thereof shall have the right to appear in person or by an advocate or legal counsel. Such representative shall not be a member of the Judicial Committee.
- (4) Any person or ~~court~~ council appearing by an advocate or legal counsel may be present at the hearing.
- (5) All hearings of the Judicial Committee and all panels thereof shall be conducted pursuant to the rules of procedure for appeals as provided in sections J.13.1 of *The Manual*, as if the hearing were an appeal hearing.
- (6) Notwithstanding the provisions of section A.4 of *The Manual*, the Judicial Committee and all panels thereof shall have power to take such evidence as it may deem necessary, either in person orally or by commission report, statutory declaration, or otherwise which shall be stipulated in each case.
- (7) The agreement of a majority of the members of the panel of the Judicial Committee hearing any matter shall be necessary to reach a decision.
- (8) Decisions of a panel of the Judicial Committee shall be decisions of the Judicial Committee.
- (9) The necessary expenses of each panel of the Judicial Committee, including stenographic or other assistance when required, shall be provided by the ~~General~~ Denominational Council.

Reporting

~~17-~~ 15. The committee will report to each meeting of the ~~General~~ Denominational Council.

GCE 9 BOARD OF VOCATION AND CANDIDACY BOARD

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

Executive Summary

This proposal establishes the framework for the Board of Vocation and Candidacy Boards.

1. What is the issue?

The office of vocations [sic] will be overseen by an elected body honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry, as described in Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church; consisting of a balance of ministers whether ordained, diaconal, or designated lay ministers and lay people, with a variety of active experience. (ROP 42nd General Council CR6 p146-147)

The Candidacy Pathway remit calls for candidacy boards within Conferences with authority for assessment and oversight of candidates. The 42nd General Council (GC42) *Record of Proceedings* (ROP) gives the responsibility for “determining the person’s fitness and readiness for accreditation to ministry” to the Office of Vocation. The Council decided that other actions would be amended to accommodate the decisions of the comprehensive review related remits should they pass.

This proposal defines the “elected body,” the process for election, the relationship with the candidacy boards which are part of the Candidacy Pathway remit, and where the authority for “accreditation to ministry” lies.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board need to be established in order for the Office of Vocation to function. See further information in section 4.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve the following recommendations:

- 1) The Board of Vocation consists of 12 people with discretion to add another 2 to ensure appropriate balance of intercultural, ordained, diaconal, designated lay ministry, and lay members. The Indigenous Church would elect one Board member in addition to those elected by the General Council.**
- 2) The Board of Vocation is elected by the General Council as approved by GC42 and that for 2018, should the General Council decide to enact the Office of Vocation remit, GC43 refer the election to GCE so the nomination process can be followed.**

- 3) For 2018 the Conferences nominate five people to a pool to populate the Board, its committees and candidacy boards. The General Secretary may invite additional nominations through related groups and networks, if needed, to address any gaps in the expertise or diversity of the pool. The nominations process of General Council would provide the GCE a slate of 12–14 people for election to the Board of Vocation. This would include naming the Chair of the Board of Vocation. The Indigenous Church would elect a person to the Board of Vocation.
- 4) The nominees not on the slate for election to the Board would become part of a pool for the Board of Vocation to populate the committees of the Board including the Candidacy Boards whose responsibilities are identified in the Candidacy Pathway remit.
- 5) There will be up to six Candidacy Boards serving different geographies. One of these Candidacy Boards will be named by the Indigenous Church and will serve the Indigenous Church. Part of the responsibilities of the Office of Vocation ministers is to resource the Candidacy Boards.
- 6) The Board of Vocation may appoint commissions to assist it in fulfilling its responsibilities. Candidacy Boards are commissions of the Board of Vocation and would have the responsibilities outlined in the Candidacy Pathway including, but not limited to, naming candidates, terminating candidacy, and determining readiness for accreditation for ordination, commissioning to the diaconal ministry and recognizing designated lay ministers.
- 7) The regional councils have responsibility for ordaining, commissioning to the diaconal ministry, and designating lay ministers. They decide on the basis of the determination of readiness by the Board of Vocation through the appropriate Candidacy Board and confirmation that the requirement for call or appointment has been fulfilled.

4. What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

In keeping with our tradition as a connectional church, we believe that the ordering of ministry leadership enables pastoral charges and other ministries to live out God’s call in the world. We also believe in educated and equipped ministry personnel.

In the reformed tradition both ministry personnel and lay people have been part of the governance of the church including preparation for ministry, support, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel.

1 Peter 1:1–5a Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, **I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.** And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Oversight and discipline is about vocational support and accountability. This scripture invites us to view the members of the Board of Vocation, its committees and candidacy boards as elders supporting the vocation of ministry.

What is the history/background of this issue?

The Office of Vocation remit is part of the Comprehensive Review decisions of GC42 and has been passed by the majority of presbyteries and pastoral charges. The Candidacy Pathway remit has been passed by the majority of presbyteries.

Currently ministry personnel are under the oversight of presbytery. Where there were issues of discipline leading to reviews or formal hearings, feedback from presbyteries was:

- that presbyteries felt ill equipped to handle these formal processes,
- that they took a lot of time and human resources,
- they often resulted in fracturing the relationship between the ministry personnel who was the subject of the remedial or disciplinary process and their colleagues (the presbytery),
- and that it was difficult to fulfill the obligations in a timely manner.

Since mandatory racial justice training and boundary training has been required, the presbyteries have asked the Conferences to track fulfillment of those requirements for the ministry personnel under their oversight.

In 2015, the Comprehensive Review recommended to GC42 that an independent College of Ministers be established. GC42 made a different decision and proposed an Office of Vocation.

The Office of Vocation concept was approved by the 42nd General Council and by remit by a majority pastoral charges and presbyteries. This proposal has been developed by a joint staff/elected working group, reviewed by the Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS) with the direction of the General Council. The Executive of the General Council (GCE) approved the proposals in November 2015 and the General Secretary further developed the them with advice from PC-MEPS and input from a range of stakeholders including Conference Executive Secretaries and Personnel Ministers, lay members, and ministry personnel across the church.

Feedback from the Conferences testing the principles of the Effective Leadership Healthy Pastoral Relationships project confirmed the value of having the court of collegiality separate from the court of oversight of ministry personnel. While the Office of Vocation is not a court, if the remit is implemented, it will have responsibility for the accreditation, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel, leaving the regional councils as the place of collegiality.

What are the principles informing this issue?

- Consistency - the denomination articulates policy and implements the standards.
- Flexible and responsive to emerging realities, including contextual and cultural variations.
- Paid accountable, 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.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work—either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal/motion numbers.

2015 (GC42) decisions concerning CR OMNI 1 Comprehensive Review and in particular CR 6 Office of Vocation

Executive of the General Council November 21–23, 2015

GS 18 OFFICE OF VOCATION CONCEPT

Executive of the General Council November 18–20, 2017

MEPS 22 Office of Vocation

MEPS 25 – Board of Vocation and Candidacy Board

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

GCE 10 POLICY CHANGE: MINISTRY POSITIONS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE GOVERNING BODY

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

Executive Summary

This proposal recommends changes to *The Manual* to eliminate a common point of misunderstanding between pastoral charges and presbyteries (communities of faith and regional councils if the remits are enacted) when a pastoral charge wishes to appoint an ordered minister to a lay congregational accountable position.

1. What is the issue?

There is confusion caused for communities of faith by the policy Filling Positions Accountable to the Governing Body, found in *The Manual* at section I.1.8.3.

The purpose of policy in the church is to assist congregations and ministry personnel in living out the gospel in the world.

2. Why is this issue important?

This policy is causing confusion for congregations and conflict between congregations and presbyteries. It is necessary to provide clarity.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- 1) **Change the Lay Ministry policy of the United Church, such that members of the order of ministry may not be appointed to positions “accountable to the governing body rather than the presbytery,” resulting in policy that serves rather than conflicts the Church; and**
- 2) **Remove section I.1.8.3 (a) from *The Manual*.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This policy specifies that “this section applies when a pastoral charge believes that the position should be accountable to the governing body rather than to the presbytery” (I.1.8.2 (b)) and further that “a position accountable to the governing body may be filled by a member of the order of ministry” (I.1.8.3 (a)).

Pastoral charges who follow this policy, appoint members of the order of ministry to congregationally accountable positions outside of the pastoral relations structure (without a call or appointment). They then become frustrated when the presbytery/Conference conduct an oversight visit and informs the pastoral charge that they are functioning outside of the United Church’s policy and polity.

What are the key underlying ecclesiological issues?

All members of the order of ministry are members of the presbytery, and the presbytery is responsible for the oversight of all members of the order of ministry. Further, all members of the order of ministry commit, at their ordination or commissioning, to be subject to the oversight and discipline of the church.

“The presbytery consists of members of the order of ministry...” (*The Manual*, C.1 Membership)

“The presbytery is responsible for the oversight of all ministry personnel on its roll.”¹ (*The Manual*, C.3.2 Oversight of Ministry Personnel)

“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?” (*The Manual*, H.7.1 Service of Ordination, Commissioning and Reception)

¹ Ministry personnel is defined in *The Manual* (1. Connecting) as “a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply.”

Considering that ministry personnel are permanent members of presbytery, there is no place in our conciliar polity for a governing body of a pastoral charge to decide that a member of the order of ministry may be appointed to a congregation and accountable only to the governing body without presbytery oversight.

What is the history/background of this issue?

This policy came into place in 2007, based on a change made at the 39th General Council (2006).

The Manual, 2004 had the following policy statement about Congregationally Accountable Ministry:

0.41.1 “Congregational Accountable Ministry: The provisions of the By-Laws concerning the pastoral relationship shall not apply to the appointment of a lay person to a Congregational Accountable Ministry, except that the Pastoral Charge must consult with the Presbytery through its Pastoral Relations Committee prior to making such an appointment.”

In 2006 the 39th General Council made the following policy change:

Designated Lay Ministry/Congregational Designated Ministry (GS34)

GC 39 2006 – 076

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Approve the policy that:

1. There be two streams of paid accountable lay ministry in the United Church:
 - (i) Designated Lay Ministers who are accountable to a Presbytery and recognized by the Conference; and
 - (ii) Congregational Designated Ministers who are accountable to a Pastoral Charge and recognized by the Presbytery.
2. Presbyteries shall approve all paid accountable ministry positions by either:
 - (i) Declaring a vacancy that may be filled by a member of the Order of Ministry or a Designated Lay Minister; or
 - (ii) approving a Congregational Designated Minister position to be filled by someone appropriately qualified according to guidelines to be approved by the Executive of the General Council.

The Manual, 2007 includes the following policy:

041.1 Ministry Positions

(e) Where supervision, oversight, and support by the Pastoral Charge is appropriate, where the proposed length of service and other contextual considerations are not such as to warrant a lengthy discernment process or significant additional education or training, and where the desired competencies are available from local lay members, **the Presbytery may designate the position as one to be filled by a member of the Order of Ministry or a**

Congregational Designated Minister. The position shall be filled through a search process to be determined by the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council. That person shall be appropriately qualified according to the policies approved by the General Council or its Executive. (Emphasis added)

There was no change in policy in *The Manual, 2010*.

The Manual, 2013 contains, with minor differences, the same policy that may be found in the 2016 Manual.

The Manual, 2016 reads:

1.8 Lay Ministry

1.8.3 Filling Positions Accountable to the Governing Body

A position that is accountable to the governing body may be filled by

- (a) a member of the order or ministry; or
- (b) a congregational designated minister under section I.1.8.3 (*sic*) below.

The governing body is responsible for deciding on a search process to fill the position.

1.8.4 Employment of Congregational Designated Minister

...

A congregational designated lay minister is accountable to the governing body except in matters of discipline. They are accountable to the presbytery in matters of discipline.

Please reference the General Secretary opinion number **01-001-O**.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work?

GC42EX: MEPS 27 – Policy Change: Ministry Positions Accountable to the Governing Body

GCE 11 NEW PASTORAL RELATIONS COVENANT POLICY

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

Executive Summary

This proposal recommends new pastoral relations covenant policies and processes in response to the establishment of a three council model of governance and the elimination of transfer and settlement. The recommended policies and processes are based on learnings from seventeen years of research and study and on the outcomes of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships tests undertaken in Conferences since 2009.

1. What is the issue?

The church has passed three remits that collectively dismantle the current pastoral relations system:

- the transfer and settlement remit;
- the three council remit; and
- the office of vocation remit

The United Church of Canada (the Church) needs a new set of policies and processes to support the covenantal relationships of ministry personnel and communities of faith (previously called pastoral relationships) within the new structure.

2. Why is this issue important?

- a) The church, since 2005, has prayerfully and actively researched and reported on support systems to ministry personnel and the health of pastoral relationships (covenants), yet has not made any significant changes to the current pastoral relations system that reflect the research done.
- b) The church has made “its response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #48, adopting and complying with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.”¹ The church has also made a commitment to become an intercultural church which “means living together with a respectful awareness of each other’s differences. We do this examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly.”² The current pastoral relations system of policies may not reflect these commitments.

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

Covenant, the Bible shows us, is a relationship with God that continues through changing times.

Currently, a covenant establishing a pastoral relationship is between God and three parties: the ministry personnel, the pastoral charge, and the Church as represented by the presbytery. There are special times when a Conference may settle ministry personnel to a presbytery recognized ministry and a covenant is made when the presbytery is able to determine “that the ministry setting is and remains a location in which a valid exercise of Christian ministry can be exercised.” (*Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting*, Presbytery Recognized Ministry policy, p. 35, www.united-church.ca/handbooks).

The proposed ecclesiological and missional change is to open the parties to the covenant so that a covenant may be between God and the ministry personnel, the community of faith, the wider United Church as represented by the regional council and other parties that are integral to a particular ministry.

¹ www.united-church.ca/news/united-church-responds-call-action-un-declaration

² www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/vision-becoming-intercultural-church

Key questions posed by the presbytery when determining if a site is a valid Christian ministry remain relevant to the discernment of covenant parties:

- Does the vision and activity of the organization correspond with God’s mission and Jesus’ work?
- Does the position afford opportunities for the practice of theological reflection and spiritual nurture?
- Are there opportunities for the ordered minister to continue to learn and grow in their practice of ministry and in their spiritual and worship life?
- Are the employment standards of the organization fair and just?

What is the history/background of this issue?

The larger picture of making changes to pastoral relations policies, oversight and discipline policies, and improving support systems to ministry personnel has been part of the church’s mandate for the past 17 years.

The most recent of these projects is the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project³ authorized by the 41st General Council, a multi-conference project that tested moving pastoral relations and oversight and discipline of ministry personnel from the jurisdiction of the presbytery to the jurisdiction of the conference and supporting those areas of administrative ministry with additional staff support. Further, the project tested how presbyteries fared in programmatically supporting the collegial relationship of ministry personnel and among congregations. The remits alter the landscape by proposing that the regional council be responsible for the establishment and support of pastoral relationships according to denominational policies while a denominational Office of Vocation be responsible for the oversight and discipline of ministry personnel. Learnings from the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships tests informed the proposed policies for this new landscape.

What are the principles informing this issue?

The Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project was a part of most Conference contexts from 2012 to present. The project was based on and evaluated against the following principles established by the General Council:

- a) Flexible to contextual and regional differences across the church;
- b) Supported within the overall financial capacity of the church;
- c) Reflective of, but not limited to, a model within which:
 - a. The pastoral charge and the presbytery be accountable for the discernment and articulation of mission and ministry leadership needs, and the support and nurture of pastoral relationships and ministry personnel;
 - b. The Conference be accountable for the pastoral relations processes related to placement, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel; and finally
 - c. The courts resource pastoral relations as well as oversight and discipline policies with trained paid accountable staff.

³ If you would like to know more about the background of the ELHPR project, we offer this presentation for your information: <https://sway.com/nuKMTu8IChknfXs0?ref=Link>

In the spring of 2017, a final evaluative harvesting of the project was completed. Five of the six themes that came out of the evaluation were used to create the new pastoral relations covenant process.

- a) **Ministry profiles: *naming our faith community story*:** who we are, what are we called to do. Profiles should be flexible not formulaic, and not necessarily linked to pastoral charge transition.
- b) **Joint Search Committee:** liaison support from next higher council consistent throughout the search process. Accompaniment, but not mandatory to be present at every meeting. The purpose of the role is to be a resource for good process.
- c) **Application process:** to include opportunity for ministry personnel to post profiles centrally and anonymously and to access all vacancies. Communities of faith can access and invite applications.
- d) **Care of pastoral charges:** encouraging ministry, supporting faith community stories, building healthy pastoral relationships. Traditional pastoral oversight included this along with issues of compliance. Compliance and support need to be divided; they are both the responsibility of the regional council.
- e) **Collegiality:** Amongst congregations and other ministries, and amongst ministry personnel.

A draft of a new pastoral relations covenant process was written in the summer of 2017 by the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships working group. Through the fall of 2017 the working group and resource staff consulted with three different groups to garner feedback and improve the process to ensure the process would meet the needs of the church.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Make the following policy changes to allow for a new pastoral relations covenant policy and process:

- 1) **Expand the current definition of covenant and pastoral relationship beyond three parties;**
- 2) **Replace the needs assessment process with the use of profiles of ministry personnel and profiles of communities of faith;**
- 3) **Allow the governing body of the community of faith to be responsible for some pastoral relations actions and decisions (previously the responsibility of a congregational meeting), specifically:**
 - **Decisions about supply appointments**
 - **The responsibility to prepare the community of faith profile (replaces needs assessment)**
 - **The responsibility to notify the regional council of any proposed change in covenant, and to request a liaison; and**
- 4) **Replace presbytery representatives with a regional council liaison as the regional council representative to communities of faith for pastoral relations/covenant processes;**

The covenant hub⁴ be established and regularized as the required process for ministry personnel and communities of faith to search for calls and appointments. Support the Indigenous Church in being self-determining in whether or how they use the covenant hub.

- 4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council, is this proposal in response to assigned work—either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal/motion numbers.**

This proposal exists in response to:

Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships motions:

MEPS 23 New Covenant Process

Executive of the General Council Workbook, November 18–20, 2017

GS 58 Alternate Proposal for Action on Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships

(Minutes, p. 164) 2015 Executive Motion – 2015-03-21 Motion: Nora Sanders/Tracy Murton

MEPS 23 Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships Report for Action

(Workbook p. 126) – withdrawn

Remits:

Remit 1 Three Council Model

Remit 2 Elimination of Transfer and Settlement

Remit 3 Office of Vocation

MEPS 30 – New Covenant Policy

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

⁴ The Covenant Hub is an online search tool that allows for the searching of ministry personnel and community of faith profiles through optional use of filters (filters will be based on geography, the skills and gifts categories, and the kind of ministry personnel needed). Ministry personnel submit a “Gifts and Skills profile of ministry personnel,” and the community of faith submit a “Profile of the Gifts and Skills required for the ministry of the community of faith.” (New Covenant Process, Draft. Executive of the General Council Workbook, p. 16, November 18–20, 2017)

GCE 13 IRIDESCE: THE LIVING APOLOGY PROJECT**Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

Iridesce: The Living Apology Project was launched in September 2017 as the mechanism to gather personal stories of being: trans, bisexual, 2-Spirit, lesbian, gay, queer (or another gender or sexual identity/expression) within the United Church past or present. Although the work of the Project so far is indicating that there is definitely a need for an apology, the project still needs more time to engage the church and work towards the apology .

2. Why is this issue important?

The church we are becoming brings with it brokenness and wounds that linger from 1988, with accompanying grief and anger. LGBTQ2+ people, their families, friends, and allies in the United Church, are still afraid to share their stories, afraid to come out, afraid of judgment and rejection. Today there are far too many stories of ongoing rejection, marginalization, and oppression happening in church communities across the country—both urban and rural.

The project has provided an intentional and balanced focus on *acknowledgement* and *lament*...thus providing opportunities for the church to acknowledge its possible role in injustices and mistreatment of LGBTQ2+ persons (their friends, family and allies) around 1988 and beyond. It has also considered the possibility that the issue concerning LGBTQ2+ people in the United Church, is less about gender and sexuality and more about how the church dealt with *difference* and *conflict* through the 1988 period and how it deals with conflict today.

While healing and celebration happened in a number of places after 1988, it did not happen in most places. On many levels the church failed to respond by offering healing space and pastoral care. The opportunity to continue to move towards justice and mercy by affirming and celebrating LGBTQ2+ people was all-too-often intentionally neglected in favour of soothing angry church members threatening to leave. Healthy debate was often stifled in favour of peace—at the expense of LGBTQ2+ people, their family, friends, and allies.

For all our commitment to LGBTQ2+ people we are not attracting LGBTQ2+ people into the pews. We are attracting them into leadership, yes, but not into the pews. Why? In the past 30 years, less than 6% of our United Church congregations have *intentionally* engaged in learning about LGBTQ2+ issues through the Affirming Ministry process of Affirm United. Of the over 2,800 United Church congregations, 167 were officially declared Affirming at the end of 2017.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- 1) Recommit The United Church of Canada to the full inclusion of all people.**
- 2) Extend The Living Apology Project, to report to the spring 2020 meeting of the Executive of the General Council**

- 3) **Request the Executive / General Secretary to appoint a group to work with the outcomes of The Living Apology Project, to offer an apology to the LGBTQ2+ community at the Denominational Council in 2021**
- 4) **Reaffirm the church's endorsement of the Affirming Ministries Program and invites all communities of faith to participate.**
- 5) **Direct the General Secretary, General Council to develop resources for ministers, church leadership, and the wider church in their ministry with LGBTQ2+ communities that:**
 - a. **offer pastoral care**
 - b. **create opportunities for healing and reconciliation**
 - c. **demonstrate respectful engagement in conflict/disagreement**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

In 2009 the 40th General Council mandated a consultation (GC 40 2009–083) with the LGBTQ community of the United Church to assess the opportunities and challenges they were facing within the church. One of the outcomes of the consultation was a request for an apology by the church to the LGBTQ community. After further consultation it was felt that a process was needed to determine what an apology would look like.

In 2015, the 42nd General Council approved a motion (GC42 2015-060) directing the General Secretary, General Council to partner with Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble to create the process of a [Living Apology](#) art installation project "as a vehicle for dialogue, story-telling, education and reconciliation with persons who identify as sexual or gender diverse including but not limited to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Two-Spirited, Queer persons."

This project would invite the church "into a journey of dialogue and reconciliation with LGBTQ2+ persons, that would involve: creative opportunities for conversation, worship and education; and opportunities to explore concepts such as lament, reconciliation and justice, to be reported and celebrated at the 43rd General Council (2018) in acknowledgement of the 30th Anniversary of the 1988 decision" (GC42 Record of Proceedings, page 193).

The Living Apology Process was officially launched as [Iridesce: The Living Apology Project](#), a joint project of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and The United Church of Canada. Project Coordinator Aaron Miechkota has met with church communities across Canada, visits that will continue leading up to GC43. As of December 15, 2017 a total of 88 [stories](#) had been received, with 68% of them published on the website and the remaining in process to be published. 25% have been stories specifically about 1988.

The church needs to wrestle with these issues and questions such as: What is the legacy of 1988 in terms of our communal life? How do we hold the tension of allowing individual churches to choose to become affirming or not? How do we live peacefully and graciously while in conflict, especially when people's very lives are at stake?

Iridesce challenges the church to move beyond the work of written policy through the creation of space for reflection, conversation, and worship. In this sense, one of most important outcomes of this project will be engagement - having commissioners interact with the project's art installation as an integral part of discerning what future policy are to be decided. In essence, Iridesce is using art to illumine the Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of LGBTQ and Two Spirit people so that our policies can be prayerfully guided.

The stories, videos, art, etc. collected by the project will be shared at GC43—as a display and during an evening plenary. These stories will provide opportunity for personal engagement with the project—as well as learning, reflection, and conversation for the whole church. It will also help to inform those commissioners considering the recommendations made in this report.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work?

GC42: GCE 10 – Living Apology

GC42EX: PMM 15 – Iridesce: The Living Apology Project

GCE 15 LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

In the struggle for the human rights of LGBTQI2+ how might The United Church of Canada contribute to the global international struggle for the protection of the basic human rights of LGBTQI2+ communities, and address the issues of religious based homophobia?

The second, how might The United Church of Canada be intentional about raising the conversation on LGBTQI2+ with its global and international partners.

2. Why is this issue important?

In the global fight for equality, progress is being achieved in some areas of the world, but homosexuality is still illegal in 72 countries, and punishable by the death penalty in 13 countries—implemented in at least eight. Trans and gender-diverse people also face extreme violence, with 2,343 being reported murdered in 69 countries since 2008. Last year was the deadliest year on record for transgender people in the United States, with 27 homicides reported, nearly all racialized women. In Brazil one LGBT person is murdered every 25 hours. Killings, violence, and oppression are routine in many parts of Africa and the Middle East.

The United Nations has called on the international community to confront the issue of anti-gay violence and discrimination. In June 2016 the UN Security Council issued a resolution condemning violence against LGBT people. Soon after, the UN Human Rights Council announced the appointment of an 'independent expert' to monitor LGBT violence around the world.

Violence and oppression also happens in Canada. It wasn't so long ago that homosexuality was illegal here. In 2013 there were 186 police-reported hate crime incidents that were motivated by sexual orientation. That's roughly one every two days!

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Affirm a commitment to:

- 1) **Naming LGBTQI2+ Solidarity and Human Rights solidarity as a key component of the Global & Canadian Partnership Program of The United Church of Canada,**
- 2) **Affirming The United Church of Canada participation in and support of the Dignity Network, a network of organizations and individuals from across Canada that encourage a stronger Canadian voice on human rights issues facing LGBTQI2+ communities around the world. The initiative has the twin objectives of strengthening solidarity work by Canadian civil society groups and Canada's foreign policy commitment to the realization of human rights for LGBTQI2+ people internationally. (See: www.dignityinitiative.ca/en/)**
- 3) **Supporting Aboriginal Ministries Circle and Council in their work towards full inclusion and support work towards an Indigenous Two Spirit consultation within Aboriginal Ministries**
- 4) **Paying particular attention to supporting Migrant Church communities on their journey of full inclusion**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The July 2016 message from The United Church of Canada Partner Council proposed that "The United Church and the Partner Council...consider holding a series of regional workshops [on LGBTQI2+ issues and inclusion] with partners, or sponsoring some inter-partner dialogues, with the goal of expanding understanding of the issues and the people they affect." The Partner Council indicated its willingness to work with the United Church "to find ways to increase engagement in support of LGBTQI2+ organizations in different global contexts, and to continue to join others in support of LGBTQI2+ refugees."

In preparing their statement, members of the Partner Council were attentive to calls for respectful dialogue about LGBTQI2+ issues that have been heard in diverse contexts. Opportunities for conversation have been coordinated by the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Student Christian Federation (among others). Some partners have seen the need to support LGBTQI2+ people who have become refugees. Some partners take steps to ensure a measure of safety to LGBTQI2+ people who are homeless or physically threatened. And in places where there really are no "safe spaces," courageous witness and action is provided by organizations (including some churches) that protect and support LGBTQI2+ people, as well as People Living with HIV and AIDS, and others who face discrimination and violence.

The Global LGBTQI2+ Dialogue, recommended in 2016 by the United Church Partner Council, was held Nov. 10–13. The dialogue was co-hosted with the United Church by Partner Council and Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble and involved participants from Philippines, Korea, Lebanon, Zambia, Kenya, Uruguay, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, the United States, and Canada. The event was held at the YMCA Geneva Park conference centre, on the territory of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation near Orillia, Ontario, north of Toronto.

GS 4 THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA ACT

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

The federal and provincial legislation for The United Church of Canada must be revised to reflect the new three-council structure.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada was created by The United Church of Canada Act (the “federal Act”) in 1925. There is parallel legislation in the ten provinces, and each of those Acts is also entitled The United Church of Canada Act (the “provincial Acts”).

The federal Act gave the United Church broad authority to legislate for itself so that most structural changes may be made by the General Council through the remit process without the need for any changes to the federal Act.

The two exceptions are the remit formula and the Model Trust Deed in the federal Act, which may only be changed by Parliament, and not through the remit process alone.

The remit formula and Model Trust Deed must now be revised in the federal Act to reflect the three-council structure by updating the terms “presbytery” and “Conference” used in those parts of the federal Act. We expect the Bill for the revisions to be introduced in Parliament in early fall 2018, with sponsors Senator Peter Harder in the Senate and Rev. Rob Oliphant in the House of Commons.

No other changes are necessary to the federal Act, and no other changes to the federal Act were contemplated by the remits. The same changes should be made to the provincial Acts.

As part of the amendment process, Parliament requires the General Council to adopt a motion requesting Parliament to make these changes to permit the three-council restructuring. The amendment process for each of the provincial Acts varies but it would be wise if not essential for the General Council to request these changes to the provincial Acts in the same way.

It would also be wise for the General Council to adopt a declaration and affirmation that the regional council is the successor to the presbytery and performs all functions of the presbytery with respect to the Model Trust Deed and property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council. This would be an interim measure for secular legal purposes until the revisions to the Acts are all in effect.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might adopt a motion

- **requesting Parliament and the provincial legislatures to make the legislative changes to their respective acts that are necessary to reflect the three-council restructuring.**
- **declaring and affirming that, during the interim period until the revisions to the Acts are all in effect, the regional council is the successor to the presbytery and performs all functions of the presbytery with respect to the Model Trust Deed and property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council.**

GS 5 REGIONAL COUNCIL TRANSITIONAL COMMISSIONS

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

The new regional councils do not have the ability to make any decisions until they come into existence on January 1, 2019, though each of them will have the responsibilities of a fully functioning regional council on that date.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Remit Implementation Task Group proposed that commissions be appointed for each regional council to do significant planning prior to January 1, 2019; see mandate, below. This would enable the regional councils to be functional on that date, and to have a governing structure in place on an interim basis.

The process for appointing a transitional commission was laid out in a letter from the General Secretary to Conference Presidents/Presidents-Elect/Leading Elders, presbytery chairs and secretaries, and co-chairs of the Aboriginal Ministries Council on April 4, 2018:

“There will be 16 commissions in total, one for each regional council. Each region will work in its own way, and what I am wanting is for you to tell me who should form the Transition Commission for your region. I suggest that you do that by:

- Submitting one name from each presbytery that is part of the future region

- Submitting 1 or 2 names of Conference Presidents/Presidents-Elect/Past Presidents or other Conference representatives resident in the future region
- FYI, the All Native Circle Conference and the Aboriginal Ministries Council will develop a process for naming and supporting the Indigenous members of the commission. Serving on a regional council transition commission does not make any assumptions about the future relationship between Indigenous communities of faith and any regional council. The Indigenous Church is in the process of working out what dual belonging means in accordance with the Calls to the Church document.

“If you have already named a transition team and there is consensus from within the region that these people should be the ones to serve on the Transition Commission, simply forward me those names and contact information.

“The point is that the choice of who will be on the Regional Transition Commission should be made within the region.”

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Appoint a commission for each of the regional councils, consisting of:

Regional Council #1: Moriah Anderson; Derry Bott; Beverley Brown; Graham Brownmiller; Michael Caveney; Cherie Dobson; Ken Fanning; Bob Fillier; Andy Gilman; Laura Hermakin; Stephen Hershey; Ray Jones; Everest Kao; Jean Macdonald; Carol Martin; Blair Odney; Jay Olson; Sarah Prestwick; Lawrence Sankey; Ruth Stebbing

Regional Council #2: Britt Aerhart; Deanna Cox; Joan Kennedy; Marlene Lightning; Ruth Lumax; Scott Reynolds; Susan Waldie; Paul Douglas Walfall

Regional Council #3: Tammy Allan; Darrel Beaver; Sue Brodrick; Ray Goodship; Helen Reed; Bob Wallace; Kathy Yamashita

Regional Council #4: Tricia Gerhard; Neil Gilbert; Luellen Ironstar; Bev Kostichuk; Barb MacNaughton; Brian Maitland; Bonnie Morton; Susan Reed; Bernice Saulteaux; Annette Taylor; Dave Whalley

Regional Council #5: Gloria Cook; Betty Kelly; Kathy Highmoor; Sherri McConnell; Barb Miller; Grant Qeskekapow; Wayne Sanderson; Robert Smith; Mária Szabó-Bérces; Ken Thomas

Regional Council #6: Bella Barbeiro; Cindy Desilets; Eun-Joo Park; Harry Stewart; Helen Smith; Janet Ross; Janet Sigurdson; Jim Jackson; Joy Bott; Joy Galloway; Sandra Jenkinson; Kathie Smith; Mardi Mumford; Maxine McVey; Barbara Nott; Rob Smith

Regional Council #7: Eileen Antone; Jim Evans; Judith Fayter; Louise Hall; Karen Low; Beth Parsons; Joyce Payne; Robin Sherman; Mary Anne Silverthorn

Regional Council #8: Brent Caslick; Rod Coates; Gord Dunbar; Ann Harbridge; Margaret Krauter; Mark Laird; Heather Leffler; Laurie O'Leary; Martha Pedoniquotte; Tim Reaburn

Regional Council #9: Jean Bethune; Margaret Blewett; Rhonda Johns; Deborah Laforet; Robert Lawson; George Montour; Christina Paradela; Ted Smith; Sybil Wilson; Kate Young

Regional Council #10: Dan Benson; Kirsty Hunter; Ross Leckie; David Leyton-Brown; Kye Munro; Paul Shepherd; Catherine Smith; Evan Smith; Jessica Stevenson; Bri-anne Swan; Martha ter Kuile; Marg Walker; Kent Ward

Regional Council #11: Shirley Baster; Steve Coles; Svinda Heinrichs; Carol Johnson; Elizabeth McDonald; Ryan McNally; Ted Meyers; Paul Reed; Wanda Stride; Jean Wilson

Regional Council #12: Elaine Beattie; Teresa Burnett-Cole; Joanne Fletcher; Catherine Grant; Bronwen Harman; Kimberly A. Heath; Phyllis MacRae; Blair Paterson; Don Stiles; Linda Suddaby; Carla Van Delen

Regional Council #13: Susan Gabriel; Pierre Goldberger; David Lambie; Joëlle Leduc; Patricia Lisson; Monique Moser; Rick Sheffer; Paul Stanfield

Regional Council #14: Stephen Berube; Richard Bowley; Kevin Dingwell; Heather Donnelly; Jane Doull; Sheila Gallant; Rose-Hannah Gaskin; Sharon Hannan; Blair Lewis; Audrey Lounder; Jason O'Hearn; Pamela Reidpath; Wayne Trail

Regional Council #15: Krista Anderson; Ross Bartlett; Anne Cameron; Alicia Cox; William Drysdale; Derek Elsworth; Alison Etter; Ruth Gamble; Elaine Gray; Peter Hardy; April Hart; David LeBlanc; Catherine MacDonald; Beverley McDonald; Donnie Morrison; Carol Smith; Fay Smith; Janet Sollows; Donna Tourneur; Joyce Wylie

Regional Council #16: Brenda Andrews; Bill Bartlett; Bob Bennett; Kathy Brett; Brian Colbourne; Paula Gale; Peggy Johnson; Steve Lowden; Wendy Lowden; Larry Noseworthy; Lisa Potter; Florence Sanna; Paul Vardy; Roy West

With each commission mandated to:

- a) function as the Executive of the regional council from January 1, 2019 until such time as the regional council meets and elects a new Executive; and
- b) make decisions on such items as in the commission's opinion are necessary to allow for the immediate functioning of the regional council on January 1, 2019;
- c) make decisions on the following items:
 - any required actions regarding staff who will serve the regional council;
 - a regional council budget for 2019;

- mission support grants for 2019;
 - a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding between the regional councils being served by a single Executive Minister;
 - a plan for how the Executive Minister will come to know the regional councils;
 - whether to have a getting-acquainted gathering in 2018 (optional);
 - property matters formerly done by presbyteries or Conferences, with the regional council serving as the successor to the presbytery, and performing the functions of the presbytery, in all property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council;
 - a date and organizing a founding meeting for the regional council not later than June 30, 2019;
 - any unfinished business from presbyteries, including approval of final minutes and Records of Proceedings;
- d) propose plans for addressing the following potential topics:
- a vision for the regional council;
 - the composition of the regional council's governing body;
 - a process and timeline for determining the longer term governance of the regional council following the interim period filled by the commission;
 - nominations policies;
 - frequency and times of regional council meetings;
 - a process for selecting a name for the regional council;
 - a plan regarding current resource centres, if applicable.

GS 6 COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AND COVENANTS

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

This is an administrative matter that needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of the enacted remits.

2. Why is this issue important?

In current church polity, congregations, pastoral charges, and presbytery-accountable ministries have a relationship with presbyteries, largely defined by the Basis of Union and the by-laws found in *The Manual*. In accordance with Remit #1, "communities of faith" and regional councils will enter into a covenantal relationship which will require discussion by the two bodies. This proposal addresses the initial covenant that will exist between a community of faith and the regional council upon implementation of the remits.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might declare that all applicable existing requirements for membership, meetings, governance body and organizational matters set out in the by-law portion of *The Manual* and as approved by the presbytery for the community of faith will continue to apply and will be deemed to be the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council unless and until modified with the approval of both the community of faith and regional council.

GS 7 ASSETS OF PRESBYTERIES/DISTRICTS AND CONFERENCES

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

This is an administrative matter that needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of the enacted remits.

2. Why is this issue important?

Presbyteries and/or Conferences may have assets that need to be addressed before they cease operation at the end of 2018. Assets include cash, investments, physical property, loans to congregations, etc. All presbyteries and Conferences have been asked to determine where those assets will go as of January 1, 2019. The proposal, below, outlines the process for how presbyteries and Conferences will do this work.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Establish the following process for the transition of presbytery/district and Conference assets to regional councils. This process must be followed by presbyteries/districts and Conferences that will still own assets on December 31, 2018:

1. Each presbytery/district and Conference will identify the assets it will own effective December 31, 2018.
2. Each presbytery/district and Conference will provide this information by December 31, 2018 to the Commission established for the regional council succeeding that presbytery/district or Conference, together with all banking and other documentation necessary to facilitate the transfer.
3. If a presbytery/district or Conference has been divided into more than one regional council:
 - a) the presbytery/district or Conference will provide this information by December 31, 2018 to the Commissions for all the regional councils involved together with all banking and other documentation necessary to facilitate the transfer; and

- b) the Regional Council Commissions involved will negotiate a division or ongoing sharing of the assets by March 31, 2019, failing which the Denominational Council will decide the division or ongoing sharing as between or among the regional councils.**

GS 8 FORMAL HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

This is an administrative matter that needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of the enacted remits.

2. Why is this issue important?

The church needs to ensure that any current formal hearings or appeals have continuity if they extend beyond December 31, 2018. To avoid any jurisdictional confusion, General Council needs to take an action so there is clarity about what will happen with these formal hearings and appeals.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Provide for the transition to the new structure of formal hearings and appeals that are outstanding as of December 31, 2018 as follows:

- a) formal hearings that are before the Judicial Committee will continue, with hearing panels appointed by the Judicial Committee continuing to have jurisdiction, and the role of the prosecuting court (presbytery/district or Conference) being automatically assumed by the Board of Vocation or as it may direct;**
- b) formal hearings that are before a Conference will continue, with:**
 - hearing panels appointed by the Conference continuing to have jurisdiction;**
 - for all subject matter within the jurisdiction of the Board of Vocation, the role of the Conference being automatically assumed by the Board of Vocation, and the role of the presbytery/district being automatically assumed by the appropriate body of the Board of Vocation;**
 - for all other subject matter, the role of the Conference being automatically assumed by the Judicial Committee, and the role of the presbytery/district (if a party) being automatically assumed by the regional council;**
- c) appeals that are before the Judicial Committee will continue, with hearing panels appointed by the Judicial Committee continuing to have jurisdiction, and the role of the responding court being automatically assumed by the body having jurisdiction within the three council structure for the subject matter of the appeal (either Board of Vocation or regional council); and**

- d) appeals that are before a Conference will continue, with:
- appeal panels appointed by the Conference continuing to have jurisdiction;
 - for all subject matter within the jurisdiction of the Board of Vocation, the role of the Conference being automatically assumed by the Board of Vocation, and the role of the presbytery/district as respondent being automatically assumed by the appropriate body of the Board of Vocation;
 - for all other subject matter, the role of the Conference as appellate court being automatically assumed by the Judicial Committee, and the role of the presbytery/district as respondent being automatically assumed by the regional council.

GS 9 REVIEWS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND/OR PASTORAL CHARGES

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

This is an administrative matter that needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of the enacted remits.

2. Why is this issue important?

Presbyteries and/or Conferences have the authority to order reviews of ministry personnel or pastoral charges. If the reviews are not complete by December 31, 2018, or if remedial action is not yet finished by December 31, 2018, there could be a gap regarding who would ensure that the reviews have been completed to the satisfaction of the church. This proposal would ensure that there is a decision-making body authorized to complete any outstanding aspects of reviews ordered by presbyteries and/or Conferences.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve that:

- a) responsibility for all reviews of ministry personnel that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the Office of Vocation as of that date; and
- b) responsibility for all reviews of pastoral charges that have not been concluded by December 31, 2018, including completion and final assessment of all remedial work, be automatically transferred from the presbytery/district or Conference, as applicable, and automatically assumed by the regional council with oversight of that pastoral charge.

NOM 2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Origin: Nominations Committee, the Executive of the General Council

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 who are directly accountable to the General Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

The current and transitioning functions of the General Council are dependent on these committees. The church is enriched by the participation of its members, sharing together their many and diverse gifts. Throughout their discernment, the Nominations Committee was guided by this passage from Romans 12.4: *For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us...*

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Appoint or reappoint the following members with terms as stated:

Nominations Committee (Denominational Council, 2021)

- Cathy Hamilton – Ordained, Montreal & Ottawa, *chairperson*
- YongSeok Baek – Ordained, Saskatchewan
- Janet Gear – Ordained, British Columbia
- Abiel Khalema – Ordained, London
- Lynella Reid-James – Lay, Toronto
- Pat Tooley – Lay, Hamilton
- Kathy Brett – Ordained, Newfoundland & Labrador, *Denominational Council Executive (pending appointment to Executive)*
- Samuel Dansokho – Ordained, Montreal & Ottawa, *Denominational Council Executive (pending appointment to Executive)*

Audit Committee (Denominational Council, 2021)

- Robin Pilkey – Lay, Toronto, 2nd term, *chairperson*
- John Hurst – Lay, Hamilton, 2nd term
- Miriam Bowlby – Ordained, Newfoundland & Labrador
- Randal Hobbs – Lay, Newfoundland & Labrador
- Steven Lowden – Lay, Newfoundland & Labrador
- Andy Spears – Lay, Toronto

Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (Denominational Council 2021)

- Dan Hayward – Ordained, Montreal & Ottawa, 3rd term, *chairperson*
- Alison Etter – Ordained, Maritime, 2nd term
- Jennifer Janzen-Ball – Ordained, Saskatchewan, 2nd term
- Ryan Slifka – Ordained, British Columbia, 2nd term
- B. Collin Smith – Lay, Alberta & Northwest, 2nd term
- Brian Thorpe – Ordained, British Columbia, 2nd term
- Jamie Bradshaw – Diaconal, Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario
- Jane Dawson – Lay, British Columbia
- Isaac Kamta – Ordained, Toronto
- Andrew Macpherson – Ordained, Hamilton
- Dyane Matthews – Lay, Hamilton
- Lloyd Nyarota – Ordained, Alberta & Northwest
- Michelle Owens – Diaconal, Manitoba Northwestern Ontario
- Lawrence Sankey – Designated Lay Minister, British Columbia

Archives and History Committee (Extend current committee to December 31, 2018)

- Wayne Harris – Lay, Bay of Quinte, *chairperson*
- Bert Riggs – Lay, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Julielynn Anderson – Lay, Maritime
- Joan Benoit – Lay, Montreal and Ottawa
- Diana Duncan-Fletcher – Lay, Bay of Quinte
- Rod Coates – Lay, Hamilton
- Anne Gregory – Lay, London
- Dawn Monroe – Lay, Manitou
- Peter Douglas – Ordained, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- John Haas – Ordained, Saskatchewan
- Helen Reed – Diaconal, Alberta and Northwest
- Gerald Hobbs – Ordained, British Columbia
- Rick Hebert – Lay, All Native Circle
- Todd Webb, *academic*

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Nominations Committee was grateful for the abundance of nominations for these committees. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, in particular, received 23 nominations, and nine were received for the new Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee was able to recommend for appointment all six nominees for the Audit committee. It is hoped that those not appointed may still be called upon to offer their gifts and wisdom in related work.

In their discernment process, the Nominations Committee considers, not just each individual's particular gifts and sense of call, but also seeks to provide a variety of voices, perspectives and experiences for each area of work. Where possible, the committee also balances expertise with

opportunities to foster new leaders. Throughout, the Nominations Committee keeps itself open to the promptings of the Spirit.

SK 7 ADMISSION PROCESS QUESTIONS BE REVIEWED FOR TODAY'S REALITY OF MORE INTERCULTURAL MINISTERS

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

A number of ministers from other denominations are seeking admission to The United Church of Canada. Some of those who went through the admission process have expressed their concerns about the cultural sensitivity of the questions for the interviews as part of the process of admission.

2. Why is this issue important?

Admission interviews are one of the first steps for those coming from other cultural backgrounds and it is important to make the process inclusive and culturally sensitive as the denomination is trying to become truly intercultural.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council 43 might direct a review of the general process of admission from the intercultural perspective including the suggested questions for interview.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

No.

THEME: ADMINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS**ANW 4 THE GRANTING OF THE RIGHT TO ADMINISTER SACRAMENTS TO ALL DIACONAL MINISTERS AT THE TIME OF THEIR COMMISSIONING****Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

The issue is one of inequality.

2. Why is this issue important?

If the church indicates that ordained and diaconal ministers are part of the Order of Ministry, and each can serve as single ministers leading congregations/communities of faith in all of their worship and faith life, then they should receive the same Sacramental privileges.

A key injustice issue is also that Diaconal Ministers who have administered Sacraments for their whole ministry lose that licensing upon retirement, even if they are no longer employed but still serve the church as Sunday Supply.

When Remit #6 was defeated, it contained so many items that this issue of Sacramental Privileges was also defeated, but was not necessarily the reason for the defeat of the Remit.

Background

Within Ordered Ministry there are two streams of equal value in our denomination, and many Diaconal Ministers currently serve as the sole minister in Pastoral Charges. Even in shared ministry, much of the work of Diaconal Ministers in their ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care leads logically into a sharing of the sacraments of communion and baptism. As part of their preparation for ministry, Diaconal Ministers study the theology and practise of the administration of the sacraments. The current practice where permission is required for Diaconal Ministers to administer the sacraments is confusing to congregations who are under the impression that The United Church of Canada believes in and demonstrates equality in ministry; it also results in time-consuming work at Congregational and other church court levels leaving some congregations without access to Sacraments.

The current restrictions also do not allow Retired Diaconal Ministers, or Diaconal Ministers undertaking Sunday Supply to offer Sacraments. Congregations who have received sacraments from Diaconal Ministers are puzzled as to why the sacramental privilege disappears from Diaconal Ministers when it does not do the same for Ordained Ministers.

As written in 1 Peter 4:10–12 from *The Inclusive Bible*: “As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received. The one who speaks should deliver God’s message. The one who serves should do so with the strength provided by God, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, who has been given all glory and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.”

Granting Diaconal Ministers the right to administer the sacraments at the time of their commissioning would eliminate inconsistency and confusion, and also uphold the valuing of all members of the Order of Ministry by The United Church of Canada.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a. **direct the Executive of General Council to review the current guidelines for the Commissioning of Diaconal Ministers and add the right to administer the sacraments as part of the responsibilities they undertake at their Commissioning; and**
- b. **authorize a Category 3 Remit to test the will of the church regarding this change.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by Coronation Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference. Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

ANW 10 SACRAMENTS ELDERS POLICY

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

1. What is the issue?

The current *Manual* Section I.2.4.1 (c) states that “The Conference may grant a licence to administer the sacraments to members of congregations without a settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister. A member holding a licence to administer the sacraments is called a ‘sacraments elder.’”

It is recommended that the Sacraments Elders Policy be changed so that the Conference may grant a licence to members of congregations that have a settled or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister.

2. Why is this issue important?

Sacraments are integral to our understanding and experience of being church. The Basis of Union 5.10.1(3) states that it shall be the duty of Session to have the oversight of the administration of the sacraments. Some congregations are not able to regularly celebrate the sacraments.

The policies and procedures of The United Church of Canada exist to support the church in living out God’s mission in the world. The sacraments elder policy and procedures are one way of ensuring that each congregation can celebrate its sacramental life: by licensing lay members of the United Church to administer the sacraments within their own congregation. Congregations want and need the Sacraments to be given on a regular basis.

The need for Sacrament Elders is not a temporary blip in the life of a congregation but is part of the new normal. Many congregations are served by part-time ministry who are not necessarily available in a timely manner to preside at sacraments when required. Even when congregations have full-time ministry they are serving larger geographic areas and there are times when the minister is not available to preside due to other commitments whether on leave or serving the wider church. This problem is especially true in rural presbyteries where congregations are very far apart geographically.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council direct that the policy be changed based on this proposal.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Presented by Northern Lights Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Adopted and submitted by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

GCE 20 SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR DIACONAL MINISTERS

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

The right for those who are commissioned to diaconal ministry to administer sacraments differs from Conference to Conference currently, and clarity is needed about who will issue these licences if the remit decisions are enacted at General Council and Conferences and presbyteries are replaced by regions.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because the right to administer the sacraments is a denominational concern that affects people's access to the sacraments, our understanding of ministry within the United Church, and ecumenical relationships.

The practice of granting sacramental licences from Conference to Conference and the policy (*The Manual*, 1.2.4) do not align. Further, if the remits that have been passed by the Church are ratified by the 43rd General Council presbytery and Conference will not exist - forcing change to this policy.

Our current policy on sacramental licences directs presbyteries to recommend to the Conference that a person be granted a licence. The person may be:

- any ministry personnel other than an ordained minister;
- a lay person who was serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the appropriate court as a designated lay minister; and

- a member of a congregation without a settled or appointed member of the order of minister or designated lay minister.

Currently, a pastoral charge who has called or appointed a diaconal minister may make a request to the presbytery to initiate the recommendation for a licence. Practice varies significantly across the country. Some of our Conferences issue sacramental licences to all diaconal ministers at the point of commissioning, while others limit licences to requesting pastoral charges.

What is the history/background of this issue?

The issue of sacramental rights for diaconal ministers has been an intentional conversation within the church since 2012 when a proposal was sent to the 41st General Council from Alberta Northwest Conference requesting that all diaconal ministers be granted the right to administer the sacraments at the time of commissioning. This proposal was referred to the Executive of the General Council and went on to become one of the foundational proposals for the One Order remit.

One Order of Ministry was presented to the Church as a remit and failed. This means that an alternative means to addressing the inconsistency of sacramental licences needs to be found.

The One of Order of ministry remit tested the will of the church about making sacramental privileges for diaconal ministers a right associated with their commissioning to the diaconal ministry of education, service and pastoral care. The difference between this proposal and One Order is that the policy direction in this proposal would licence diaconal ministers whenever they are in a covenant. The use of the directive “will” rather than “may” to regional councils is based on the understanding that sacramental privileges for ordered ministers is a denominational matter. This creates consistency of licencing across the country, something we do not have now. Consultation with the Diakonia of the United Church (DUCC) resulted in a majority view preferring “will” to “may.” DUCC supported the removal of the geographic boundary restriction and requested a way for retired diaconal ministers serving as pastoral charge supervisors or doing pulpit supply to receive a licence for the sacraments. This parallels the opportunity for lay people who were serving as Designated Lay ministers at the time of their retirement to receive a licence for sacraments. In keeping with the new pastoral relations policy, the addition of “or employment in ministry” allows diaconal ministers serving in ministries other than a pastoral charge to receive a licence for sacraments.

What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?

If the remits that have been passed by the church are enacted by the 43rd General Council, presbytery and Conference will not exist—forcing change to existing policy. Taking no action on this issue would result in the authority to grant a licence simply moving from Conference to regional councils and being granted at the discretion of the regional council. It also would be limited to within the bounds of the regional council and would not enable retired diaconal ministers to be granted a licence for the sacraments unless appointed.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

That the 43rd General Council:

Approve the amendment to the sacramental licence policy to provide that:

- **The regional council will grant a licence to administer the sacraments to diaconal ministers when they are covenanted to their call, appointment or employment in ministry.**
 - **The licence will last for the duration of the covenant.**
 - **The regional council may grant a licence to a retired diaconal minister.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This history of the work the church has done on sacramental rights for diaconal ministers includes:

GC41 2012 071 - ANW1 The Granting of Rights to Administer Sacraments to All Diaconal Minister at the Time of their Commissioning (pp. 211-212)

- General Council referred ANW1 to the General Council Executive

GS 1 Opening Motions - GCE 10 The Granting of the Rights to Administer Sacraments to All Diaconal Ministers at the Time of their Commissioning (GC41 2012 071 – ANW1) (p. 15)

- General Council Executive referred ANW1 to the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services

November 2012 meeting of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services member of the committee were nominated to a Joint Ministry Working Group with members of Theology and Inter-Church, Inter-Faith.

ANW1 was referred to the Joint Working Group with a proposal for local ordination. These became the foundation for One Order, was presented back to GC42 as TICIF2 A Proposal for One Order of Ministry (p. 256).

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

MNWO 3 SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR RETIRED DIACONAL MINISTERS**Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God is calling us to ensure that all congregations have a vibrant worship and sacramental life. We believe that the current policy, which excludes retired Diaconal Ministers from presiding over sacraments, is both prejudicial to the ministry personnel and detrimental to those congregations who are dependent upon retired supply for their ministry support.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because there are many United Church congregations, especially in rural and remote areas, who are not served by full-time paid accountable ministry personnel.

The reality of less-than-full-time employment in rural and remote areas makes it more difficult to attract new ministry personnel. Many congregations rely on several different people, both active or retired ordained ministers and lay people, to fill their ministry needs, sometimes under appointment or as supply. This reality requires a higher degree of flexibility to accommodate new and innovative ways of serving the needs of the local church while still maintaining the integrity of the sacraments.

Our current policy and practice grants sacramental authority without time limit to ordained ministers at time of ordination. Lay people who were serving as recognized designated lay ministers at time of retirement may be granted a licence in retirement. However, there is no provision for retired Diaconal Ministers to be licensed for sacramental authority. The current policy discriminates against Diaconal Ministers and disadvantages congregations who may be dependent upon the ministry support offered by retired Diaconal Ministers.

What is the history/background of this issue?

The church has been in conversation about sacramental rights for diaconal ministers for many years. One aspect of the One Order of Ministry Remit was intended to address this issue; however, the remit itself, which covered far more than just sacramental authority, failed. We need to find an intermediate solution to the problem of inconsistency in licensing practices while we wrestle with trying to achieve consensus on the broader theological understandings of both ministry and sacramental authority in the United Church.

What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?

As the One Order of Ministry remit failed, the current policy remains in place. From a congregational standpoint, they could well be without the opportunity for a sacramental life. If a retired Diaconal Minister was appointed to the congregation, that minister is currently not eligible for sacramental licensing. But because the congregation has a retired Order of Ministry person hired under appointment, even if only for one Sunday per month, they would be ineligible to have Sacrament Elder(s) licensed. As such, there would be no opportunity to celebrate baptism or engage in the breaking of bread together as a sacramental act.

For those retired Diaconal Ministers who may provide support to several rural and/or remote pastoral charges, on either a regular or occasional basis, they would not be able to fully engage the needs of the pastoral charges as both retired ordained and retired designated lay ministers may.

3. How might the church respond?

The General Council could authorize an amendment to current policy to allow retired Diaconal Ministers to be licensed for sacramental authority, the boundaries of which are not confined to a specific pastoral charge, as long as they remain in good standing with The United Church of Canada.

THEME: GOVERNANCE**ANW 02 CONSTITUTION OF A MEETING****Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to do something about restrictions on the format that meetings can take.

2. Why is this issue important?

The definition of a “meeting” is restrictive in that a meeting by e-mail is not allowed.

In the busy season of harvest, our far-flung Pastoral Charge was required to hold a meeting to request Presbytery to approve the request for permission for our student minister to serve communion to our congregations.

At harvest time every hour is vital, and 18-hour days are common for that season. Because of our rural location visual computer contact is not always possible, and again requires everyone to be present at the same time, which is often unachievable for farmers at harvest time.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council can amend *The Manual* to allow a meeting by e-mail, with prior consent of a higher Court of the Church, in which participants are asked to “reply all” and to respond with their comments if any and their vote within 48 hours.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by Hardisty-Hughenden Pastoral Charge to Coronation Presbytery, April 25, 2018.

Transmitted with concurrence by Coronation Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

ANW 11 UCW REPRESENTATION ON REGIONAL COUNCILS**Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe that we are called to ensure that the United Church Women have voting membership on each of the future Regional Executives, provided that Remit 1 is enacted at General Council 43.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Women's Organizations of the United Church have been an integral part of the Church throughout its history. We have had full voting privileges in Pastoral Charges and Presbyteries (*Manual C.1.2 (g)*). In some Conferences, UCW Representatives are also voting members of the Conference Executive (*Manual D.1.3 (b)*).

The implication of taking no action on this issue would be to reduce the democratic representation of the largest women's organization in the church and would make women who have served for many years feel demoralized and unappreciated.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Depending on the process being used to determine the makeup of Regional Councils, General Council could either include United Church Women's representation as part of the Regional Council structure or could direct those in charge of setting up Regional Councils to do so.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by Alberta and Northwest Conference UCW to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Adopted and submitted by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

GCE 12 FAITHFUL DECISION MAKING ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES**Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God is calling us to re-affirm the denominational commitment to social justice as a core aspect of its identity and seek to live this out by making clear the basis for this work, adopting criteria for social justice decision making and implementing measures that increase access to decision making for the many diverse voices that make up the United Church.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church seeks to do its business in a way that is fair, respectful, and inclusive of all participants.

The recommendations are made in the context of the United Church's commitments to seeking justice and living it out. For example, we work for the full inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities, for racial and gender justice, and for right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. They are made with knowledge of the different contexts we are inhabit. For example, the Aboriginal Ministries Council represents a distinct Indigenous presence within The United Church of Canada, and the church is implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which prioritizes Indigenous self-determination and participation in decision-making.

They are made as we continue to seek be an intercultural church: The intercultural commitment means living together with a respectful awareness of each other's differences; we do this by examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly. Making decisions through an intercultural lens means that as we seek God's will, we would remember to question biases, challenge assumptions, notice who's missing, value all voices, aim for equity, and live out our commitments.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Receive the report *ANW3 Faithful Decision-Making on Social Justice Issues in The United Church of Canada* (found in the Reports section of the meeting materials), discuss it, and decide upon any actions that may be appropriate in response to the following recommendations:

- 1. That General Council re-affirm the denominational commitment to social justice as a core aspect of its identity by making clear the theological, ecclesiological and missional basis for this work.**
- 2. That General Council adopt the following criteria for social justice decision making:**
 - a) A dedication to making social justice decisions that reflect The United Church of Canada's core convictions to love God and neighbour, and to respond to the call to be participants in the healing of creation**
 - b) A dedication to speaking out, when others are mostly silent, with people who are on the margins in our society**
 - c) An openness to hearing from all the many diverse voices that make up our church, including people from different racial, cultural, economic and age groups, sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as regions, community sizes and abilities**
- 3. That the Executive of the General Council continue to experiment with new and inclusive ways of engaging the church in the process of decision-making around social justice issues with a commitment to an ongoing learning process and evaluation.**

4. That the General Secretary, General Council be asked to develop a strategy for timely communication of proposals and decisions and their implementation before, during and after each General Council and meeting of the Executive of the General Council.
5. That the Executive of the General Council develop and implement strategies to ensure that the voices of people from diverse races, languages, socio-economic classes, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities, be an intentional part of the decision-making process; and that this intentionality be constructed in a way that is fully participatory and not a token inclusion.
6. That the Executive of the General Council develop processes for recruiting and retaining volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This proposal in response to ANW 3 from GC42

GC42EX: PMM 13 – Faithful Decision Making on Social Justice Issues

General Council 42 ANW3 directed the General Secretary, General Council, to “engage the whole church in a process of consultation, review and discernment about the social justice ministries and public witness of The United Church of Canada,” with a focus on the exploration of such topics as the following:

- How the church most faithfully engages questions of social justice
- The importance of social justice to our faithfulness
- The dangers and possible failures in this ministry
- The criteria, guidelines, and principles that might help guide the church to... most effectively witness to God’s kingdom (kin-dom) and build up the body of Christ

The resolution was based on a hypothesis that while social justice work is “seen as one of the defining characteristics of The United Church of Canada...people who fundamentally support the social justice ministry of the Church often have legitimate questions about ... [social justice] decisions, how they are made, what the Church is trying to do when it makes them, and whether there were different approaches that could have resulted in more faithful outcomes.”

The resolution was further based on the assertion that “it is important that social justice work be done with care, and that the principles on which the church engages this work be clear, transparent, widely understood and carefully grounded in our theology and ethics.”

The above resolution which originated in Alberta and Northwest (ANW) Conference was referred to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC-PMM) and the Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda (PC-G&A). PC-PMM took the lead on responding to ANW3 with representation on its advocacy working group from PC-G&A. The working group undertook these three tasks in fulfilling its mandate: it established a consultation process that involved a three stage qualitative and quantitative research project with both United Church ‘people in the pews’ and people involved in United Church governance processes; it reviewed the findings from the consultation; and finally, it discerned the meaning

of the consultation findings and framed recommendations arising out of these findings. PC-PMM, at its September 20, 2017 meeting affirmed the report and recommendations for consideration by General Council Executive

The recommendations are based on a consultation process that involved a three stage qualitative and quantitative research project with both United Church “people in the pews” and people involved in United Church governance processes.

As this report and proposal were being developed, the GC43 Planning Committee was also at work developing a process for discussion of issues and decisions at General Council that provides for inclusive and respectful engagement with the different perspectives. This resulted in the creation of a new business process containing three distinct stages: a learning session; a time for smaller groups to discuss the business and transmit comments to a facilitation group; and a decision making time based on what is brought back to the plenary by the facilitation group. This method has now been used at two Executive meetings, and it will also be used at General Council itself. Initial use of the new the new business method at the Executive was observed to elicit broader participation in discussions and evaluations indicated greater satisfaction with the decision making process. This process was not explicitly designed to attend to issues of access and participation in decision making by groups from diverse linguistic, racial, and gender identities as well as socio-economic groups, sexual orientations, and abilities.

M&O 1 FRANCOPHONE REPRESENTATION ON THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL AND THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Origin: Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to recognize that Francophones constitute 25% of the Canadian population. This segment of the population, which is concentrated in Québec but present across the entire country, is a vitally important domestic mission field for The United Church of Canada. A significant number of migrants and immigrants from French-speaking countries settle in all regions of Canada.

Francophone communities across Canada constitute in and of themselves an intercultural host society offering integration through their institutions, diverse cultures, language and even, in the case of Québec, civil law. Welcoming, witnessing and mission exist contextually in this French host society. This specificity expresses both the constitutional reality that defines the country and a vital identity of The United Church of Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

In 2009, the 40th General Council meeting in Kelowna declared that “Francophone ministries are an integral part of the identity, mission and vision for the future of The United

Church of Canada.” We therefore consider it vital that Francophones be clearly and expressly represented on decision-making bodies (Denominational Council and Denominational Council Executive) as a clear message that this constituency does indeed have a place in the United Church, for this is critical to the credibility of our ministries, our welcome, our witness and our mission.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Francophone members who will be appointed to the Denominational Council and the Denominational Council Executive must understand the issues and cultures of French ministries, have close ties to those ministries, and be involved in a ministry associated with the French Ministries Table. Therefore, the General Council would facilitate this process if:

- a) The General Council assigns the responsibility of preparing a list of individuals apt to fulfill such a role to the French Ministries Table.**
- b) The General Council agrees that at least four seats on the Denominational Council be reserved for representatives of French ministries and that the names of candidates will be submitted to the nominating committee by the French Ministries Table.**
- c) The General Council agrees that one or two seats on the Denominational Council Executive be reserved for representatives of French ministries and that the names of candidates will be submitted to the nominating committee by the French Ministries Table.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

GC 42 (2015); M&O 17 reaffirmed that the Francophone presence is fundamental and indispensable to the national identity of The United Church of Canada and requested that any future structural changes include measures intended to guarantee the ongoing, dynamic presence of this dimension of the Church’s identity.

GS 67 November 2017; the General Council Executive endorsed recognition of the French Ministries Table: “Whereas the United Church strives to be relevant and sensitive to different realities across the country and, consequently, is positioning itself to be able to better respond to the needs of a constantly changing society. In order to foster the development of French ministries, the Executive of General Council approved a bilingualism protocol recognizing that The United Church of Canada is an officially bilingual church (PMM 8, French Language Translation Strategy, March 2014) and a National Strategy for Ministries in French (PMM 14, General Council Executive, November 2014).

MTU 1 A CHANGE TO CURRENT REMIT PROCESS**Origin: Manitou Conference****1. What is the issue?**

Currently, Section 8.6.2 of the Basis of Union: Polity requires that 50%+1 of all pastoral charges and/or presbyteries vote in favour of a remit in order for it to be approved.

2. Why is this issue important?

While the majority of presbyteries historically vote upon most remits, the same is not always the case when it comes to votes that are required of pastoral charges.

When pastoral charges do not vote, they are counted as a “NO” vote.

Should pastoral charges that take the time to study remit documentation, discern, and vote have their decision possibly skewed by those who do not vote?

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The 43rd General Council 2018 could initiate a process to engage the church in a discussion specifically relating to Section 8.6.2 of the Basis of Union: Polity.

Consider the ramifications of a change to our current polity to a formula by which 50%+1 of the pastoral charges and/or presbyteries that vote be used to determine whether a remit passes or fails.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The matter initially considered by Conference was a proposal requesting the General Council take steps to amend the remit voting formula to that noted above in #3. That proposal required two recounts and was narrowly approved at the Manitou Conference General Meeting 2017.

Transmitted with Concurrence

MTU 3 MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL**Origin: Manitou Conference Executive****1. What is the issue?**

It is being proposed to the 43rd General Council that the Basis of Union be changed to define membership of the Executive of the Denominational Council as follows:

7.5 Executive of the Denominational Council.

The executive of the Denominational Council is the decision-making body for the United Church between meetings of the Denominational Council, living into covenantal relationship and mutually accountable with the Denominational Council, Regional Councils, and Communities of Faith, with the following membership, authority and responsibility:

7.5.1 membership: a fixed number between 12 and 18 members, with the exact number set by the Denominational Council;

Within our understanding of a conciliar and connectional church, decisions made by the Executive of the Denominational Council should have direct accountability through the Regions to all pastoral charges.

While hearing the desire for a smaller denominational executive, we believe that is necessary to enlarge the membership to ensure direct accountability to the Regions through an elected representative.

With more and more of the work of Executive being done by videoconference, we believe that a slightly enlarged membership will not pose a significant financial hardship.

2. Why is this issue important?

We contend that The United Church of Canada was formed as a conciliar system, in which each court of the church has direct relationship and accountability to one another. Each court clearly has its own distinct responsibilities, but each court of The United Church of Canada has had some measure of accountability to the others.

We believe that in making the decision to establish a smaller denominational council executive, without direct representation from and accountability to each regional council, the church fails to honour the conciliar nature of our church that has been central to our being since Church Union.

We are aware of no theological rationale having been provided for what we consider to be an unacceptable departure from our conciliar system.

In November 2015, the Executive of the General Council approved, in the Appendix to Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee Report, a section which speaks directly to *“the conciliar nature of The United Church of Canada.”*

The Committee notes the following understandings about our conciliar system of governance:

- *The church in its essence is conciliar.... (p. 64)*

Under the proposed change, actions of the denominational council executive will have no direct accountability to the wider church between General Councils. We believe this to be

unacceptable and during this time of tremendous institutional change is likely to significantly undermine trust between the various courts.

3. How might the General Council respond to this issue?

It might accept the recommendation of Manitou Conference that:

- 1. Membership of the Executive of the Denominational Council include one representative (either ministry personnel or lay), nominated by and accountable to each Regional Council.**
- 2. Regional Councils nominate a pool of candidates from which one would be chosen through the approved General Council nominations process.**
- 3. And that General Council initiate a robust discussion about what it means when we speak of our church as “conciliar.”**

Transmitted with Concurrence by Manitou Conference

NL 1 REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE OF THE DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL

Origin: Newfoundland and Labrador Conference

1. What is the issue?

Since Church Union in 1925, The United Church of Canada has operated using a conciliar system. This has meant that each council of the church (local, regional, and national) had a direct relationship and explicit accountability to each other, and each Conference had representatives elected by them on the General Council Executive. This Executive made decisions in the three-year period between General Councils. It is now being proposed to the 43rd General Council that the Basis of Union be changed to allow a smaller Denominational Council Executive (currently General Council Executive). Some Conferences or Regions may not be represented on that new proposed smaller executive, as members will be chosen from a pool of people offered up from the regions but chosen by the denominational Nominations Committee in an attempt to meet the gender, age, financial and human resource skills and as well in an attempt to become an inter-cultural church. This means that some Regions will not have a direct relationship with the Denominational Executive between meetings of the Denominational Council and, thereby, there will be no direct representation from and accountability to all Regional Councils between the Denominational Council meetings. A means to address this is to require that there be at least one representative (lay or ministerial, and submitted by the Region) from each Region. It assumes that all Regions must be represented on the Executive of the Denominational Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

In the conciliar model currently used in The United Church of Canada, local congregations elected representatives to Presbyteries/Districts. This court then elected members to Conference, and then Conference elected representatives to General Council and as representatives to General Council Executive. In that way, all councils of the church were connected to each other. In approving the smaller Denominational Council and smaller Executive, there is nothing to suggest that the intention of the 42nd General Council was to change the conciliar nature of the church. In fact, in November 2015, the Executive of the General Council approved a section in the appendix of the *Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee Report* that discussed the conciliar model. Relevant selections from this section include the following:

- The proposed three council structure does not significantly altar the conciliar nature of the church.
- The committee notes the following understandings about our conciliar system of governance:
 - The Church in its essence is conciliar. From the Council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 through the first Ecumenical Council of Nicea, the early church maintained a conviction that the church as a body of Christ existed in gatherings of its people, both for worship and for decision-making about its common life.
 - The Reformation challenged the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church with its accompanying emphasis on the central authority of individuals.
 - The Protestant tradition instead is marked by the conviction that authority rests in gatherings of believers where God's spirit is present and active as people pray, reflect, consider and make decisions. The role of the bishop in an episcopal structure is therefore given to a council.
 - United and Uniting Churches have generally merged the conciliar structures of the present denominations. The basic structures uniformly involve a local ministry or congregational council, a denominational council, and one or more middle judicatory bodies.

The Committee further notes the following central characteristics of our conciliar system:

- Each council represents a distinctive part of the church and carries specific but overlapping authority and responsibility.
- Councils carry the episcopal or oversight functions of their respective areas.

[Source: <http://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Governance>. This is a large site. The appendix is located on: 2015-11-21 GCE Addenda, pages 44a–44IIIIII.]

The 42nd General Council decided to have a smaller denominational council executive:

7.5 *Executive of the Denominational Council*

The executive of the Denominational Council is the decision-making body for the United Church between meetings of the Denominational Council, living into covenantal relationship

and mutually accountable with the Denominational Council, Regional Councils, and Communities of Faith, with the following membership, authority and responsibility:

7.5.1 membership: a fixed number between 12 and 18 members, with the exact number set by the Denominational Council.

Given our understanding of a conciliar church, we believe that all Regions of the church must be represented on the Executive of the Denominational Council in order to have direct accountability to all Regions and Communities of Faith.

We support the decision made by General Council 42 to have a smaller Denominational Council Executive, but the membership of that Executive may have to be enlarged in order to ensure that each Region has a member to represent them at the table.

Currently the General Council Executive takes advantage of meeting electronically, with only one meeting face-to-face annually. There is the potential to meet electronically more often, if deemed necessary. We do not feel there will be significant expense involved in ensuring every Region is represented, especially since individuals may bring other competencies as well as regional representation.

The Commissioners who met for the 42nd General Council were recalled in order to make plans for the 43rd General Council. They met electronically and directed the Nominations Committee to begin a search process for members of the new Denominational Executive, to be elected at the 43rd General Council. This process asks each Conference to nominate 3-5 members to be considered for membership on the Executive. In making their nominations, Conferences are being asked to consider the diversity of an intercultural church as well as the expertise required in theology, governance, finance, and vision, as well as geography. Out of a pool of nominees, probably composed of more than 80 people, the Nominations Committee will choose 15 members who will serve “alongside” the Moderator, the Immediate Past Moderator, and the General Secretary. Since there are 16 Regions, and perhaps an Aboriginal Region to be added, Conferences have been told that the Executive may not include someone from every Conference or Region. Our proposal asks that this latter assumption be rejected, and that the membership of the executive be enlarged as necessary to ensure there is a representative from every Region.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

That the membership of the Denominational Council Executive include one representative (either ministry or lay), from each Regional Council. Those Representatives to be chosen from a pool of 3-5 individuals, nominated from the region from which at least one would be chosen through the approved General Council Nominations Process. Any of those chosen by Region could be asked to serve as a representative from the region and must agree to do this if selected.

This would allow the General Council Executive to select from the pool the gifts and skills needed with a view to becoming an intercultural church.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Motion: (Wilson Gonese/Brian Colbourne)

That the Proposal be forwarded from the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference to General Council with concurrence.

Carried

TOR 5 THE MANUAL ITEM 5.3.3: MANDATORY MEETINGS OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE

Origin: Toronto Conference

1. What is the issue?

Current rules empower 10 members to trigger a mandatory meeting of the pastoral charge regardless of the size of the congregation or purpose of the meeting. For appointment or removal of trustees the threshold is lowered to seven members. These thresholds create random and widely varying impacts in practice: for a congregation with a membership of 400, for example, the thresholds are 2.5% and 1.8% respectively. For a membership of 100 they rise to 10% and 7%.

2. Why is this issue important?

Issues such as reviewing a pastoral relationship or electing/removing members of the governing body or trustees are not trivial and should not be triggered under low or arbitrary thresholds.

In May of 2016 these rules led Rosedale United Church to hold a divisive and painful review of its lead minister triggered by a handful of members representing less than 5% of the congregation. The result of the vote was 87% support for the lead minister, which rose to 90% when letters from members unable to be present were included.

This process caused deep distress that could otherwise have been avoided. Members and staff should be better protected from missional disruption and potential harm.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Rosedale United does not know the history or principles underlying these rules, so it is difficult to suggest changes in keeping with their original spirit and intent. Our understanding is that the legacy denominations vested substantial authority in members of a congregation as a counterweight to the perceived power of clergy and/or boards. It may now be more faithful to these traditions to offer a higher measure of due process to avoid potentially damaging events driven by narrowly held agendas.

One way to achieve greater balance would be to express thresholds as percentages rather than absolute numbers. This would create consistency and fairness in their application across congregations and allow for an even-handed and proportionate approach (as is the case for quorums). Absent greater knowledge, it is hard to be more specific, but Rosedale United's board asks that General Council consider a minimum threshold of 10% be required to trigger meetings of this kind.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal entitled "Manual item 5.3.3: Mandatory Meetings of the Pastoral Charge"

And makes the following recommendations:

1. that the General Council take into account the difference between smaller and larger churches in how they determine the required number; and
2. that the General Council consider using a required number and/or percentage, whichever is the greater.

THEME: IDENTITY AND VISION

BC 3 LEADING ON PURPOSE

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the Triune God is calling The United Church of Canada, over the next three years to:

- adopt a governance model for the Denominational Council Executive that will enable the church to undertake discernment of purpose and priority-setting for ministry, then align that with financial planning, by:
 - establishing a discipline of intentionally sparking conversations about purpose and mission across the church, and subsequently discern the core work required by the Denominational Council at this time as a church;
 - creating open networks of communication between the elected leaders of governance bodies of Regional and Denominational Councils;
 - planning for financial allocation dollars to support core work at both the Denominational Council and Regional Council levels;
 - consulting more widely (rather than less) in the context of institutional decline, so that the setting of the mill-rate for allocations takes into account the viability, mission and purpose of Communities of Faith and Regions, not merely the denominational and regional staffing structures;
 - establishing a budgeting process in which the Denominational Council (and its Executive) consults with Regions and Communities of Faith (who have a vested interest, and need input into what work gets done) to determine the core work for the next triennium.
- lead by the principle of on-going discernment rather than structural perpetuity:
 - at the end of the every triennium, re-evaluate the denominational staffing plan to ensure it is aligned with the priorities of the core work.

2. Why is this issue important?

In a time of institutional decline, it is imperative to lead strategically and transparently. Grief plays a big role in our functioning, and we tend toward the “technical” rather than the “adaptive” work. So it takes powerful intention to shift our focus from those things we can “control” to a conversation about our purpose, our identity, and our priorities. It has always been difficult for United Church of Canada bodies to discern between “goods” but now, as we look scarcity in the face, it is even more challenging.

We have just spent two triennia focussed on our organizational structure: the first, through the Comprehensive Review process, and recently, through the Remits and the planning processes that grew out of it.

It is vital to the life and mission of The United Church of Canada that the Denominational Council and its Executive turn to purpose and identity, and discover ways to engage the rest of the church in the conversations that grow out of those vitally important topics.

If no action is taken on this issue, then it is possible that the decline of the church will continue unabated, and God will continue to work in other ways in the hearts and lives of Canadian people, rather than through the institution of The United Church of Canada.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might consider:

1. Discussion of the issue at the General Meeting;
2. Action in the form of direction to the General Secretary to research governance models and introduce the newly formed Denominational Council Executive to a model of governance that provides for the above outcomes;
3. Action in the form of direction to the Denominational Council Executive itself to explore governance models in a systematic way in order to lead the church with purpose at this time.

BC 5 A VISION TO GROUND US

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

We are called to engage God's mission in the world through a vibrant *Denominational Vision* that intentionally shapes our priorities and plans.

2. Why is this issue important?

- a) In recent years, there have been many denominational level decisions that have radically altered the nature of The United Church of Canada that appear to lack a cohesive Denominational Vision that serves to ground and direct the overall mission priorities and ministry plan for the denomination.
- b) Henry David Thoreau reminds us that, "It's not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?" As a denomination, we have been very busy with reviews, reports, task groups, and commissions, however the question still remains: what have we been so busy about? Some would claim we've been busy about the work of survival and structural reconfiguration, yet is this the vision of The United Church of Canada made manifest or is there something bigger, deeper, and wider that guides us in our discipleship?
- c) Could it be that we've simply set the bar of our vision too low and never really recovered since the failed attempt at church union with The Anglican Church in Canada? Michael Angelo once penned, "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss, but it is too low and we reach it." As an institution that is unique in Canada have we aimed too low? Have we lost sight of our missional identity that was fundamental in the creation of our denomination? Has our aim been so low that we've lost our pioneering spirit that called us to embody a social gospel that believed it was

possible to change lives and the world? Has our aim been so low that we actually believe we're irrelevant and our message of radical love and acceptance is no longer needed in the world?

- d) In a similar vein, Louis Henry Sullivan observed that, "form ever follows function." Could it be that our form has become so challenging, not only because we live in a post-Christendom society, but because we've lost a unifying denominational function? Could it be that in our need to restructure in the name of fiscal responsibility and viability, we have neglected to ask the question, "what function...what vision...are we trying to live into?"
- e) These notions aren't foreign to us. The theological understanding that vision animates, inspires, transforms, and propels people into action is a cornerstone of our faith. In the first testament, it is summed up in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision the people perish." In the second testament, the first thing that Jesus does as he begins his ministry is declare a vision in Luke 4. Vision ground Jesus' ministry and sets its function. It provides direction to his ministry and sets the form. It also provides a matrix within which Jesus can prayerfully discern what ministry he is called to do and what must be left to the Spirit and others to accomplish.
- f) After 93 years, The United Church of Canada needs to articulate a Denominational Vision that will help define our function and shape our form. We need a vision that will help us prayerfully discern what is our ministry to do at the denominational level and what must be left to the Spirit and others to accomplish. We need a vision that will move us beyond the busyness of being an institution with an aim that is high enough to be good news to our communities and the world. The time has come to have the difficult, challenging, 40 days and nights in the desert kind of conversations that will help us discern a Denominational Vision for this United Church of ours.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a. **Set as a number one priority for the next triennium discerning and articulating a clear denominational vision for The United Church of Canada.**
- b. **Direct the Inter-faith and Inter-cultural committee to undertake a period of consultation with the goal of discerning a denominational vision.**
- c. **Engage all levels of the denomination in real and honest conversation that move beyond mere consultation.**
- d. **Designate sufficient funding to undertake such a project.**
- e. **Review existing materials to see what can be harmonized and where any gaps might exist.**
- f. **Engage communities of faith in conversations about our denominational history and where we think the Spirit of God is calling us to go.**
- g. **Limit the conversations to high level vision statements in order to avoid drifting into mission prioritization and ministry planning.**
- h. **Once the denominational vision has been adopted, develop strategies that utilize the denominational vision within the General/Regional Council Executive so that it directs missional priorities and a three to five-year ministry plan.**

TICIF 1/GCE 17 REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP**Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee****1. What is the issue?**

We believe that God is calling us to consider what approach to church membership will best serve the church in twenty-first century Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

This current initiative is the result of a report from the Committee to the last General Council and a referral by the General Council back to the Committee. This latest report and referral represents the third time in the past 30 years that The United Church of Canada has wrestled with the concept of church membership. The 42nd General Council asked the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to engage the church in a study on church membership and to report back to the 43rd General Council.

As a result of the responses received, and the Committee's own discussions, it is clear that there is no consensus within the church regarding church membership, as two different theological and philosophical perspectives exist within the church on this matter. These perspectives in turn lead some persons to desire a model of membership that emphasizes belonging, with any faith commitment coming later, while others advocate a model of membership firmly linked to a profession of faith. The Committee has outlined those differing visions in a report that is an appendix to this proposal.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- 1) Have a discussion about church membership based on the report of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (appended);**
- 2) Make decisions and/or direct that the Committee do further work on membership.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council, is this proposal in response to assigned work—either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal/motion numbers.

The 42nd General Council passed a motion (**GC 42 2015-071**) asking the Committee to lead the church in a study on church membership and to recommend to the 43rd General Council a model of church membership as a result of that study.

Executive Summary Report on Membership

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee submitted a report on “membership” to the 42nd General Council. In response, the General Council directed the Committee to involve the church in a study of this subject. Informed by the responses it received to such a study, the Committee was to bring a recommendation to the 43rd General Council on the meaning of membership. The Committee prepared and circulated a study document, presenting two different models for “membership” as a way of encouraging discussion about our theology and understanding of membership in the church.

The responses the Committee received to the study document it had circulated across the church revealed an almost equal division between those who favoured an approach to church membership that emphasized belonging as the means for establishing membership and those who emphasized a faith commitment. The Committee believes that behind these two different approaches lie two different ways of thinking about what it means to be a Christian and to be a member of the church in an increasingly secularized Canada. Both approaches are valid. Both have key theological understandings at their base. But they are different approaches. Those different ways of thinking about the implications of our current culture lead to different theological emphases in thinking about church membership. Those different approaches and emphases are described more fully in the report itself.

The Committee judges that the General Council needs to have a discussion, and then make a decision, about which of these two approaches, or some other option besides these two, will serve the church best in these times in which we live. Given such direction from General Council, the Committee believes it can either offer a compelling case for a more intentional practice of our current model for church membership or refine further the new model presented in the study that was circulated across the church in 2017. But the decision about the specific direction to take needs to come from the General Council, not the Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee.

Report on Membership Thinking about Church Membership: Two Approaches

Background

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee submitted a report to the 42nd General Council. The Committee proposed that the General Council direct it “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 a new model of membership for the church.” The 42nd General Council adopted an amended version of that motion, deleting the reference to “a new model.” Instead it directed the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith 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 of membership

for the church as a result of that study.” The Committee, in the study document it subsequently produced, used two different models—Model One¹ a slightly amended version of the United Church’s current model and Model Two,² a new and different model—as a means of helping the church to reflect upon various aspects of membership in the church. The Committee hoped that the responses it received would give an indication of the mind of the church about membership.

Analysis of Responses Received

The Committee’s report was circulated across the church early in the winter of 2017, with responses due by June 30. 251 responses, both in English and French, were received electronically; 22 others were submitted in hardcopy. The Committee was pleased to have received that number of responses and grateful to those who took time to offer their thoughts on the matter. We were, and are, aware that the report came out at a particularly busy time in the life of the church and its congregations, given that the voting on remits going on at that same time necessarily absorbed much attention and energy across the church. Voting on remits by the key governing board of each pastoral charge during these months may also explain the fact that only 24 of the 273 responses the Committee received came from the key governing board of a pastoral charge. While the Committee received responses from some other groups, either in Presbyteries or Pastoral Charges, the vast majority of the responses the Committee received came from individuals wishing to express their views on the subject of membership.

The Committee had invited respondents to indicate on a spectrum whether the United Church’s model of membership ought to give emphasis to belonging on the one hand or a faith commitment on the other, with 1 giving a strong emphasis to belonging, 7 a strong emphasis on a faith commitment, and 4 representing a neutral or middle position. The average of the responses received was approximately 3.5, almost as close to the middle as it would have been possible to have. Written comments about the two models presented, models that reflected these polar positions, showed a slight preference for the “new” model the Committee had developed as one option, but many respondents made thoughtful arguments for retaining the present model of church membership.

In summary, the responses the Committee received did not give it confidence to recommend one particular direction or model over the other.

Another Way to Think about These Approaches to Church Membership

As the Committee thought about both the current model of membership and the new model it developed for the purpose of the study document, a model that drew upon the work of Diana Butler Bass, and considered in addition the responses the Committee had received, it seemed to us that the two models in the study document represented two opposing visions of how

¹ See the study document circulated across the church in February–June 2017, *Our Model of Church Membership: Time for a Change?*, pp. 8–10. <https://commons.united-church.ca>: see the Membership folder in What We Believe and Why.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 10–15.

trying to live Christian life in twenty-first century Canada relates to church membership. Both models have counter-cultural elements, although in different ways.

Behind Diana Butler Bass's work, and the "new model" (Model Two in the study document) the Committee circulated, is the conviction that Canadian society has changed. Members of society do not "join" organizations in the way Canadians did for much of the twentieth century. Therefore, the church needs to adapt to that situation. The church needs to recognize that many people today, and most especially younger people, will only become involved in an "organization" by being sufficiently attracted to it to begin to participate in it. Commitment to any organization comes only after a lengthy period of participation or involvement. Therefore, Diana Butler Bass would be among the theorists who believe that our society has moved to a point where belonging and activity become the entry point to a deeper relationship with the church—that developing and deepening relationship then leads to a fuller understanding of the Christian faith and, in turn, to the possibility of seeking that membership status we now know as full membership.

While it is not often noted, one could also argue that adapting our understanding of church membership to reflect this aspect of contemporary Western culture would be a very United Church thing to do. Our origins as a denomination were rooted in a desire to help make a Christian Canada. While by the time of church union in 1925 the founders realized that goal was impossible to achieve, the United Church during at least its first fifty years saw itself as a significant and integral part of Canada and the Canadian culture. Aspects of that earlier reality still linger with us, even though we acknowledge that we no longer have that integral and significant place. During our history, if the church has sometimes been critical of particular cultural changes, the church generally adapted to be in concert with them.

If this "new model" (Model Two) is an effort to adapt to a changing Canadian culture, its advocates would also assert that the current model of church membership is deeply rooted in an institutional culture that has had its day. Thus, they would see this new model as a counter-cultural approach to how the United Church has governed itself since church union.

Theologically, supporters of the "new model" (Model Two) would lay particular emphasis on the fact that Jesus called people and invited them to follow. The challenge of following Jesus and being a disciple was learned "on the way."

Those who would support the current model of membership (Model One), or indeed a more rigorously practised version of that model of church membership than the United Church has historically undertaken, make a different assessment of what being a Christian in the current culture demands. This viewpoint agrees that the culture has dramatically changed. But the change to which those favouring a rigorous approach to church membership highlight is the secularization of Canada. In contemporary Canada, unlike the Canada of two generations ago, no one, and certainly no one under forty, is involved in the church because it is "the thing to do." The societal pressure to be involved in a church or a synagogue, a reality in 1950s Canada, no longer exists. In fact, the opposite is true—a serious involvement in any faith community is

increasingly regarded with ambivalence or even mild hostility. Think, for example, of the debate in the province of Quebec during the past several years over the wearing of overt religious symbols, or similar debates in other parts of Canada over religious practice and its place in society.

In contemporary Canada, belonging to a church (or any religious organization) is often a highly counter-cultural activity, particularly if you are younger. Supporters of this approach to church membership would point to the 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, you became a Christian only after being well-schooled in the faith; part of the preparation for membership was to try to ensure you had the resources to stand firm in the face of any hostility that came your way and that you would, in the words of I Peter, "Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you" [I Peter 3:14-15].

Supporters of this model would acknowledge that the current model's history in the United Church comes from a time when the culture strongly supported the practice of Christianity and in which an institutional mindset reigned. However, they think that such a model, with its emphasis on the need for a knowledge of the faith tradition and a commitment to it for membership in the church, is precisely what is needed when the practice of Christianity is such a counter-cultural activity.

The Committee's Current Thinking

We judge that these two different analyses of the effects of current culture lead, in turn, to the two fundamentally different approaches we saw in the responses to the study document as to how the United Church should think about church membership. We have concluded that the General Council needs to offer guidance as to which of these two visions it believes will serve us best as we seek to nurture individuals in the Christian faith tradition, thereby enabling them to try to lead their lives according to that tradition. If asked, the Committee believes it can draft a compelling case as to why the current model of church membership (Model One), especially given recent changes to enable adherents to play a greater role in congregational life, needs to be reaffirmed and practised with greater intentionality. Equally, the Committee believes it can draft a revised version of the "new model" (Model Two) it presented as one of the options in the study document. In doing so the Committee also thinks it can take account in such a revised version of Model Two of concerns expressed about the theological underpinnings of that model, in particular, the place of baptism.

However, the Committee does not think it should be the body to decide which particular reading of the culture, with the vision for church membership that comes with that reading, the church should adopt. We believe that is the role of the General Council. When that decision is made, the Committee can design or support a model congruent with that vision.

Recommendations

In light of the responses we have received and our analysis of them, we recommend:

- 1) That the General Council offer guidance as to which vision of church membership will serve us best as we seek to nurture individuals in the Christian faith tradition, thereby enabling them to try to lead their lives according to that tradition. Both before and during the 43rd General Council, representatives of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee would be prepared to facilitate such a discussion, one focussed not on the details of a model of membership but on the theological and philosophical basis for a model for church membership in our times, a model that can then be developed and lived into.
- 2) That upon a decision by the General Council as to the basic direction the church should take, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee would undertake during the next triennium either to refine Model Two to take account of the responses received to the study document and the discussion at General Council or to develop materials to help the church live into its existing model (Model One) with greater intentionality and faithfulness.

TICIF 2/GCE 18 HONOURING THE DIVINE IN EACH OTHER: HINDU–UNITED CHURCH RELATIONS

Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

1. What is the issue?

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has invited the church into a study of Hindu-United Church relations. We believe that the church must continue to encourage its membership to grow in understanding Hindus as they would wish to be understood. At the same time, we must search for new ways of understanding Hinduism and its relationship with Christianity. Through creating such understanding, it will be possible to sustain long-term mutual relationships of acceptance, respect, and mutual transformation for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

2. Why is this issue important?

The 36th General Council in 1997 authorized for study across the church a document on United Church–Jewish relations and asked that similar studies be undertaken with other faith traditions. Following studies on Islam and on Aboriginal spirituality, in 2009 the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee agreed to develop a resource and policy statement on the relationship of The United Church of Canada to Hinduism in the Canadian context.

The Committee believes this direction is consistent with the commitment expressed in the Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Committee's 1997 report: *Mending the World: An Ecumenical*

Vision for Healing and Reconciliation, adopted by the 36th General Council. It commits the United Church “to seek conversations and partnerships in mission with other sisters and brothers in God’s wider human family.” It is the hope of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee that people in the United Church will find opportunities in the future to engage with the study document, and to explore a theology of acceptance, respect and mutual transformation as a next step in building interfaith understanding and action in the United Church.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Adopt the proposed statement on Hindu–United Church relations (appended) and commend it to communities of faith as encouragement to continue to build interfaith relationships.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Comments from the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee invited people across the United Church into a process of exploration of this relationship, by using the study document *Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church–Hindu Relations Today*. Included with the document was a proposed statement on United Church–Hindu relations; the committee invited comments on this statement as the basis for revision and presentation to General Council.

The Committee was disappointed by the very limited response to the study (only six written responses were received). This may not indicate decreased interest in interfaith engagement, but rather the many different issues that have called for study and action in the time since the study was released. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has discerned that placing the proposed statement before General Council for affirmation may be an encouragement to continuing dialogue with Hindu neighbours, and a basis for further reflection on our relationships with different faith communities in our pluralistic world.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work?

GC36: Resolution 2 – Bearing Faithful Witness (substitute resolution, see ROP 1997 p. 879)

Proposed Statement:

Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church–Hindu Relations Today

Preamble

The United Church of Canada is called continually to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the midst of our neighbours and in the world. In accordance with that call, the 36th General Council in 1997 authorized for study across the church a document on United Church–Jewish relations and asked that similar studies be undertaken with other faith traditions. Following studies on Islam and on Aboriginal spirituality, in 2009 the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

agreed to develop a resource and policy statement on the relationship of The United Church of Canada to Hinduism in the Canadian context. The Committee invited people across the United Church into a process of exploration of this relationship, using the study document *Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church–Hindu Relations Today*.

The United Church, in previous studies of other faiths, has made the following affirmation:

We believe the church can continue to affirm its own distinctive self-identity while affirming that other faiths and traditions have their own self-understanding. The Bible teaches that the Word and Wisdom of God are not limited to Christians, and the Spirit of God is free and faithful. We therefore affirm and cherish the differences between traditions as gifts of God, which can be life-giving and transformative. (*That We May Know Each Other Final Statement*)

We believe that the church must continue to encourage its membership to grow in understanding Hindus as they would wish to be understood. At the same time, we must search for new ways of theologically understanding Hinduism and its relationship with Christianity. Through creating such understanding, it will be possible to sustain long-term mutual relationships of acceptance, respect, and mutual transformation for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

In continuity with these affirmations, and as an act of witness to the church's desire to find new ways of understanding and working with Hindu neighbours for the sake of the well-being of our world, The United Church of Canada:

- Rejoices in the prospects for transformation in faith and action that arise in the emergent dialogue with Hindus
- Respects and accepts the differences between the beliefs and practices of Hinduism and Christianity
- Expresses a deep respect for the richness of the ancient philosophical traditions of Hinduism
- Regrets the church's complicity in the history of colonialism and the racist social patterns that evolved in the British Commonwealth
- Regrets the church's condemnation of Hindu worship practices that were part of missionary history.
- Regrets the use of the language of idolatry to condemn Hindu theological traditions.
- Recognizes the variety of expressions of divinity in Hinduism as not inconsistent with the church's understanding of the nature of God.
- Recognizes that truth is embodied in the religious life of Hindu traditions around the world.
- Recognizes that God's saving and liberating grace is at work in the religious life of Hinduism.
- Invites the people of the United Church to explore the many ways that Christians can deepen their faith and spiritual life through learning from Hindus.

- Invites United Church congregations to engage with Hindu temple communities for the sake of the healing of the world.
- Encourages all people of the United Church to continue conversations with Hindus that show a growing pattern of acceptance, respect, and a movement toward transformation.

THEME: INTERCULTURAL AND DOMINANT PRIVILEGE LENSES

ANW 9 RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, RACIAL JUSTICE AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the God of Distributive/Restorative Justice, revealed in Jesus the Christ through the Holy Spirit, is calling us to respond to the challenges of racism, racial discrimination and racial justice along with/and White privilege that still exists in The United Church of Canada, in personal relationships and the prevailing systems of the church.

White privilege is so engrained in the system that it causes injustice. It affects decision-making.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada has described a Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church. If this vision is to be honoured and lived into, then Intercultural mission and ministry needs to be intentional at every level of the church. Sometimes though mere intention is not enough. This is both a justice and theological issue. It is based on Jesus' teachings and expectation to, "*Love your neighbors as you love yourself.*" What ethnic minorities need in The United Church of Canada is not equality, but equity, because of their minority status. It is important for the church to hear the voices of the minorities, especially of those who are racially marginalized.

Canada is probably the most diverse country in the world. It is made up of many diverse cultures, races and languages. And the demography of Canada is fast changing in its open policy to immigrants. Therefore, as a Canadian church, The United Church of Canada should be willing to serve these diverse communities according to their need.

The United Church of Canada did acknowledge the existing problem and proclaimed that it would work towards becoming an accepting, open, justice seeking and inclusive church. Indeed, the General Councils 39 and 41 did agree upon, apart from announcing and covenanting that it is committed to Transformative living. However, the process in becoming an Intercultural Church has been very slow, if not almost invisible.

Racism is unacceptable for it is de-humanizing, dividing and oppressive. Racism and White supremacy have caused and can continue to cause broken and wounded hearts and minds, apart from twisting human souls. It is the shame of colonial identity.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

In order to recommit, and ensure a continued focus on becoming an intercultural church the General Council could:

- 1. Have an Inter-Cultural Ministry Standing Committee at every structural level— Communities of Faith/Regional Councils/Denominational Council, to carry out this important and challenging mission of the church,**

2. **Develop policy and guidelines for the regions on this issue,**
3. **Assist leaders with spiritual guidance and support,**
4. **Provide guidelines and governance to protect ethnic and migrant leaders of the church in regional councils,**
5. **Oversee working conditions to ensure ethnic and migrant workers/ volunteers are fully accepted and work towards achieving the goals and mission of the church,**
6. **Check that each region is intentional and determined to meet these needs in their given context,**
7. **Provide funds for a Regional gathering each year and for a Denominational gathering every second year for spiritual caring, fellowship, connections and growing together in these ministries,**
8. **When not possible for the Denominational Council to fund a staff member, encourage Regional Council to support a staff member to carry out this important work where funds are available,**
9. **Where not possible for one region to support a staff member, share the staff member with another neighboring or needy region.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by the ANWC Intercultural Ministry Standing Committee to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Adopted and submitted by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

BQ 3 EQUITY MONITOR

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada and the General Council, in its commitment to be an equitable and accessible national Church is being called to establish the role of Equity Monitor and encourage all levels of the church to implement a similar role.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Bay of Quinte Conference, the Executive, various committees and the presbyteries have adopted the role of Equity Monitor in all their meetings.

The role of Equity Monitor is to ensure Web content, meetings, workshops, or events follow established protocols for equity, accessibility and communication related issues. As an example, the Monitor can ensure all PowerPoint slides comply with an established font size protocol.

Many sectors in Canada have established the role of Accessibility Coordinator, similarly, the Equity Monitor can act as a liaison between individuals and the various structures of The United Church of Canada to identify gaps or barriers.

The United Church of Canada has committed to be an inclusive church, should a gap be identified, there lacks a dedicated system/person who these concerns can be shared with.

The Bay of Quinte Conference Equity Committee has identified many areas of equity concerns, such as:

- Assistive listening or amplification of speakers
- Visual loss accommodations
- Scent free/nut free environments
- Gender neutral accommodations
- American Sign Language interpretation
- Accommodations for persons with various mental health concerns

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could establish the role of Equity Monitor for future meetings, events or workshops to ensure a barrier-free, equitable opportunity for all participants.

The General Council could act to establish the role of an Equity Monitor or Coordinator to assist in identifying gaps or barriers, acting as a liaison between individuals and the General Council and its structures.

The General Council could direct that a handbook of resources be prepared.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 3 to the General Council, with approval.

BQ 4 DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling The United Church of Canada and the General Council move towards implementing a policy of inclusion for persons with visual loss.

2. Why is this issue important?

A previous motion referred to the Executive of the General Council (GC40 New 6), directed “all future video programming produced by or purchased for The United Church of Canada include closed or open captioning.”

The Church needs to make accommodations for persons with visual loss. Through the work of the Disability Ministries of The United Church of Canada, this accommodation continues the work of becoming an inclusive church.

Many mainstream broadcasting companies recognize their duty to accommodate and are including descriptive video in their television programming.

According to the CNIB, 5.5 million Canadians have “a major eye disease the could cause vision loss” and there are approximately 1.4 million Canadians living with age-related macular degenerations (AMD) “many of whom have vision loss or are at risk.” Future predictions expect a rise of vision loss to “nearly 30 per cent in the next decade.” (reference: www.cnib.ca/en/about/media/vision-loss/pages/default.aspx).

The United Church of Canada has its own “channel” on the YouTube platform and as such has invested much time/energy in developing its profile and a well-established mainstream audience. YouTube currently allows users to turn on voice recognition technology that captions a large majority of their videos, but does not allow for descriptive video technology. Such technology had previously been possible with the YouTube platform.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could direct a program of actively advocating with social media platforms to adopt and implement descriptive video technology.

The General Council could commit staff resources to investigate and implement ‘text to speech’ technology on The United Church of Canada’s website

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 4 to the General Council, with approval.

BQ 5 INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY/EQUITABLE STANDARDS

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that The United Church of Canada is being called to develop a standard (policy) in the areas of customer service, employment, and information and communication and subsequent training.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Federal Government of Canada held 18 consultations across Canada between July 2016 and February 2017, aimed to establish legislation “to promote equality of opportunity and increase inclusion and participation of Canadians who have disabilities or functional limitations.” (source: Government of Canada—Consulting with Canadians on accessibility legislation)

It is evident the Federal Government and provinces are moving towards accessibility legislation and this proposal is consistent with the commitment of The United Church of Canada to be an inclusive church.

As of 2017 three provinces in Canada that have established “Standards or Regulations,” these are Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia. Organizations, such as The United Church of Canada, who provide services to Canadians, need to be mindful of provincial accessibility legislation.

Ontario’s Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was the first of its kind in Canada and Ontario was “one of the first jurisdictions in the world to enact specific legislation.” (source: www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws)

The Ontario Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) became law in 2011, “enacting standards in the areas of Employment, Information and Communications, and Transportation” these “are laws that...non-profits...must follow to become more accessible.” (source: www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws)

Ontario has established a timeline for Private & Non-profit Organizations (50+ employees):

- 2012 – “customer service – train staff and volunteers and develop policy, make emergency and public safety information accessible when asked, create workplace emergency plans for employees with disabilities”
- 2014 – “create a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, make all new and refreshed Internet websites and web content on those sites conform with WCAG 2.0 level A”
- 2015 – “Make feedback processes accessible when asked”
- 2016 – “Make publicly available information accessible when asked, make employment practices more accessible including: recruitment, employees and accommodation, performance management, career development, and redeployment”
- 2021 – “Make all Internet website and web content conform with WCAG 2.0 level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description)”

Should this not be implemented, the church will be complicit in continuing to permit systemic barriers for Persons with Disabilities.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council could establish a study group to develop a policy/standard to be implemented by 2021 including appropriate video training modules tools for all Paid Accountable Ministry Personnel and Ministry Personnel Committees.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 5 to the General Council, with approval.

BQ 8 UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO WORK WITH UNESCO'S CANADIAN COALITION OF MUNICIPALITIES AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God's Holy Spirit is calling us to continue into being an intercultural church recommend to The United Church of Canada work with UNESCO'S Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination towards eliminating Racism and Discrimination.

2. Why is this issue important?

This vision and request is based on the Statement of Beliefs proclaimed by The United Church of Canada in its Anti-Racism Policy Statement *That All May Be One* adopted by the 37th General Council (2000). It declares the following:

We believe we are all equal before God.

We believe racism is a sin and violates God's desire for humanity.

We believe racism is present in our society and in our church, and throughout time has manifested itself in many forms in varying degrees.

We believe that the struggle against racism is a continuous effort. Therefore our anti-racism policy statement is only a first step. It provides the basis for the creation of a church where all are welcome, where all feel welcome, and where diversity is as natural as breathing.

We believe change is possible. We believe in forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation and the potential to learn from stories and experiences.

We believe we are all called to work against racism and for a society in which the words of the gospel are realized among us.

Key underlying theological understandings are:

- a) **the concept of God**, seen as universal and loving, and, therefore, would give all persons the capacity within their historical and cultural situation to relate to God such that their full human potential is realized in communities of faith, and in society.
- b) **The Incarnation** offers clarity, through its emphasis on human relating, personal and social. In its emphasis on the meeting of the divine and the human, it promotes positive religious behaviour toward our neighbours and assists towards understanding that it is through strong ethical relationships that faith and hope are kept alive. This concern with right relationship is crucial. Theological reflection on the connections between the relationship between God and humanity, God and the world, and human beings, one with another, as neighbours on planet earth, is crucial.

Ecclesiological, the following principles emerge from the stories we have told as The United Church of Canada. Revealed in these principles are the core values that we hold as a Church—values which shape our identity and the character of our relationships. Articulated in the 41st General Council Ecclesiology Report, we believe these principles can help us to reflect on fundamental issues and make decisions related to the elimination of racism and discrimination as we live into the 21st century:

- a) A church that holds scripture as foundational remembers the wealth of stories from diverse cultural groups collected in scripture and in continuing tradition;
- b) A church that is called into being as the Body of Christ recognizes that those who come to the church, come through the invitation of Christ, and must be welcomed with the radical hospitality of the reign of God;
- c) A church seeking justice and resisting evil itself, confesses and repents its errors, serves with humility, and acts with courage;
- d) A church that lives with respect in creation asks how all of its decisions will affect the flourishing of those who are marginalized, and all of creation; (e) A church seeking equity and justice honours the diverse experiences of those who we may have seen as “other”, but who are never other to God; An interracial, intercultural church intentionally risks engagement with difference as a God-given gift, affirming the human dignity of all;
- e) A church open to transformation through relationship with others is committed to dialogue;
- f) A church which values partnership seeks collaboration with people beyond our church in areas of common concern;
- g) A church living faithfully in the midst of empire makes its decisions with the full and informed participation of all those affected.

Missional: A church that is part of God’s mission in the world asks how each of its decisions will promote or obstruct God’s mission. In the Canadian context, the dominant missional theme has been the Love of God for all created humanity. Living in a multicultural, pluralistic Canada, The

United Church—through its interfaith/intercultural work has focused on *Mending the World* by engaging and working with all persons of goodwill. It has remained true to the dialogical imperative with an attitude of openness and reflective analysis when in discussion with members of World Religions and Cultures. This interfaith and cross-cultural involvement respects cultural difference, and highlights Theologian Pannikar’s understanding that “Culture is the house, not the prison of the human being.” Regardless of skin colour, The United Church of Canada lives its vision of honouring the divine image of God within all persons by sponsoring refugees, working with global partners in mission, and executing the mandatory requirement for all Order of Ministry personnel in anti-racism training, based on its *That All May Be One* policy.

Religious Ethics: The ethical dimension of religion and the work of Justice, is derived from our Judaeo-Christian sources, and scriptures such as Micah 4. The application here of “act justly” has been concretized in the church’s anti-racism policy and reads as follows: “Will endeavour to act justly within its own structures, courts, policies, and practice, by:

- a) applying an anti-racist lens in practicing ethical and just financial stewardship,
- b) reviewing the candidacy, settlement, and post-settlement processes for clergy to ensure that they are supportive and non-discriminatory,
- c) developing and publicizing the availability of policies and procedures to address complaints and conflicts with respect to racism,
- d) helping those who have committed acts of racism to recognize the sin of racism and to be transformed,
- e) helping people to become aware of and support others in accessing church and public services/processes when rights are violated by acts of racism,
- f) working to create or maintain just relations with persons of racial and ethnocultural minorities, and
- g) working to create or maintain just relations with Aboriginal and First Nations peoples.

Historical background of this issue:

- a) First Nations history in Canada, and Settler groups;
- b) The Underground Railroad, North Buxton, Ontario;
- c) History of slavery in Canada,
- d) documented histories of racism in Canada,
- e) Black Loyalist history,
- f) Ukrainians and Italians during World War I;
- g) Japanese internment during World War II;
- h) Head Tax on the Chinese population;
- i) the story of Louis Riel;
- j) The Sikh community on Kamagata, and,
- k) Black Civil Rights during 1940 and 1950’s (Hugh Burnett, Howard McCurdy, and Lyle Talbot);
- l) The Black Lives Matter movement.

The Anglican Journal, October 2017 issue states that “Today, there are about 100 white supremacist/neo-Nazi/far-right groups in Canada, and like their U.S. counterparts, they too have been coming out of the woodwork. Far-right groups like the Canadian branch of Soldiers of Odin, an anti-immigrant and anti-refugee network founded in Finland, have been making their presence felt with “park and street patrols” in Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta since last year.” The Anglican Church of Canada, with other organizations has issued a joint statement of solidarity and call for action against hate. The statement urged all levels of government to review laws and policies pertaining to hate and hate crimes.

What are the consequences of not acting on the issue of Racism?

The Church of Jesus Christ is rendered ineffectual. No action is destructive of the essence of the Social Gospel. Will result in the loss of respect for all citizens. Will contribute to the weakening of civic engagement. No fostering of a more mature collective life. The Church loses integrity—a moral dilemma is created. Seen also as a failure to uphold Canada’s Multicultural Policy. No witness in the Public Square, and the role of faith in Canadian life is fractured. Damaging effect on social cohesion. No action helps create a climate for group violence and manipulation.

With their rich Theological and Spiritual background, United Church of Canada members would bring in depth understandings of “right relations” to Eastern Ontario. This would result in a major impact by the UCC in this region.

What are the benefits of joining CCMARD?

Pastoral Charges working with Municipalities who join the program would benefit in several ways. These benefits include: increased access to a network of municipalities throughout Eastern Ontario that promote the sharing of best practices and resources to combat racism and other forms of discrimination; strengthened partnerships with local organizations, businesses and individuals concerned about discrimination; increased sustainability and documentation of anti-discrimination initiatives through the creation and implementation of a Plan of Action that is approved and adopted by Council. Bay of Quinte United Churches would have a strengthened capacity in efforts to foster equality and respect for all citizens. They would be working with a major arm of the local communities, and have the capacity to influence public opinion and bring diverse interests together for the common good.

“CCMARD is about the people, and how a local initiative has an impact at the local, national and international level. It is also about how members of the community can influence programmes and policies to improve the daily lives of their fellow citizens.”

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could encourage its Pastoral Charges to work with their local municipalities toward joining UNESCO’s Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) program.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 9B to the General Council, with approval.

GCE 16 MIGRANT CHURCH: MIGRATION

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

Migration is the movement of peoples; today there are over 200 million people on the move across the globe. The majority of these experiences of displacement have been forced by external circumstances and gives rise to human exploitation. The plight of migrants continues to be one of the greatest issues facing our world today. The urgency of this situation demands that faith communities respond.

2. Why is this issue important?

There is no current UCC policy on migration. Many sectors of society including The United Nations and The World Council of Churches, have named migration to be of critical importance in our time. There is a tension between the global and the local realities of migration. As an example, there are over 640 000 temporary foreign workers in the Canadian context alone. The local reality can only be healthy if we attend to the global issues that affect migration.

Scripture is filled with stories of migration, one such being the exodus story. The people of Israel were in a situation of servitude to the dominant power out of fear of the other and economic gain. The UCC 1988 Refugee Policy also reminds us that the prophets called God's people to care for the refugees and sojourners in their midst and states that the biblical witness is clear; hospitality to strangers, sanctuary to the endangered, love for neighbours, justice for the persecuted and oppressed, protection for the weak and homeless all embody the vision of shalom God intended for creation.

We are a migrant church and migrants bring tremendous gifts for being the body of Christ in our time and place.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Adopt the following principles:

- 1) Human dignity and all human rights for all migrants, refugees, and uprooted peoples.**
- 2) Forced migration is about real human beings.**
- 3) Freedom of movement is a protected human right.**
- 4) Forced and enforced movement is entangled with historic injustices.**
- 5) Forced migration requires a just, durable and sustainable solution.**
- 6) Nothing about migrants without migrants in any venue and level of negotiation.**

- 7) **Migration requires a commitment to offering Pastoral care from the welcoming communities.**
- 8) **Migration is an opportunity for mutual transformation.**

As a result of adopting these principles, the Executive General Council and the 43rd General Council might consider:

- **Directing the General Secretary, General Council to:**
 - (a) **develop resources for communities of faith to engage with issues of migration;**
 - (b) **in partnership with KAIROS, Churches Witnessing with Migrants (CWWM), World Council of Churches (WCC), Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and ACT Alliance, develop advocacy strategies to address:**
 - a. **root causes of forced migration;**
 - b. **systemic issues which contribute to the challenges facing migrants such as racism, racial and gender justice, inclusion of women, LGBTQI2+ Rights, White privilege, colonialism, human trafficking and the culture of suspicion.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Appendix: 6 Principles of CWWM Berlin Statement 2017

1. HUMAN DIGNITY AND ALL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND UPROOTED PEOPLES. All human beings have inherent human dignity and protected human rights. Human dignity is inviolable; and all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. All human rights are migrant, refugee, and uprooted peoples' rights. Their dignity and human rights are primordial over any other considerations be it in their familial, community, social, economic, political, or cultural relations. The protections guaranteed by the international regime of human rights and humanitarian principles, as well as human development arising from international treaties, conventions and protocols, generate legally binding obligations that accrue to migrants, refugees, and all uprooted peoples. The fulfillment of these obligations must be open and inclusive, transparent and accountable.

2. FORCED MIGRATION IS ABOUT REAL HUMAN BEINGS. Forced migration is a human tragedy affecting real human beings, with real emotions and human relationships with friends, families and communities. Our solidarities and advocacies must focus on the actual, material, concrete, sensuous human bodies of migrants, refugees, and all uprooted peoples, including asylum seekers and stateless peoples, and how their human bodies respond to assaults on their dignity and violations of their human rights as they negotiate the workings of labor, capital and the market. Witnessing with and among them must include the rejection of the objectification and commodification of their lives and bodies, and the exploitation and commoditization of their labor and services. Other concerns include contemporary realities such as xenophobia, racial discrimination, intolerance, and the toll on the human body and the planet due to extractivism, predatory capitalism, and global warming (climate change).

3. **FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS A PROTECTED HUMAN RIGHT.** People and things have always been on the move. Movement and mobility are natural characteristics of life. Freedom of movement is a protected human right. Migration must be an option arising from choice. Forced and enforced migration, within countries and across international borders are violations of human rights. Wars and ongoing conflicts, including those arising from political persecution and religious and cultural intolerance around the world, have resulted into forced migration, creating unprecedented numbers and massive movement of refugees and uprooting of peoples. The uneven development of economies and labor export policies of certain countries have resulted into forced movement of peoples seeking employment and other economic opportunities. We must put to stop the scourge of human smuggling and trafficking in persons that occur along the path and chain of migration and mobility.

4. **FORCED AND ENFORCED MOVEMENT IS ENTANGLED WITH HISTORIC INJUSTICES.** Forced and enforced migration have deep historic roots and entanglements in slavery and colonialism, and in racism and genocide. The historic injustices that arose from these entanglements saddle the complicated nature of forced and enforced migration today. The legacy of these ignominious historical events bequeathed the current generation and milieu an unprecedented and devastating experience of oppression, exploitation, persecution, and psychosocial trauma, complicating even more so the experience and situation of migrants, refugees, and all uprooted peoples. People in situations of forced migration, involuntary displacement and forcible uprooting are affected many times over by migration that is increasingly globalized, securitized, militarized, ethnicized, racialized, sexualized, gendered, and criminalized. They experience multiple challenges: socially and psychologically traumatized, economically exploited, politically oppressed, and culturally marginalized (women, children, Indigenous peoples, stateless peoples, and LGBTQI persons as vulnerable populations in the migration chain).

5. **FORCED MIGRATION REQUIRES A JUST, DURABLE AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION.** A just, durable and sustainable development that will truly eliminate forced migration must focus on freeing peoples from poverty and hunger and protecting the planet. It must also address the uneven economic development and structural inequalities within and among countries, including the plunder and exploitation of natural and human resources, and attendant practices and policies of extractivism and development aggression. Addressing the above includes providing for the immediate need of migrants, refugees and uprooted peoples for goods and services that tend to their wellbeing and survival (hospitality, accompaniment and acts of mercy). It also includes a strategic visioning for how to achieve development justice whose pillars include redistributive justice, economic justice, social justice, environmental justice, and accountability to the people (solidarity and acts of justice).

6. **NOTHING ABOUT MIGRANTS WITHOUT MIGRANTS IN ANY VENUE AND LEVEL OF NEGOTIATION.** Migrants, refugees and uprooted peoples must be involved in great numbers and in all venues and platforms throughout the full timeline of the negotiations of a “global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration”, and the “Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.” Their full participation gives meaning to the intention to develop and abide by “open, transparent and inclusive modalities”. The United Nations, especially the expertise of its

human rights, humanitarian and labor treaty bodies, and other multilateral (regional and international) bodies, must work in concert with the wide spectrum of migrant/refugee/asylum seeker/uprooted and stateless peoples, communities, service organizations, civil society and advocacy groups. Ensure democratic, representative and accountable governance at all times and in all levels. No negotiation must proceed and conclude without the robust participation and engagement, including the democratic access—physical and political—by all stakeholders. The same principles, modalities and mechanisms hold true with respect to our engagement with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

The Migrant Church working group recommends the addition of 2 other principles:

7. **MIGRATION REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO OFFERING PASTORAL CARE FROM THE WELCOMING COMMUNITIES.** Pastoral care has been one of the pillars of support as we respond to the needs of migrants. The church is called to welcome the migrant and to offer pastoral care and support. Pastoral care involves radical welcome and real support. It recognized that the forced nature of migration has caused trauma in the life of the migrant and this trauma must be attended to. Authentic pastoral care attends not only to the basic needs of the migrants including helping to provide space to gather as community, it also attends to the various challenges, and rigorous advocacy. It is both giving and receiving. The church welcomes the gifts of caring and support that migrants offer to all of us. In receiving we are enriched, enabled, and empowered.

8. **MIGRATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MUTUAL TRANSFORMATION:** Migration continues to shape and transform the church. As church we are broken; we are not whole. We need to name and celebrate the gifts of migrants within the faith community as part of who we are and not just what we do. Everyone has a migration story and these stories continue to transform who we are.

“We sing of a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ’s presence in the world. We are called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and place.”

SK 5 LIVING INTO TRANSFORMATION: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY AS AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to...

- Rejoice in a diverse faith inspired by the promise of Pentecost,
- Know that diverse people are God’s gifts,
- Know that God cherishes all people, and that all people are created in the image of God,
- Lament the loss of momentum created by national intercultural events such as Behold! and Sounding the Bamboo, and,
- Lament the current focus on church finances, and not on God’s mission.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because...

- The United Church of Canada is in the midst of structural changes, and,
- Wants all people to participate fully in the work of the church.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council might respond to this issue by...

- **Ensuring that the admissions process for The United Church of Canada contain information sharing on issues such as Indigenous justice and LGBT2Q+ issues, and, at least one racialized member of the interviewing team in each region; and**
- **Request that each of the Regions consider including regular gatherings for racialized leaders in their structure and budget.**
- **Put a process in place to voluntarily request receiving and sharing names of those who consider themselves racialized to be administered by Conference/Regional and General Council Offices**
- **Require that all Regions hold newcomer’s events with provision to invite at least one racialized resource person**
- **Strongly encourage intercultural ministries and racialized and minoritized ministers to submit articles for the Minute for Mission and other national church resources;**
- **Require that each Region, as part of its emerging identity, create their contextual vision for intercultural work. This requirement is because The United Church of Canada emphasizes living into being “a relational church [which] treasures the different contexts that God gives to different communities...valu[ing] diverse expressions of faith,”¹ and because all parts of the church are invited to be “honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry.”**

¹ The United Church of Canada, Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church, adopted by General Council Executive October 2012 as part of the report “Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation.”

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

No.

THEME: LEADERSHIP**GCE 6 FORMATION FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP****Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)****1. What is the issue?**

General Council 42 referred the report of The Working Group on Leadership for Ministry (competency based approach) to the General Secretary for further work.

2. Why is this issue important?

“We are called to be the Church.” *A Song of Faith* states that “in the church, some are called to specific ministries of leadership, both lay and ordered.” How best do we prepare and form people for these leadership roles?

We believe that God calls people into the church for the sake of the world. Some of those whom God calls are called to exercise their ministry in and for the church. Effective leadership in the Church requires basic knowledge and skills and also certain habits and ways of being. From time to time the church has considered what is required for effective leadership in terms of knowledge, skills, and habits or ways of being. From time to time the Church has also considered how best to prepare persons in the acquisition of such knowledge and skills and in the formation of those habits or ways of being.

The most recent United Church consideration was a report and a Proposal to General Council 42 by The Working Group on Leadership for Ministry. Among other things, that Working Group’s report called for a competency-based approach to leadership formation t asserted “that assessing the academic readiness and competence for leadership in ministry and mission is a core responsibility of the church, and...that the tradition of naming specific schools as testamur-granting be discontinued.” After discussion, General Council 42 referred the Proposal back to the General Secretary for further work. The General Secretary arranged for a Task Group (the Competency-based Assessment Task Group) to be formed to respond to that referral. The Task Group’s report is found at (insert link to GCE Workbook, November, 2017), with a one-page Executive Summary of that report following this proposal.

3. How might the General Council respond to this issue?

Receive the Competency-Based Assessment Task Group’s Report found on pages 101–114 of the November 2017 General Council Executive Workbook (<https://commons.united-church.ca>) and approve its recommendations as follows:

- 1) That it be acknowledged the journey to, and the exercise of, effective church leadership has four components—Call, Credentialing, Competency and Assessment, and Continuing Education—extending over an individual’s entire ministry.**
- 2) That for the Credentialing component of this process the Church, in conversation with the Testamur-granting schools, continue to determine the general areas it sees as**

crucial for the course of study, leaving to the schools responsibility for developing the details of the course of study and the carrying out of instructional responsibility.

- 3) That the current practice be continued, for candidates for ordained and diaconal ministry, of the granting of Testamur by the United Church-related schools as the indication that the individual has completed satisfactorily the course of study determined, from time to time, by the United Church.
- 4) a) That conversations take place from time to time between the Testamur-granting schools and the appropriate Church bodies to ensure clear guidelines to enable the schools to be consistent in determining what further work will be required of persons who have done some or all of their Credentialing at a non-United Church-related theological school, have other theological degrees or, in the case of those preparing for diaconal ministry, theological preparation other than the Diploma issued either by the Centre for Christian Studies or by the Sandy Salteaux Spiritual Centre.
b) That, given the existence of clear and consistent guidelines developed through these conversations, persons preparing for church leadership who have done some or all of their Credentialing at a non-United Church-related school be able to approach a Testamur-granting school directly to see what further work will be required for a Testamur.

There will no longer be a need to work through General Council staff for permission to pursue an “alternative route” to Credentialing.

- 5) That the Testamur-granting schools, insofar as it is possible for them in their particular settings, use or continue to use Prior Learning Assessment as a way of validating appropriate formation work a student may have done prior to attending a theological school.
- 6) That it be acknowledged that the Church is the decision-making body in the Call, Competency Development and Assessment, and Continuing Education components.

In making this recommendation the Task Group is aware that at St. Andrew’s College and in the Summer Distance Master of Divinity program at the Atlantic School of Theology, Supervised Ministry Education has been integrated into the Testamur requirements. In these two programmes, there is close co-operation between the school and the relevant church assessment bodies. That close co-operation notwithstanding, judgement as to whether an individual has satisfactorily completed the Supervised Ministry Education requirement lies finally with the requisite Church assessment body.

- 7) That conversations regarding formal Church involvement with Field Placements take place with the Centre for Christian Studies as a part of the implementation of Candidacy Pathway.

At the Centre for Christian Studies, candidates for diaconal ministry serve in Field Placements throughout their Diploma programme. At present, there is no formal Church involvement in these placements.

- 8) That there be continuing and close conversations between the Church and theological schools currently preparing candidates for ordained ministry through integrated programs that include the Supervised Ministry Education requirement, and those where such an integration is being considered.**
- 9) These conversations would have with the goal of clarifying ways of meeting the learning objectives and needs both of the schools and the Church.**
- 10) That the implementation of Candidacy Pathway include as normative for candidates for ordination a two-year Supervised Ministry Education experience and that the framework of Supervised Ministry Education be enhanced to include a rigorous evaluation by the Church of a person's competency for ministry.**
- 11) That the United Church-related schools, when opportunities for hiring new faculty members present themselves, continue to bear in mind the desirability of expanding further the ethnic and cultural diversity of their faculties in order that the faculty might more fully reflect both the Canadian reality and the desire of the United Church to become and to be an Intercultural Church.**
- 12) That United Church committees assessing those at various points in the process for Church Leadership endeavour to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Canadian reality and the desire of the United Church to become and to be an Intercultural Church.**
- 13) That those exercising leadership in the church be held accountable through the Office of Vocation for undertaking such continuing education as will help to maintain and to develop further their competencies for ministry, particularly given changes in context and new situations of ministry in which they might find themselves.**
- 14) That the Admissions Task Group consider the challenge faced by immigrant congregations with a serving minister who wish to become part of the United Church but whose minister does not meet the Church's educational standards, and if the Admissions Committee is not able to address this matter that a Task Group be appointed to consider it.**

4. Comments from the Task Group:

The 42nd General Council passed a motion (GC 42 2015-075) asking the General Secretary to do further work on a proposal from an earlier Working Group and to report to General Council 43. The recommendations and accompanying report of the Task Group represent the best wisdom of the Task Group concerning the formation of persons, in the present time and context, for ministerial leadership in The United Church of Canada.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work?

GC42 GCE 11: Competency-Based Assessment

Executive Summary

Competency-Based Assessment Task Group Report

The Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry presented a Proposal entitled “Faithful, Effective and Learned Leaders for the Church We are Becoming: Competency-Based Approach to Ministerial Education” to the 42nd General Council. The General Council referred that proposal back “to the General Secretary for further work and to report back to the 43rd General Council.”

A Task Group was established in 2017 to work on this referral. It included two members of the former Working Group, the heads of two United Church-related theological schools, two other persons with strong educational involvement and also extensive experience in the courts of the United Church, and two staff members.

The Task Group found it helpful to think of four components through which candidates for ministerial leadership in the Church find their way to a lifetime of service: Call, Credentialing, Competency and Assessment, and Continuing Education. The first three of these components are not sequential and may happen at various points on a person’s journey. In some programs of preparation, some of these components may be integrated.

In considering these four components, the Church has responsibility for assessing an individual’s call, their suitability and readiness for ordination/commission/recognition, and the adequacy of their ongoing continuing education in light of the situations in which they minister. The Church has historically understood that its theological schools play a central role in formation for leadership as places where Credentialing takes place. In the field-based programmes, the Credentialing component and the Competency Development and Assessment component are woven together.

The Task Group agrees with many of the challenges the previous Working Group named. However, it sees more flexibility than did the previous Working Group in how the United Church-related schools can administer the church’s required program of study. The Task Group sees Supervised Ministry Education as a key component for addressing some of the challenges the previous Working Group identified for those pursuing ordination and likewise thinks that Field Placements can do the same thing for those seeking commissioning as Diaconal Ministers. These conclusions, and a pattern of regular conversations between the church and the United Church-related schools to ensure the development and application of clear guidelines for programs of study, have led the Task Group to make the recommendations found in the Proposal.

Members of the Task Group were: James Ball, Neale Bennet, Lorne Calvert, Deborah Laforet, Bob Lockhart, and Louise Rogers. Robin McGauley and John H. Young served as staff to the Task Group.

THEME: MINISTRY PERSONNEL**BC 4 CREATIVE RIGHTS****Origin: British Columbia Conference****1. What is the issue?**

Under current Canadian copyright law, ministry personnel serving in congregations are considered to be under “contract of service.” In such situations, the Copyright act (Section 13(3)) deems the employer to be the “first owner of the copyright.”

At the moment, the congregation holds the decision-making power about what can and cannot be shared, and under what circumstances.

2. Why is this issue important?

Many ministry personnel are creatives, who wish to share their creative work with a larger community than the congregation/ministry unit with whom they serve. (For example, sharing their liturgical resources with *Gathering*, or publishing their sermons.)

In an era when the financial resources for creating congregational programs/liturgical works/ etc. are diminishing, it becomes even more important that we make it easy to share developed resources. When copyright is held by the congregation/ministry unit, additional steps are required to get permission to share that creative work outside of the congregation. (Although this permission is often assumed, when ministry personnel wish to publish their creative work in a commercial setting, it becomes vitally important to secure copyright.)

As well, more ministry personnel are finding themselves in part-time and concurrent calls or appointments with multiple pastoral charges/ministry units. This leads to confusion about who “owns” the work, or about who decides what of the ministry personnel’s creative work can be shared between the different congregations.

Not taking action on this issue would mean that ministry personnel would continue to negotiate, congregation by congregation, assignment of copyright.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could direct the mandatory assigning of copyright to ministry personnel at time of call/appointment, by including a statement on the call/appointment form.

For example, “The copyright interest, either economic or moral, in any work created by [name of ministry personnel] or any two or more ministry personnel settled called/ appointed to the congregation during the term of their call, appointment or employment is assigned to the Author or Authors of the work. [Name of pastoral charge/ministry unit] shall have a license to use or reproduce such work without additional payment of fee or

other restriction during the term of the call, appointment or employment and afterwards for its day to day purposes as a pastoral charge/ministry unit of The United Church of Canada, but shall not have a license to share the work, or to use the work for commercial purposes.”

M&O 4 MANDATORY TRAINING FOR ALL UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MINISTRY PERSONNEL Origin: Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to strengthen the Church’s response to the LGBTQ2 community through mandatory training to sensitize United Church of Canada ministry personnel to the issues faced by this community in the Church and in the world. This is especially important, since the pace of societal change is rapid in this area, and not all ministry personnel are in a position to be well versed on current issues.

2. Why is this issue important?

At stake here are fundamentals of the United Church’s faith and policy.

The United Church of Canada seeks to stand for justice, and to actively oppose discrimination in all forms.

According to a statement made at the 40th General Council in 2009, “in matters of doctrine, worship, membership and governance, The United Church of Canada is opposed to discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, language, marital status, place of origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other basis by which a person is devalued.”

Out of its commitment to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies, organizations and other bodies that operate under its name, the United Church has sought to establish policies and systems that insure due diligence and training are in place. These include mandatory training for all ministry personnel in the area of Racial Justice (implemented in 2006) and prevention of sexual abuse, and the Sexual Abuse Policy of The United Church of Canada (implemented in 2010).

However, to date, there is no widespread system to sensitize and inform ministry personnel about the current issues that surround gender identity, sexual orientation, and in particular, those issues that affect the lives of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer-questioning, two-spirited (LGBTQ2) brothers and sisters, their families of origin, and the families they have created.

These issues, and the discrimination that arises around them, are amongst the most hidden within our society. This is not just in “general society,” but hidden homophobia exists in many loci in society, for instance in medicine¹ and education.²

To be true to its own accepted standards, The United Church of Canada, through its General Council, should mandate all ministry personal to undergo a workshop that introduces the current struggles of the LGBTQ community, and brings to light how homophobia may be at work in our church community and society.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

As a further step along the pathway of making the United Church a safe and welcoming community of faith, we propose that the General Council develops a curriculum, and implements mandatory training that will explore issues surrounding homophobia, and sensitize its ministry personnel to how homophobia affects the life and work of the church, in order to stop homophobia from being promulgated.

The parameters of Mandated Training for all clergy/paid accountable ministers, should be extended to training workshops dedicated to the issues, concerns and consequences of homophobia towards our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer-questioning, two-spirited (LGBTQ2) brothers and sisters, and to their families of origin and families created, in an effort to help The United Church of Canada continue to live out its principles and engagement with justice and to facilitate an end to homophobia being promulgated in the church.

As the church seeks to formally apologize to the LBGTQ2 community, the implementation of a policy dedicated to combatting further harm on the part of the church is a step in honoring its commitment.

The time frame to develop and implement the training is not to exceed a two-year period.

We ask that the General Council support this proposal to help ensure we honour the commitment to ensure the well-being of all who form the Body of Christ and work to continue to break down barriers and build right relationships and just institutions.

¹ Keisa Fallin-Bennett, MD, MPH, “Implicit Bias Against Sexual Minorities in Medicine: Cycles of Professional Influence and the Role of the Hidden Curriculum,” in *Academic Medicine: The Journal of the Academic Medicine Colleges*. Volume 90: Issue 5; May 2015, pp. 549–552.

“The cycle of bias and the hidden curriculum:

The persistence of bias against LGBT people in academic medicine contexts—which resists the trend toward societal acceptance of sexual minorities—is likely related to this tendency of implicit biases to create multiple self-perpetuating cycles that are manifested via norms of professional behavior and expectations.”

² Gerald Walton, *The Hidden Curriculum in Schools: Implications for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth*, in *Alternate Routes*, Volume 21, 2005, pp. 18–39.

MNWO 5 MOVING EXPENSES FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

1. What is the Issue?

The ability of some pastoral charges to pay Moving Expenses has resulted in limited distribution/mobility of trained Ministry Personnel to fill vacancies across the United Church.

2. Why is this issue important?

As a church we train Ministry Personnel for the denomination as a whole and the UCC has policies that ensure portability of Ministry Personnel across the church so that the ministry needs across the church are able to be met in a fair manner.

The UCC congregations/pastoral charges in some areas of the country (and Bermuda) are reliant upon the movement of Ministry Personnel significant distances. This reliance is increasing with increasing numbers of Ministry Personnel retiring in some areas and a decreased number of persons discerning and training for Diaconal Ministry/Ordained Ministry or Designated Lay Ministry.

Some pastoral charges who are able to afford salary and other costs on an ongoing basis are not able to afford the one time costs related to a significant move in the same year they are also paying costs related to search processes.

Access to financial assistance for moving ministry personnel is crucial.

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

1 Corinthians 12.... The interconnectedness of the body of Christ, the church, and our understanding of the stewardship of the resources across the church, would support the development of policies and processes that would encourage the just sharing of resources, both human and financial across the United Church of Canada where and when possible.

What is the history/background of this issue?

There exists as part of the Mission Support Grant System, a fund entitled "Moving Expenses: Pastoral Charges and Community Ministries" the objective of which is "to share the costs of moves within Canada with pastoral charges or community ministries with modest income and small membership, including those designated by Conference as isolated ministries." Monies are shared according to a formula (first \$1,500 from the charge or mission unit; next \$8000.00 40% is the responsibility of the Pastoral Charge or mission unit and up to 60% will be considered by the Financial Support Group (FSG) from the Mission Support Grant Common Fund; over \$9000.00 is the responsibility of the pastoral charge or mission unit. The monies for this fund come from the Common Fund which may have a bit of money in it after June 1 but more likely has funds only after November 15 after Conferences have returned to General Council any Mission Support Grant monies assigned to them that have not been used. The guidelines for the fund are in the *Financial Resources Handbook*:

The absence of moving assistance in the form of a grant or a loan at points throughout the year when moves may get approved or happen more frequently i.e. for July 1, September 1 or January 1; means those pastoral charges or community ministries may not be able to access ministry personnel that are the best match for their pastoral relationship. It is not a good stewardship practice for presbyteries/Conferences/regions to permit a pastoral relationship to begin based on the “hope” that there will be funding available for Moving Assistance later in the calendar year as the risk is that if the charge does not receive moving assistance they will not be able to pay salary and other expenses and have to give notice to end the pastoral relationship. This has actually happened in the Conference of MNWO.

The Transfer and Settlement System, which had its final round in Spring 2018, used to present an option for those congregations/pastoral charges with limited resources to access ministry personnel by having an established contribution by the pastoral charges to the costs regardless of the cost of the move or the resources of the pastoral charge.

An additional concern is with changing structures there may be no such centralized fund and each Conference/Region will be left to set aside funds for moving assistance from within the designated amount of their own Mission Support grant allocation, not necessarily sharing the responsibility/burden of this matter across the church. The definition of “modest income and small membership” may mean that some who have the issue of finding the lump sum for moving costs are not eligible for assistance.

3. How might the church respond?

The General Council could ensure the Moving Expense: Pastoral Charges and Community Ministries continues to exist as a denominational fund and ensure funding assistance is available throughout the year by having a balance from January 1 of at least the amount that was previously available for moves within the Transfer & Settlement processes. Monies could come from the Mission and Service Fund.

The General Council could ensure that when Mission Support Grant monies are divided up between the Conferences/Regions those divisions include some monies based on the number of “modest income and small membership” pastoral charges or Mission Units likely to be engaged in a change in pastoral relations during that calendar year or some other formula or criteria that seems reasonable and just (like that used for the former travel equalization grant).

MNWO 6 APPOINTMENTS OF CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTERS

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

1. What is the issue?

The Manual states:

“A Pastoral charge may appoint a person as a ‘congregational designated minister’ if the Presbytery has designated the ministry position as one that is accountable to the governing body of the pastoral charge. The following requirements apply:

- a) The person must be a baptized Christian*
- b) The person must agree to comply with the polity of the United Church*
- c) The appointment must be for a specified term, which may be renewed and*
- d) There must also be a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge.*

A congregational designated minister is accountable to the governing body except in matters of discipline. They are accountable to the presbytery in matters of discipline.”

The Manual 2016 I:1.8.4 (d) (there must also be a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister settled in or appointed to the pastoral charge) presents a hardship for many Pastoral Charges in that it prevents the hiring of trained leadership (Congregational Designated Minister) in situations where Pastoral Charges have declared vacancies and are waiting for Order of Ministry or Designated Lay Ministers to be called or appointed, or where Pastoral Charges are not able to call or appoint Order of Ministry or Designated Lay Ministers due to their financial situation and/or location.

Congregations small or large, rich or with financial hardship, in city or rural locations deserve to be served by those who have training in specific areas.

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to respond to this challenge in a way that

- a) supports pastoral charges,
- b) offers recognition to those gifted by God for supporting pastoral charges in an area of ministry that the congregation feels less than capable to do on a voluntary basis,
- c) recognizes that accountability is vital.

2. Why is this issue important?

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

Currently the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario has 72 pastoral charges that do not have an Ordered or Designated Lay Minister settled or appointed to the pastoral charge. These are viable pastoral charges worshipping and doing God’s work in their communities. Many of these pastoral charges have been actively searching for at least a year for ministry personnel. Many are searching for someone on a less than full time basis and/or in beginning salary categories. While there are ordered ministers and designated lay ministers, recognized, actively looking for call or appointment in some Conferences, they are not able to relocate where the need is. Other pastoral charges are not able to attract applicants because of their

financial situation. Many are at least 90 km in distance from each other, making a multiple point charge unfavourable for both the pastoral charge and a minister.

There are other Conferences who face similar problems.

We are all gifted and skilled, some of us in the more challenging areas such as Pastoral Care, Worship Leadership,...regardless of the ability to attract Ordered or Designated Lay Ministers or financial status of a pastoral charge (some where vacancies have been declared), the wider church views the viability of these pastoral charges as positive and must find ways to support these pastoral charges.

If a congregation must have a called or appointed minister on their charge to appoint a Congregational Designated Minister, congregations without are treated unfairly.

Pastoral charges need leadership to move into God's mission with energy and guidance.

The wider body (Presbytery and Conference) to whom these congregations are responsible is huge, and travel is often unsafe especially in the winter. Congregations in these more remote areas (remote means from the wider body offices and staff, and distance from other pastoral charges with whom they might share) need Congregational Designated Ministers as sole staff focussing on one specific area of ministry (working within the guidelines specified by the church).

There appears to be a scarcity of ministers willing to accept the opportunity to move into these pastoral charges. A Congregational Designated Minister(s) in this situation provides trained support to the charge.

1 Corinthians 12 speaks of the spiritual gifts shared by all of us with the reminder that the body is responsible for all parts. It is our understanding that "where two or three" gather to worship, praise and enter into God's mission, there is viable ministry. The United Church must find a way to provide staff holding gifts and skills in all of these places. Currently, the only way for these pastoral charges to appoint someone with gifts and skills for the work is to have an ordered minister or a designated lay minister called or appointed already. Without someone in a ministry stream at the pastoral charge, this means that the work can only be done voluntarily by perhaps less than skilled and gifted people who are not accountable for their work, or tired volunteers who readily admit they are not doing the best.

What is the history/background of this issue?

Many of these congregations were Missions or Settlement Charges when Settlement was an option. In the 20th century, churches were attended and supported by a greater number of people allowing for the call or appointment of ministers. Earlier in the history of the United Church, ministers entered the ministry earlier in life and were not restricted to larger centres by special circumstances and the expectation was that they would be settled to their first call or appointment.

Proposals that were sent through the Conference of MNWO by Cambrian Presbytery in 2012 resulted in the General Council directing the General Secretary to develop policy defining the purpose and role of congregational designated Ministers and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for inclusion in the by-laws and submit to GC42. The results did NOT eliminate the requirement for a Settled or Appointed Minister to be present in order that a CDM be hired and the restriction still remained.

What are the principles informing this issue?

Questions informing this issue are:

- a) What makes viable ministry?
- b) Can viable ministry grow and continue without leadership/followership?
- c) How can we encourage accountable, gifted, and skilled leadership where people do not feel called into all aspects of streams of ministry?

3. How might the church respond?

The General Council could change the polity so that a Pastoral charge may appoint a person as a “congregational designated minister” if the Pastoral Charge Supervisor appointed by presbytery, an Ordered Minister or a Designated Lay Minister Recognized, is assigned the responsibility of overseeing the work of the Congregational Designated Minister and reporting to Presbytery as well as the pastoral charge.

The General Council could change the polity so that a Pastoral charge may appoint a person as a “congregational designated minister” if the congregational designated minister is accountable through an agreement made with another pastoral charge that has an Ordered or Designated Lay Pastoral Minister Recognized for supervision and accountability purposes.

The General Council could change the polity so that a Pastoral charge may appoint a person as a “congregational designated minister” if the congregational designated minister is accountable to the governing body of the Pastoral charge.

MNWO 7 EQUAL PAY FOR DESIGNATED LAY MINISTERS**Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario****1. What is the Issue?**

We believe God is calling us to acknowledge that the work of Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs) is equivalent to the work of ordered ministry personnel, and that the difference in the minimum pay schedule for DLM/Ordered Ministry has the possibility of DLMs being made to feel that their ministry is less than that of their Diaconal and Ordained peers.

2. Why is this issue important?***What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?***

We feel that our denomination holds special concern around justice issues, and that the lower minimum pay that is required for DLM who were deemed qualified to, expected to, and do fill the same role as ordered ministry is an injustice that should be corrected. If the One Order of Ministry Remit had passed, the pay equity issue would have been addressed. Since it has failed, we felt that the issue of pay inequity should be addressed.

What is the history/background of this issue?

Diaconal and Ordained ministers are not paid more automatically if they have a post graduate degree. So why do we pay less for a different form of education that we consider qualifies Designated Lay Ministers to fill the same jobs as Diaconal and Ordained ministers in the United Church? Often Designated Lay Ministers are serving in rural and remote congregations where we have large numbers of vacancies left unfilled.

What are the principles informing this issue?

The difference in the minimum pay scale for Designated Lay Ministers is marginal, \$1100–\$1400 annually as compared to their Ordained and Diaconal colleagues, therefore we feel that this is not an issue of affordability for congregations, or being able to afford more tuition and years of school costs for the other ministry streams, but ensuring that Designated Lay Ministers are made to feel that their ministry is equally valued to that of their peers.

What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?

That Designated Lay Ministers may continue to be viewed as providing a “lesser” form of ministry, rather than feeling valued and equal for the vitally important ministry these people provide in our congregations.

1. How might the church respond?

The General Council could harmonize the minimum pay scale for Diaconal, Ordained and Designated Lay Ministry.

SK 1 SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ACCESSIBILITY

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to...

- Co-create a world where: the vulnerable are protected; those with power understand the parameters of their power and exercise it to the benefit of others; human sexuality becomes a reason to celebrate our Creator and not a reason for shame at our human selves; people of different languages and cultures from God's church in every part of this world come together to share and work towards this vision of the kingdom of God;
- Work together with ministers engaging in ministry with The United Church of Canada from our mutual recognition partner denominations in the US, Philippines, and Korea;
- Prepare "Boundaries for Church Leaders" mandatory training that includes translations of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures (SMRPP) to meet the specific needs of ministers from our mutual recognition partner denominations and their communities in understanding the SMRPP of the UCC.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because...

- We strive to be an intercultural church;
- Ministers and members representing non-dominant cultures are often not accommodated or are neglected when it comes to education regarding important policies of the United Church;
- The SMRPP is one of the most important policy developments of the UCC in the past two decades that has the potential to prevent and minimize the damage of cases of sexual misconduct in the church;
- Special attention is required to make sure that ministers seeking admission from other denominations, particularly our mutual recognition partner denominations (PROK, UCCP and the UCC USA) and the congregations they serve, have access to and training in the SMRPP policy that accommodates linguistic and cultural understanding;
- Experience in Saskatchewan Conference where there has been a strong SMRPP training program for many years suggests that racialized, linguistic and ethnic minorities are not adequately represented in leadership and challenged to access the SMRPP in a way that accommodates differences of language and culture.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council might respond to this issue by...

- 1. Providing translation of the SMRPP into the Korean language for PROK ministers entering into ministry with the UCC, as well as Korean congregants of the UCC.**

2. **Providing translation of the SMPRPP into the Filipino (Tagalog) language for UCCP ministers entering into ministry with the UCC, as well as congregants of the UCC who speak Filipino.**
3. **Provide special, culturally specific “Boundaries for Church Leaders” training webinars for significant ethnic and linguistic groups in the UCC, especially for those from our mutual recognition partner denominations.**
4. **Ensure that the UCC’s pool of national consultants under the SMPRPP includes consultants from and familiar with the cultures and languages of mutual recognition partner denominations and other significant ethnic/linguistic minorities of the church.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there any comments, affirmations, suggestions that the Conference would like to make with respect to this proposal?

No.

SK 3 ELIMINATING APPOINTMENTS FOR DESIGNATED LAY MINISTERS

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs) are appointed to communities of faith with terms of 1 to 3 years depending on where they are serving. In one Conference it was 5 years. These ministry personnel and the congregations they serve are in a constant mode of re-appointments leaving both feeling the burden of paperwork. Uncertainty is always in the midst of the covenant relationship. There is inconsistency across the United Church in the terms of these appointments and in the length of the appointments.

2. Why is this issue important?

At the time when the ministry of Lay Pastoral Ministers (LPMs) and, prior to that, Lay Ministers were established, it was for a local, short-term fill-in. Some were also appointed as youth ministers or in areas of social justice. In the past couple of decades in many areas of the church, the relationships between DLMs and the communities of faith they serve have been on-going long-term covenants. The reality today is that many DLMs now serve as the only minister in the congregation, offering worship, pastoral care, sacraments and all other functions of ministry offered by ordained and diaconal ministers. There are also more communities of faith than there are ministry personnel seeking a call in many parts of the country, and so the previous need to ensure that all Ordered Ministry Personnel would have a place is no longer relevant. DLMs move across conference and presbytery boundaries serving in not just rural and remote communities of faith but in urban settings.

In the *Song of Faith*, it states: “We offer worship as an outpouring of gratitude and awe and a practice of opening ourselves to God’s still, small voice of comfort, to God’s rushing whirlwind of challenge. Through word, music, art, and sacrament, in community and in solitude, God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.”

DLMs have felt like their gifts for ministry have not been upheld and at times undervalued by the Church, partly due to the Church allowing them only to have an appointment. DLMs are called to serve the church by God. That call is responded to through their appointments to paid accountable ministry where they perform the same work as their colleagues in the Order of Ministry streams. When responding to an invitation to serve a pastoral charge, both the DLM and the pastoral charge hope and expect to continue long-term pastorates which build community and relationship. The covenantal relationship between a DLM and the Pastoral Charge is not taken lightly; however short-term appointments put into question the reality and seriousness of that covenantal relationship.

The United Church of Canada has a long and proud history of supporting those who are otherwise disadvantaged. We strive to seek justice for all God’s people. This is a justice issue. This is not about education, ordination or compensation. It is about both the ministry personnel and the congregation being treated fairly by the church and recognising that DLMs have been called by God to ministry in The United Church of Canada and therefore should be called and not appointed to a community of faith.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the General Council stop the use of appointments for DLMs and allow them to be called into a community of faith except in circumstances of retired supply, intentional interim ministry and where in the joint needs assessment committee (JNAC) report a community of faith is asking for a short term appointment for reasons described in the JNAC report.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

No.

THEME: REMIT IMPLEMENTATION**ANW 8 PRIORITIZING CLUSTERS AND NETWORKS****Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe that our connectional understanding of being church calls for the prioritization of support at the denominational level for the formation of clusters and networks within the Three-Council Model, in keeping with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review Task Group which considered clusters and networks to be “central to the living out of our faith.”

2. Why is this issue important?

The history of this matter shows that the General Council Executive has not treated the formation of clusters and networks as being of high priority, even though communities of faith have been calling for it.

- a. The “Fishing on the Other Side” study document, February 2014, identified the following as priorities: “we want groups of communities of faith to gather together for worship, mutual support, and faithful action, instead of governance,” and “we want to build networks for mission, worship, partnership, and justice, with staff enabling connections.” It specifies that when consulted, “communities of faith expressed a strong desire for connection with each other and with the wider church,” and that “staff located in the regions would facilitate connections, help uncover resources, and provide expertise.”
- b. The “United in God’s Work” report, March 2015, recommends that: “clusters of communities of faith [should] be encouraged to gather regularly for collegiality, support, and learning, and networks [should] link people with common interests across the church.”
- c. The proposals of the Comprehensive Review Task Group, March 2015, included the following in GC42-CR3: “Although the clusters and networks would not be formal governance bodies, they would be central to the living out of our faith,” and specified in GC42-CR9 that the General Secretary, in addressing remaining matters prior to the issuing of a remit, pay attention to the principle of “the engagement of networks and clusters with the councils.”
- d. The “Study Guide for Remit 1,” February 2016, stated that: “There will be clusters and networks. These will not be formal governance bodies but organically formed communities of common interests, mission, and support.” It defines clusters as “local clusters of communities of faith that would provide community and support for communities of faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning,” defines networks as “groups of people in different parts of the country working on specific issues or on a project,” and specifies that they “would offer opportunities for communities of faith and people with shared interests and passions to connect outside decision-making bodies.”
- e. A United Church webpage [post](#) titled “Some Definitions around Clusters and Networks,” updated November 29, 2017, states that the General Council Executive agreed that:

- those involved in clusters and networks will define their own meaning and responsibilities
- church councils will not define clusters and networks
- the church is encouraged to experiment with how clusters and networks can assist in living out the faith of The United Church of Canada
- clusters and networks are encouraged to seek support from local resources
- local bodies that wish to support clusters and networks are encouraged to do so
- church councils may support clusters and networks to their level of ability and within their areas of responsibility
- clusters and networks are encouraged to share their experiences with others in the church and the wider world through media available to the church
- following a period of experimentation, the church will learn intentionally from the experiences of clusters and networks

The webpage also states that Remit 1 includes “minimal definition” of clusters and networks, without clarifying that this reflects only the text of the question itself. The Study Guide for Remit 1 included the definitions in point (d) above.

- f. The minutes of the General Council Executive meeting of November 18, 2017 state that the facilitation group on the above decision noted “recognition that without support, clusters and networks may take time to form and may increase the loss experienced by the loss of Presbyteries,” and the background of the motion in the workbook for the meeting includes the statement that clusters and networks” are central to the living out of the faith of the United Church.” Neither of these acknowledgements appear on the above quoted webpage.
- g. Some communities of faith do not have the leadership resources required to initiate clusters and networks without denominational support. For this and other reasons, many communities of faith will become increasingly isolated unless formation of clusters and networks is prioritized.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We wish to affirm that those involved in clusters and networks will define their own meaning and responsibilities; that church councils will not define clusters and networks; and that the church will learn intentionally from the experiences of clusters and networks following a period of experimentation.

However, in light of the above, we request that General Council 43:

- a. **affirm that clusters and networks will be central to living out our faith in the Three-Council Model, and essential to a healthy transition to the Three-Council Model, and**
- b. **instruct the General Council Executive and the Councils of the new model to develop a strategy that prioritizes the formation of clusters and networks beyond simply encouragement for their formation, including incentivizing their creation and facilitating communication during the period of experimentation, and**

- c. **establish an expectation that each community of faith will engage in the period of experimentation by forming or joining at least one cluster or network.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by Foothills Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference. Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

BQ 1 MAINTAINING THE NAME GENERAL COUNCIL

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to venture forth as a denomination balancing envisioning a new future while honouring our traditions.

2. Why is this issue important?

In this time of profound change and embrace of new ways of being it is imperative that we do not forget who we have been as we strive to live into who we might be as God's people.

Since 1925 we have been Congregations, Presbyteries, Conferences, and a General Council—a curious combination of elements from founding denominations that over time became key components of the identity of the United Church. The current remits reimagine all this in terms of Communities of Faith, Regions, and a Denominational Council.

While there is great wisdom in describing the ground roots organizational unit of the church as a “Community of Faith,” and the regional expression as a “Region,” the descriptor of “Denominational Council” lacks both historical resonance and contemporary verve.

The Comprehensive Review report originally offered a completely reimagined denominational governing body that had representation from every Community of Faith and ministry personnel. Such a body would have numbered in the thousands. Such a body would have required a new name because it was entirely new.

GC42 modified that vision and agreed to a denominational council which remains a representative body of delegates elected from every region of the church (remarkably similar to current practice).

The Sessional Committee at GC42 described that modified version using the placeholder name “denominational council” and except for section headings always spelled those words with lowercase letters indicating it was meant to be a descriptor and not a formal name or title. Since GC42 the spelling style relaxed and morphed and eventually became capitalized.

Simply put, seeing that our national governing body has not substantively changed in composition or function, acknowledging the importance of being rooted in what is even as we leap forth into what will be, and noting that while certainly descriptive the name

“Denominational Council” lacks flare or United Church identity; there is no compelling reason to reimagine the name of our denominational body at this time.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council 43 could embrace our history, identity, and popular mainstream identification and continue to name the denominational level of governance of The United Church of Canada as “General Council” and not change that body’s name to Denominational Council.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 1 to the General Council, with approval.

GCE 8 REMIT RELATED REVISIONS TO THE BASIS OF UNION

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

There must be extensive revision of the Basis of Union [Polity, Order of Ministry and Administration sections] to reflect the remits that have been approved by a majority of the presbyteries and, if applicable, pastoral charges.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Basis of Union is the constitutional basis for The United Church of Canada and may only be revised through the remit process. The Executive of the General Council is responsible for ensuring *The Manual* is revised to reflect decisions of the General Council including enactment of remits. The General Secretary is responsible for preparing the revisions for the consideration of the General Council or its Executive. It would be wise to seek the approval of the General Council for the current revisions because they involve the restructuring of the denomination and require amendment of federal legislation by the Parliament of Canada.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Approve the revisions to the Basis of Union (appended).

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive

The Manual Committee prepared revisions for the Basis of Union to reflect the changes from Remits 1 to 4, 5, 7, and 8. All of these remits received approval by a majority of presbyteries and, if applicable, pastoral charges.

The General Secretary asked three members of the Executive of the General Council, Sean Handcock, Debra Kigar, Sybil Wilson, to serve as a General Secretary's working group to review the revisions to ensure they kept firmly to the content and wording of Remits 1 to 4, 5, 7, and 8. Further revisions were made at their suggestion. The working group then advised the General Secretary they were satisfied with the revisions as appended to this proposal.

The only revisions to the Basis of Union in the appendix are ones necessary to reflect the remits that have passed as there was no mandate to make other revisions at this time.

Formatting, punctuation and similar editing work will be completed when *The Manual* is prepared for publication.

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

Appendix

Basis of Union: Revised Polity, Ministry Personnel and Administration sections

POLITY

I. Background

3.0 We believe God is doing a new thing and is calling The United Church of Canada to be part of a new creation.

Following the meeting of the 41st General Council in 2012, the Church engaged in conversations, consultations, research, analysis, and prayer. The 42nd General Council in 2015 responded by approving a new structure to focus our resources on supporting, enlivening, and accompanying Communities of Faith to live out God's call. This structure was approved by the Church through remits which were enacted by the 43rd General Council in 2018.

This flexible and responsive structure enables us to come together to embody the gospel and vision of Jesus Christ in our current context.

II. The Church

4.1 The members of pastoral charges and congregations shall continue to be members of the United Church.

4.2 The United Church of Canada is organized as a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council, as follows.

III. Communities of Faith

- 5.1 Description. A Community of Faith is any community of people within the United Church that:
- 5.1.1 gathers to explore faith, worship, and serve, including but not limited to pastoral charges, congregations, outreach ministries, chaplaincies, faith-based communal living, house churches, and online communities; and
 - 5.1.2 is recognized as a Community of Faith within the United Church by the Regional Council through a covenantal relationship between the Community of Faith and the Regional Council.
- 5.2 Membership. The members of the United Church are the members of its Communities of Faith. The members of the Community of Faith are:
- 5.2.1 people admitted to membership by the Community of Faith, within denominational guidelines;
 - 5.2.2 eligible for election to the Denominational Council and Regional Council; and
 - 5.2.3 entitled to vote on all Community of Faith matters; and entitled to extend the right to vote to adherents on all such matters.
- 5.3 Authority and responsibility. The Community of Faith has authority and responsibility for:
- 5.3.1 Mission
 - (1) living in covenant with the Regional Council with mutual responsibilities for the life and mission of the Community of Faith, and fulfilling its responsibilities under the covenant;
 - (2) doing regular self-assessments of the ministry of the Community of Faith; and filing the report with the Regional Council;
 - (3) joining the hearts, voices, and resources of the community to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world;
 - (4) local, regional, national and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical and interfaith) for ministry, mission and justice work;
 - (5) ministry with children and youth and young adults;
 - (6) honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry; and
 - (7) living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community;
 - 5.3.2 Governance and administration

- (1) making decisions about the life of the Community of Faith, including worship, care, spiritual practice, and learning; local administration, finances, and governance and local mission, justice, and evangelism;
 - (2) meeting at least annually;
 - (3) complying with denominational and regional policies; and
 - (4) buying, selling, leasing, and renovating Community of Faith property in cooperation with the Regional Council, within denominational guidelines;
- 5.3.3 Spiritual life
- (1) setting policies for membership, within denominational guidelines and receiving and celebrating new members in the Community of Faith;
 - (2) helping members on their journey as they explore and deepen their faith; and
 - (3) ensuring the proper administration of the sacraments;
- 5.3.4 Ministry and other leadership
- (1) cooperation with the Regional Council, within denominational guidelines, in recruiting, choosing, calling, appointing, and covenanting with ministry personnel and other staff, and in ending calls and appointments/covenants with ministry personnel and other staff;
 - (2) encouraging members to consider ministry roles a responsibility shared through the whole Community of Faith; and
 - (3) calling forth individuals for ministry leadership;
- 5.3.5 Participation in regional and denominational life
- (1) helping to fund the cost of sending members to the meetings of the Regional Council;
 - (2) electing members to serve on Regional Council with shared funding of the cost; and
 - (3) receiving, dealing with, and forwarding proposals from members of the Community of Faith to Regional Councils.
- 5.4 Limitations. All authority and responsibility of the Community of Faith is subject to:
- 5.4.1 policies set by the Denominational Council on membership, governance, pastoral relations, property, and any other area within the authority of the Denominational Council;
- 5.4.2 the covenantal relationship between the Community of Faith and the Regional Council; and
- 5.4.3 the authority of the Regional Council to assume control of the Community of Faith in extraordinary circumstances where the Community of Faith is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational or regional policies.
- 5.5 Pastoral Charges Existing Previous to the Union

- 5.5.1 In the management of their local affairs, the various churches, charges, circuits, or congregations of the negotiating Churches shall be entitled to continue the organization and practices (including those practices relating to membership, church ordinances, Sunday schools, and young people's societies) enjoyed by them at the time of the Union, subject in general affairs to the legislation, principles, and discipline of the United Church. Their representatives in the next higher governing body or council shall be chosen as at present.
- 5.5.2 Subject to the provisions of the next succeeding paragraph hereof, all property, real and personal, under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada, held in trust for or to the use of a church, charge, circuit, or congregation of any of the negotiating Churches shall be held by trustees appointed by or on behalf of such church, charge, circuit, or congregation, upon trusts set forth and declared in a Model Trust Deed. This Model Trust Deed should be a schedule to the Act, and should contain, among others, a provision to the following effect: that the property is held for the church, charge, circuit, or congregation as a part of the United Church, and that no property so held shall be sold, exchanged, or in any manner encumbered, unless the Regional Council shall, at the instance of the church, charge, circuit, or congregation, have given its sanction, subject to an appeal, if desired, to the Denominational Council.
- 5.5.3 Any property or funds owned by a church, charge, circuit, or congregation at the time of the Union solely for its own benefit, or vested in trustees for the sole benefit of such church, charge, circuit, or congregation, and not for the denomination of which the said church, charge, circuit, or congregation formed a part, shall not be affected by the legislation giving effect to the Union or by any legislation of the United Church without the consent of the church, charge, circuit, or congregation for which such property is held in trust.
- 5.5.4 Churches, charges, circuits, or congregations received subsequent to the Union, into the United Church, with the approval of Presbyteries or Regional Councils, shall be entitled, if they so desire, to the privileges of sections 5.5.1. and 5.5.3.
- 5.6 **Pastoral Charges to Be Formed Subsequent to the Union**
All lands, premises, and property acquired for the use of a local church or a Pastoral Charge of the United Church shall be held, used, and administered under the trusts of the above Model Trust Deed.
- 5.7 **Church Membership**
The members of the Church entitled to all church privileges are those who, on a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, have been received into full membership. The children of such persons and all baptized children are members of the Church, and it is their duty and privilege, when they reach the age of discretion, to

enter into full membership. Admission to full membership and granting of certificates of transfer or removal shall be:

- (1) by the action of the governing body of the Pastoral Charge or by the action of those in full membership when desired by the Pastoral Charge; or
- (2) by a Chaplain in the Canadian Forces, with the approval of, and in association with, two or more members in full communion with the United Church, for persons under that Chaplain's pastoral care.

IV. Regional Councils

- 6.1 Description. A Regional Council is a decision-making body responsible to serve and support Communities of Faith within its bounds and provide necessary oversight.
- 6.2 Membership. The Regional Council is composed of:
 - 6.2.1 all ministry personnel within the geographic bounds served by the regional council;
 - 6.2.2 ministers of denominations within mutual recognition agreements while under appointment or call; and
 - 6.2.3 lay members elected by the Community of Faith, respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.
- 6.3 Authority and Responsibility. The Regional Council has authority and responsibility for:
 - 6.3.1 Covenanted:
 - (1) recognizing a new Community of Faith by entering into a covenantal relationship with it;
 - (2) living in a covenantal relationship with each Community of Faith, with mutual responsibilities for the life and mission of the Community of Faith, and fulfilling its responsibilities under the covenant; and
 - (3) living in a covenantal relationship with ministry personnel;
 - 6.3.2 Services for Communities of Faith:
 - (1) providing support, advice, and services to Communities of Faith in human resource matters;
 - (2) providing support, advice, and services to Communities of Faith in dealing with congregational property;
 - (3) managing regional archives;
 - (4) providing on-going leadership training for ministers and lay persons; and
 - (5) providing funding partnerships with United Church educational and leadership training centres and camps as determined regionally;
 - 6.3.3 Serve, support and provide oversight of Communities of Faith:

- (1) reviewing and periodically auditing the self-assessments of Communities of Faith in light of the covenant between the Community of Faith and the Regional Council;
 - (2) supporting emerging new ministries;
 - (3) supporting Communities of Faith in their life and work;
 - (4) serving, supporting and providing oversight when necessary of camps and incorporated ministries in the region;
 - (5) promoting articulation of mission and ministry;
 - (6) ensuring compliance with the policies and polity of the United Church and reviewing any relevant records; and
 - (7) assuming control of a Community of Faith in extraordinary circumstances where the Community of Faith is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational policies;
- 6.3.4 Mission and ministry. Encouraging and engaging in:
- (1) joining our collective hearts, voices, and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world;
 - (2) local, regional, national and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical and interfaith) for ministry, mission and justice work;
 - (3) ministry with children, youth and young adults;
 - (4) honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry; and
 - (5) living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community;
- 6.3.5 Policy and finance:
- (1) administering policy set by the Denominational Council, and setting appropriate regional policy;
 - (2) buying, selling, leasing, and renovating Community of Faith property in cooperation with Communities of Faith, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines;
 - (3) buying, selling, leasing, and renovating regional property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines;
 - (4) setting and managing its annual budget including revenue from the denominational assessment and setting any additional regional assessment for any additional services the Regional Council wishes to undertake;
 - (5) participating in determining priorities for mission and ministry work through Mission and Service; and
 - (6) meeting at least annually as the entire Regional Council or through its executive;
- 6.3.6 Preparation for Ministry:
- (1) calling forth of persons for ministry;
 - (2) accompanying persons in the preparation process;
 - (3) ordaining and commissioning of members of the order of ministry;
 - (4) recognizing Designated Lay Ministers;
 - (5) licensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders; and

- (6) celebrating admissions and re-admissions;
- 6.3.7 Pastoral Relations: cooperating with Communities of Faith in recruiting, choosing, calling, appointing and covenanting with ministry personnel and Communities of Faith, and in ending calls and appointments/covenants with ministry personnel and other staff;
- 6.3.8 Celebrating retirements;
- 6.3.9 Oversight of ministry personnel;
 - (1) encouraging and supporting ministry personnel towards health, joy and excellence in ministry practice;
 - (2) assisting with informal conflict resolution processes; and
 - (3) maintaining the roll of ministry personnel;
- 6.3.10 Participation in denominational life:
 - (1) electing members to serve on Denominational Council.
 - (2) receiving, dealing with, and forwarding proposals from members of the Community of Faith to the Denominational Council; and
 - (3) promoting and fostering direct dialogue between Communities of Faith and the Denominational Council.
- 6.4 Limitations
 - (1) policies set by the Denominational Council on membership, governance, pastoral relations, candidacy, ministry personnel, property, and any other area within the authority of the Denominational Council; and
 - (2) the authority of the Denominational Council to assume control of the Regional Council in extraordinary circumstances where the Regional Council is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational or regional policies.
- 6.5 Staffing

Each region has staff to assist the Regional Council in meeting its responsibilities:

 - (1) staffing numbers are based on assessments, grants from Mission and Service, and any other regional income;
 - (2) staffing is based on priorities and needs as determined regionally;
 - (3) staff are hired and managed by a regional secretary who reports to the General Secretary of the Denominational Council and relates to the Regional Council executive;
 - (4) Regional Councils with more resources are free to retain more staff; and
 - (5) sharing of all resources across the Church is encouraged.

V. Denominational Council

- 7.1 Description. The Denominational Council is the decision-making body for the United Church as both a denomination and a legal corporation.
- 7.2 Membership. The Denominational Council consists of:
- (1) those elected by the Regional Councils according to an agreed-upon formula
 - (2) the presiding officer or elder of each Regional Council;
 - (3) the Moderator and the immediate Past Moderator;
 - (4) the General Secretary of the Denominational Council; and
 - (5) other members and guests as determined.
- 7.3 Authority and responsibility. The Denominational Council has authority and responsibility for:
- 7.3.1 Mission:
- (1) joining our collective hearts, voices, and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world;
 - (2) engaging denominational-level ministry and mission including resource development and being a resource to Regional Councils and Communities of Faith;
 - (3) encouraging local and regional mission and ministry, partnerships, ecumenical and interfaith;
 - (4) engaging in national and global partnerships, ecumenical and interfaith relationships;
 - (5) honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry; and
 - (6) living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community;
- 7.3.2 Policy:
- (1) setting policies for the denomination on doctrine, worship, membership, governance, pastoral relations, property, and the entrance to paid accountable ministry;
 - (2) making decisions on denomination-shaping issues relating to public witness; and
 - (3) dealing with proposals received from Regional Councils;
- 7.3.3 Governance:
- (1) electing a Moderator;
 - (2) electing the executive of the Denominational Council;
 - (3) referring all unfinished matters to the executive of the Denominational Council;
 - (4) meeting once every three years in person, with members having the option of full participation through electronic or equivalent means;
 - (5) meeting more frequently as required through electronic or equivalent means; and
 - (6) approving the number and boundaries of Regional Councils, supporting them and promoting parity of service across regions;

- 7.3.4 Finance and administration:
- (1) setting a three-year budget framework for the Church
 - (2) determining the assessment formula for Communities of Faith and assessing them to meet the requirements of the budget; and
 - (3) maintaining the denominational archives.
- 7.4 Limitations. The authority and responsibility of the Denominational Council is subject to the following limitations:
- 7.4.1 changing the Basis of Union - the Basis of Union may only be changed through the remit process, which requires the approval of a majority of the Regional Councils and also, if the Denominational Council considers it advisable because the change is substantive or denomination-shaping, pastoral charges;
- Substantive or denomination-shaping changes include but are not limited to changes that:
- i. alter the nature of the courts of the Church;
 - ii. significantly change the structures of the Church;
 - iii. redefine the Church's understanding of ministry;
 - iv. affect the articles of faith except for gender language applied to human beings;
 - v. change the baptismal formula or vows made upon ordination or commissioning;
 - vi. move a section from this Basis of Union to the By-Laws; or
 - vii. alter the Church's understanding of membership;
- 7.4.2 membership requirements - no terms of admission to full membership may be prescribed other than those laid down in the New Testament;
- 7.4.3 freedom of worship - the freedom of worship enjoyed by churches at the time of union in 1925 may not be interfered with in the United Church; and
- 7.4.4 property - all policy on congregational property adopted by the Denominational Council must comply with the requirements set in The United Church of Canada Act.
- 7.5 Executive of the Denominational Council. The executive of the Denominational Council is the decision-making body for the United Church between meetings of the Denominational Council, living into covenantal relationship and mutually accountable with the Denominational Council, Regional Councils, and Communities of Faith, with the following membership, authority and responsibility:
- 7.5.1 membership: a fixed number between 12 and 18 members, with the exact number set by the Denominational Council;
- 7.5.2 authority and responsibility:
- (1) dealing with all unfinished matters referred to it by the Denominational Council;

- (2) dealing with all routine and emergency work of the Denominational Council between meetings of the denominational council;
- (3) establishing standing and other committees; and
- (4) exercising additional authority and subject to any limitations as set by the Denominational Council.

- 7.6 Staffing. The Denominational Council has staff to assist it in meeting its responsibilities through:
 - 7.6.1 staffing based on assessments of Communities of Faith, grants from Mission and Service, and other denominational income;
 - 7.6.2 staffing based on the priorities and needs as determined denominationally;
 - 7.6.3 administering denominational policies;
 - 7.6.4 providing centralized technical services such as information technology, communication, payroll, accounting, human resources, administration, and pension plan;
 - 7.6.5 supporting the Moderator; and
 - 7.6.6 providing leadership in global partnerships and national-level ministry and mission work.

VI. Denominational Office of Vocation

- 8.0 The denominational Office of Vocation of the United Church is established with the following responsibility and structure:
 - 8.1 Responsibility:
 - 8.1.1 establishing standards for training and accreditation of ministry personnel according to denominational policies;
 - 8.1.2 establishing expectations and standards for continuing education, formation, and professional development of ministry personnel according to denominational policies;
 - 8.1.3 determining the person's fitness and readiness for accreditation to ministry;
 - 8.1.4 maintaining registry of accredited ministry personnel;
 - 8.1.5 disciplining of ministry personnel including formal hearings and complaints;
 - 8.1.6 supporting and responding to requests for assistance from Regional Councils;
 - 8.1.7 administering the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary and Voluntary);

- 8.1.8 maintaining a list of trained conflict resolution facilitators;
 - 8.1.9 maintaining a list of recognized Interim Ministers, and those trained for the Ministry of Supervision; and
 - 8.1.10 establishing and implementing standards for admitting ministers from other denominations and re-admitting ministers.
- 8.2 Structure. Oversight of the Office of Vocation is by an elected body that:
- 8.2.1 honours and lives into intercultural mission and ministry; and
 - 8.2.2 consists of a balance of ministers whether ordained, diaconal, or designated lay ministers and lay people, with a variety of active experience.

VII. Clusters and Networks

9. Alongside the three-council structure, there are clusters and networks that, while not formal governance bodies, are central to the living out of the faith of the United Church:
- 9.1 clusters: local clusters of Communities of Faith that provide community and support for Communities of Faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning; and
 - 9.2 networks: linking people working on specific issues (supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g. event planning) that function through the whole Church, depending on the issue.

MINISTRY PERSONNEL

- 10.0 The Order of Ministry shall be open to both men and women.
- 10.1 The pastoral relationship, when initiated by call, shall be without time limit.
- 10.2 The policy of the Church shall be that, as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith
- 10.3 Every member of the Order of Ministry shall, subject to the rules and regulations of the United Church:
- (3) be a member of the Regional Council; and
 - (4) be subject to the discipline of the Office of Vocation.
- 10.4 Every member of the Order of Ministry called or appointed to a Pastoral Charge shall, subject to the rules and regulations of the United Church:

- (1) have the right to conduct services in the church, churches, or other places of worship in connection with the Pastoral Charge;
- (2) have the right of occupancy of the manse in connection with the Pastoral Charge:

10.5 Every member of the order of ministry of a denomination with which the United Church has a mutual recognition agreement shall be eligible for appointment or call in the United Church. While under appointment or call, they are equivalent to members of the Order of Ministry of the United Church in respect to membership and responsibilities in the councils of the church.

I. Candidacy Pathway

- 11.0 The Office of Vocation and the Church's three councils prepare individuals for ministry through the following phases:
- 11.1 **Calling Forth.** The Church engages a creative and invitational approach for calling forth individuals to serve as ministry personnel within our denomination.
 - 11.2 **Identify.** The Church tests an individual's giftedness for ministry.
 - 11.3 **Accompany.** The Church accompanies students and candidates by providing support and guidance.
 - 11.4 **Equip.** Through a variety of learning opportunities, the Church equips individuals and candidates for ministry.
 - 11.5 **Assess.** The Church assesses the promise, suitability, readiness, and effectiveness of students and candidates for ministry.
 - 11.6 **Authorize.** The Church authorizes students and candidates as ready for ordination, commissioning or recognition.
 - 11.7 **Celebrate:**
 - 11.7.1 The Church celebrates the conclusion of each student's candidacy pathway.
 - 11.7.2 The Church celebrates the ordination, commissioning and recognition of all individuals who have accepted a call, appointment, or offer of employment as ministry personnel.

II. Training for Ministry

- 12.1 The Office of Vocation shall have the duty of inquiry into the personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry of a Candidate for the Order of Ministry and Designated Lay Ministry.
- 12.2 It shall be left to the Denominational Council to determine, from time to time, the course of study leading to ordination, commissioning and recognition.

- 12.3 Provision shall be made, as far as possible, within the institutions of theological education for instruction in the courses of study in Theology as approved by the Denominational Council.

III. Commissioning, Ordination, Recognition, and Admission

- 13.1 The Office of Vocation shall make the final determination of the person's fitness and readiness for accreditation to ministry of Candidates for ordination, commissioning or recognition and of those seeking admission to the Order of Ministry of the United Church.
- 13.2 The Office of Vocation shall examine each Candidate on the Statement of Doctrine of the United Church and shall, before ordination, commissioning, recognition or admission, be satisfied that such Candidate is in essential agreement therewith, and as ministry personnel of the United Church accepts the statement as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.
- 13.3 The service to ordain, commission, or receive persons to the Order of Ministry shall be conducted by the Regional Council. Those presenting themselves shall, after hearing the following preamble, answer the questions which follow: (2007)

"Jesus Christ came into the world to be the servant of God and all people. As servant Lord, Jesus calls his Church to a ministry of worship, witness, and reconciliation. In baptism we were received as members of his Church and at confirmation we committed ourselves to its ministry. In order that this ministry of the whole Church may be fulfilled, God has given the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care. It is the responsibility of the Church to seek, train, and set apart those whom God calls so to serve.

1. (to each Candidate) Do you believe in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you commit yourself anew to God?
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?"

ADMINISTRATION

- 14.0 In sections 14.1 to 18.4 inclusive:
"court" means a court of The United Church of Canada or, where the context permits, a council of The United Church of Canada; and

“General Council” means the General Council of The United Church of Canada, or, where the context permits, the Denominational Council of The United Church of Canada.

Note: the remaining sections 12.1 to 16.4 in the existing Basis would be renumbered as 14.1 to 18.4.

GCE 19 ASSESSMENT RATE (2019–2021)

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

If the new financial model which has been approved at the 42nd General Council, and ratified on remit by presbyteries and congregations, is enacted at the 43rd General Council, the Assessment Rate for the next three years will need to be set by General Council.

This decision, along with the budgetary principles already approved the General Council Executive, will provide the clarity about 2019 funding levels that is needed by all those developing budgets for the coming year.

Although past General Council Office narrative budget exhibits (pie charts) provided a mission focused budget picture, this will be the first budget process where expenditures will more explicitly need to be determined based on a total unified income and on what income stream each particular piece of work falls under. (definition of mission & ministry versus governance and shared services). The proposed rate reflects what was outlined in the background documents to the Remit.

The following budget principles and assumptions for the 2019 Operating Budget have already approved by the Executive and Sub-Executive of the General Council. These were based on recommendations from the Permanent Committee on Finance, and the General Secretary. The provision relating to the division of Assessment revenues and Mission and Service funds amongst regions was developed by the current Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker working as a group.

- Core General Council Office budget to be balanced. This will be achieved through ongoing cost reduction, but also taking into account other possible trade-offs.
- Continued decline in M&S (\$900,000 per year) and in other revenue sources including some decline in retail sales after a General Council year which usually has a sales bump.
- The COLA factor for 2019 will be 1.6%.
- We will strive to maintain grant programs level with 2018 but the overriding goal is to balance the operating budget.

- Conference operating grants are eliminated and replaced by the combination of assessment funds and M&S funds with the anticipated implementation of Remit 4.
- We will strive to keep increasing the amount of M&S allocated to Embracing the Spirit, but will also seek to maximize the amount of M&S available to regions.
- We will work with the Indigenous church in continuing our right relations journey while identifying and implementing cost reduction from current expenditure levels.
- A separate budget will be established for one-time project costs for remit implementation, which will be funded from reserves.
- Providing assurance of assessment income to regions for 2019 and 2020. If income higher than expected, 100% would flow to regions. If shortfall, reserves to fund.
- Provide assurance of M&S income for 2019 and 2020 to the regions despite anticipated decline. This would allow regions to establish mission priorities and begin to make allocation decisions accordingly. This concept will most certainly impact reserves.
- Where Regions have supplemental revenue from additional assessment or other sources, it will not be included in the core funding allocations which all regions share
- 50% of the cost of Region Executive Ministers and an administrative staff position for each will be funded out of the Denominational portion of the assessment funds, and 50% will be funded out of the Regional portion of the assessment funds
- Denominational portion of the assessment is to fund Indigenous governance allocation (\$500,000); regionally deployed stewardship staff (\$500,000) and regionally deployed Office of Vocation role (\$750,000)
- Each region to be allocated 1/16 of discretionary region assessment allocation (\$325,000) and Mission and Service allocation (\$289,000)

2. Why is this issue important?

Clarity about core funding levels for the regions will be helpful to Regional Commissions and Provisional Regional Executive Ministers as they develop plans for budgets, staffing, and local granting and for all those across the church who are trying to plan for 2019 and beyond.

This decision will also establish the principle that it is the General Council (or Denominational Council) that will set the assessment rate.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

That the 43rd General Council:

1. **Set the assessment rate for the next three years at 4.5 percent of adjusted total revenues, with provision for an elective phase-in option where the magnitude of increase would be too challenging:**
 - a) **The calculation for the total revenue for pastoral charge operations (Column 32D in the annual statistics report, or total income as reported to the CRA on the annual Charitable Information Return) is reduced by the amounts raised for outward giving, bequests received, asset sales, one-time capital campaigns and certain other one-time items. 2018 assessment will be used as the baseline for**

- calculations unless unusual events or transactions in that year made it unrepresentative of the norm, in which case 2017 would become the baseline year;
- b) And with pastoral charges for whom this would result in an increase of more than 10% having the option to phase it in, with the 10% increase being the minimum level payable during this triennium and with the full assessment level to be reached by 2025.
2. Authorize that any changes to the assessment rate be approved by the Denominational Council, generally at the in person meeting that is held every three years.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The proposed principles and assumptions and the assessment rate have been approved by the Executive/Sub-Executive of the General Council, having been recommended by the General Secretary with the support of the Permanent Committee on Finance. The Assessment Rate recommended for approval is what was in the background document to Remit 4.

This proposal is in response to the Comprehensive Renewal proposals, related remits, and in particular the passing of Remit 4.

This proposal to be considered after the motion to enact the remits.

HAM 1 MAINTAINING THE TERM “GENERAL COUNCIL”

Origin: Hamilton Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God is calling us to enter a new era in the United Church’s life, even as we continue to mark and benefit from important traditions we are building upon. Since its inception, the United Church’s senior leadership body has been the “General Council.” We propose that this continue to be what the body charged with denominational decisions be called.

2. Why is this issue important?

We are experiencing significant changes throughout the United Church. In such times, it is also important to maintain healthy continuities where they make sense.

The Comprehensive Review Task Group (CRTG), in its *United in God’s Work* report to the 42nd General Council, offered new terminology for the courts of the United Church (henceforth called “councils”).

First, what have been “Pastoral Charges” would be called “Communities of Faith,” to recognize that the character of local communities of mission will be more varied in the future, with many not fitting the traditional pastoral charge/congregation model.

Second, what have been “Presbyteries” and “Conferences” would be called “Regional Councils,” to recognize that these new bodies, while maintaining aspects of presbyteries and conferences, are new entities and not simply replacements for or amalgamations of them.

Finally, what had been the “General Council” would be called the “Denominational Council.” The CRTG envisioned a body significantly different from the existing General Council. It would be much larger. With representatives from each community of faith, its potential membership would have been in the thousands. Its character would be fundamentally different than the current “General Council.”

However, the “denominational council” body finally approved by the 42nd General Council remains substantially the same as the current “General Council.” Significantly, its members will be chosen by the regional councils, similar to how they are currently chosen by Conferences. The size of the body will be similar as well. Most of its functions and responsibilities will be the same. (This is the model presented in the recently-approved Remit #1.)

There is no compelling reason to change the name to “Denominational Council.” Nothing in this name inspires. It is more of a mouthful to say. Adapting to this new term will cause confusion.

On the other hand, continuing with the term “General Council” will benefit the Church by signalling that this body is substantially the same as the current one and maintain a point of continuity with our practice since 1925.

While an attitude which resists change is certainly unhelpful for the church, making changes simply to make changes is unhelpful too. It can be wasteful and disorienting. Absent any reason for changing “General Council” to “Denominational Council,” the current name should be maintained.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

If it decides to enact Remit 1, the 43rd General Council could also decide that in the new governance structure the body responsible for leading The United Church of Canada as a whole will continue to be called the “General Council.”

MAR 3 ACTION ON THE FORMATION OF AN ASSOCIATION OF MINISTERS WITHIN THE NEW THREE COUNCIL MODEL

Origin: Maritime Conference

1. What is the issue?

All the members of the Body of Christ deserve care and in the absence of such care then the entire Body will suffer. The Comprehensive Review Task Group recognized that in the new Three Council Model there needed to be a source of support for paid accountable ministers. General Council 42 concurred with this assessment and in adopting the CRTG recommendations directed General Council Executive that work begin on an Association of Ministers. Polity and processes focus with increasing intensity on supervision, accountability and scrutiny of ministry personnel. By eliminating the Presbytery and lodging issues of discipline and supervision primarily with the Office of Vocations, the CRTG vision was that the collegial and supportive functions of Presbytery would be taken up by the Association. The planned changes will leave ministry personnel without care and support in times of conflict, isolation or discipline. The Three Council Model contains no guarantee of paid Regional staff filling the current advisory tasks of Conference Personnel Ministers. The result is a critical vacuum in the system in the absence of an effective Association of Ministers. The issue is that there has been little information shared about the limited actions taken in response to this critical structural need.

2. Why is this issue important?

GC42 adopted the following:

That the 42nd General Council 2015 direct the Executive of the General Council:

- (1) to establish a working group consisting of ministry personnel to consider the idea of establishing an Association of Ministers; and**
- (2) to receive the report of the working group and to take appropriate action in response. (ROP page 242)**

In the triennium, the action of GCE and the GC staff in response to this direction has been mentioned three times:

1. A plan to establish a task group and perhaps consult. That brief report concluded with the phrase: "While an association is not dependent upon an office of vocation, the perceived need for and shape of an association may be influenced by what ministry personnel see being developed in an office." (GCE Workbook, Nov 21-23/15, page 166);
2. A report on the formation of a Task Group and three meetings that consulted with some groups, identified several issues and referred to a possible survey of "ministry personnel (and potentially other stakeholders)." (GCE Workbook, Nov 18-20/2017 page 41);
3. A portion of the PC-MEPS report as follows: "In addition, PC-MEPS is expecting a final report in the fall of 2018 from the task group considering the idea of establishing an association of ministers." (GCE Workbook, March 3-4/18, pages 31–32)

Several things are notable from this information. First, there has been no attempt to widely inform ministry personnel about the progress of this important issue. Second, there is

apparently no intention to report to GC43 except for a possible limited note within the PC-MEPS accountability documents. Clearly, there is no intention to have even the outline of a possible Association ready for GC43. Third, it is a regrettably apparent conclusion (given the relative amounts of detailed work available on other CRTG-related files) that the Association of Ministers has had a far lower priority for attention and work in the last three years than other aspects of the new governance model. Fourth, it is improbable that timelines will permit for a meaningful consultation with the primary stakeholders prior to the final report that PC-MEPS expects in the fall.

These factors fuel the concern that, while an Association of Ministers was to be an important component of the Three Council structure, it will certainly not be ready for implementation with the other facets in January 2019. Given the complexities of the issue it may be that such a timeline was never realistic, but the apparently low priority given this file seems to guarantee this.

With the change to the Three Council model more work is directed to the Communities of Faith. The church has (rightfully) encouraged and empowered lay people to take control of their own pastoral charges and congregations. However, in most situations, ministry personnel are expected to act as advisors to committees, boards, and teams. With the elimination of Presbytery, lay committees and paid accountable ministers will have decreased access to informed resourcing. This is occurring in a time of extreme change in the system, when an increase in tensions, conflict and stress can be reasonably anticipated. In the Three Council model, it can be anticipated that ministry personnel will need more, rather than less, support. The church needs the continued well-being of a healthy, productive workforce in a time of decreasing availability of personnel due to attrition, burn-out and decreased recruitment of new members.

A further, realistic concern, is that in the coming months and years, with the significant number of issues to address as the Church lives into its new governance model, there is a possibility that the Association of Ministers, will receive even less priority than it apparently has to date. Such an easily predicted turn of events could have disastrous consequences for the well-being of the church.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

In response to this concern GC43 should reaffirm the importance of the Association of Ministers; direct the GCE to immediately provide to all ministry personnel with a report on the progress of this file thus far; and direct GCE to make this subject a priority for attention and action for the new Denominational Council Executive and PC-MEPS (or its successor department).

It is proposed by Halifax Presbytery, through the Maritime Conference, that the 43rd General Council:

- 1. reaffirm the importance of the Association of Ministers; and**

- 2. direct the General Council Executive to immediately provide to all ministry personnel an update on the progress of this topic thus far; and**
- 3. direct the General Council Executive to make this subject a priority for attention for the remainder of the current governance model and for the Denominational Council Executive and PC-MEPS (or its successor department).**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Stephen Mills/Ross Bartlett moved that Maritime Conference transmit Proposal 6 to the 43rd General Council with concurrence.

Carried

THEME: RIGHT RELATIONS

ANW 06 LIVING INTO RIGHT RELATIONS NETWORK

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling the church to continue to live out its apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canada, and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation to establish and maintain good relations. The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle have called for indigenization and decolonization of the church: this is something that all communities of faith need to engage, as Indigenous church and as descendants of the colonizing church.

In 2008, over 90 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from each Conference, a group which became known as the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network, covenanted to:

- *Explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the church.*
- *Facilitate processes to inform and engage the church and Canadians in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) process*

With the conclusion of the TRC, and its issue of 94 Calls to Action, the LIRR Network has continued to thrive, albeit with members of some Conferences being more active than others, and within a variety of models, to respond to those Calls to Action. The General Council has identified this work as a clear priority. The Network has been supported by two General Council staff (Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animators) as well as by some hours offered by some Conference and Presbytery staff. LIRR and Indigenous Justice Facebook pages, electronic newsletters, worship resources, webinars, and videos (all largely prepared and posted by staff) have been primary ways of sharing resources and ideas, and encouraging one another in taking steps on the journey of reconciliation nationally. The Justice and Reconciliation Fund, with a current annual budget of \$100,000, is available to any United Church group to “foster dialogue, reconciliation, and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.”

As we move to the 3-court model and a new financing model, we want to ensure that the LIRR Network is immediately recognized under the definition of a network *which “links people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church”*; and as such continues to be supported by staff and funding from the whole church.

2. Why is this issue important?

The LIRR Network was instrumental in raising the awareness of the work of the TRC across the country, and in encouraging participation in TRC hearings wherever they were held. Other churches, civil society, educational institutions, and governments have applauded the leadership of the United Church in addressing the residential school legacy, and other Indigenous justice issues. Hundreds of members in the LIRR Network are actively engaged in

drawing attention to the TRC's 94 Calls to Action and taking steps to eliminate racism towards Indigenous peoples, to build a new relationship based on an understanding of nation-to-nation identities and appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and culture, to educate ourselves about our shared history, and to make reparations. This is the most important task before Canada and the church today. It cannot be left to people in widespread locations with limited means to search each other out, and seek resources on an ad hoc basis.

Notes from the fall 2017 General Council Executive meeting, contain these comments regarding clusters and networks.

Clusters are defined as "local clusters of communities of faith that would provide community and support for communities of faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning," while networks would "link people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church." Before the vote on this motion was called, facilitators noted that there was a concern expressed that without financial support, clusters and network will take time to form, and that may increase the loss experienced by the loss of presbyteries. It was also suggested that there should be encouragement for establishing clusters and networks prior to the change to the Three Council Model, with everyone sharing best practices.

Furthermore, the Executive agreed that

- *those involved in clusters and networks will define their own meaning and responsibilities*
- *church councils will not define clusters and networks*
- *the church is encouraged to experiment with how clusters and networks can assist in living out the faith of The United Church of Canada*
- *clusters and networks are encouraged to seek support from local resources*
- *local bodies that wish to support clusters and networks are encouraged to do so*
- *church councils may support clusters and networks to their level of ability and within their areas of responsibility*
- *clusters and networks are encouraged to share their experiences with others in the church and the wider world through media available to the church*
- *following a period of experimentation, the church will learn intentionally from the experiences of clusters and networks*

From News post Nov. 28, 2017, on Remit Implementation, <http://www.united-church.ca/news/clarity-clusters-and-networks>

The Indigenous Communities of Faith in the United Church, through the report of the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle (September 2017) in Call #8 Concerning Sustainable Support, called for:

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;

The LIRR Network functions to facilitate reconciliation throughout the whole church. It seems unreasonable and unfaithful that an existing network responding to national Calls to Action and a building of nation-to-nation relationships should have to “seek support from **local** resources.” The support of this vitally important ministry should not be left to the possibility of no one having the responsibility to seek/provide resources, or the possibility of there being no or very limited local resources, however/wherever they might be located.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Alberta and Northwest Conference asks General Council to

- 1) Immediately recognize the establishment/existence of the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network when the 3-court model is implemented;**
- 2) Recognize that the purpose of the LIRR Network is to assist communities of faith, clusters, and regions to:**
 - **implement the United Nations Declaration as a framework for reconciliation,**
 - **indigenize and decolonize the church,**
 - **respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (in particular those directed at the churches),**
 - **learn about the legacy of residential schools, and the history of Indigenous peoples and their contributions,**
 - **work ecumenically, particularly with respect to promoting KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) campaigns and initiatives as they pertain to truth and reconciliation, and Indigenous justice concerns,**
 - **live out and theologically reflect on the meaning of the 1986 and 1998 apologies, and**
 - **continue to explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships including a deep appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and acts of reparation;**
- 3) Provide at least two staff persons beyond 2018 to support the ongoing work of a Living into Right Relations Network (or its equivalent);**
- 4) Provide Mission and Service Funds to employ staff in the General Council office and in the regions to support the LIRR work, including the use of communications media and the development and sharing of resources;**
- 5) Maintain the Justice and Reconciliation Fund with its current purpose and a budget of \$100,000 per year for the next 5 years;**
- 6) Convene a national gathering of the LIRR Network in 2019 (self-registering, all those who have been working actively to foster dialogue, learn our shared history, and implement the TRC Calls to Action or wish to do so); and**
- 7) Include the oversight and nurture of the LIRR Network as part of the work of a national working committee within the new governance structure that would advise the General Council of the United Church on taking and animating actions on any matters relating to Indigenous justice, truth and reconciliation, and the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Presented by the ANWC Living Into Right Relations Standing Committee to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Adopted and submitted by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

BQ 2 STEPS TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling the church to continue to live out its apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canada, and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation to establish and maintain good relations.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle have called for indigenization and decolonization of the church: this is something that all communities of faith need to engage, as Indigenous church and as descendants of the colonizing church.

In 2008, over 90 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from each Conference, a group which became known as the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network, covenanted to:

- “Explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the church.”
- “Facilitate processes to inform and engage the church and Canadians in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) process.”

With the conclusion of the TRC, and its issue of 94 Calls to Action, the LIRR Network has continued to thrive, albeit with members of some Conferences being more active than others, and within a variety of models, to respond to those Calls to Action. The General Council has identified this work as a clear priority. The Network has been supported by two General Council staff (Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animators) as well as by some hours offered by some Conference and Presbytery staff. LIRR and Indigenous Justice Facebook pages, electronic newsletters, worship resources, webinars, and videos (all largely prepared and posted by staff) have been primary ways of sharing resources and ideas, and encouraging one another in taking steps on the journey of reconciliation nationally. The Justice and Reconciliation Fund with a current annual budget of \$100,000 is available to any United Church group to “foster dialogue, reconciliation, and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.”

As we move to the 3-court model and a new financing model, we want to ensure that the LIRR Network is immediately recognized under the definition of a network *which* “links people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for

project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church”; and as such would continue to be supported by staff and funding from the whole church in the future.

The LIRR Network was instrumental in raising the awareness of the work of the TRC across the country, and encouraging participation in TRC hearings wherever they were held. Other churches have applauded the leadership of the United Church in addressing the residential school legacy, and other Indigenous justice issues. Hundreds of members in the LIRR Network are actively engaged in drawing attention to the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action and taking steps to eliminate racism towards Indigenous peoples, to build a new relationship based on an understanding of nation-to-nation identities and appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and culture, to educate ourselves about our shared history, and to make reparations. This is the most important task before Canada and the church today. It cannot be left to people in widespread locations with limited means to search each other out, and seek resources on an ad hoc basis.

Notes from the fall 2017 General Council Executive meeting, contain these comments regarding clusters and networks.

“Clusters are defined as “local clusters of communities of faith that would provide community and support for communities of faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning,” while networks would “link people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church.” Before the vote on this motion was called, facilitators noted that there was a concern expressed that without financial support, clusters and network will take time to form, and that may increase the loss experienced by the loss of presbyteries. It was also suggested that there should be encouragement for establishing clusters and networks prior to the change to the Three Council Model, with everyone sharing best practices.

Furthermore, The Executive agreed that

- those involved in clusters and networks will define their own meaning and responsibilities
- church councils will not define clusters and networks
- the church is encouraged to experiment with how clusters and networks can assist in living out the faith of The United Church of Canada
- clusters and networks are encouraged to seek support from local resources
- local bodies that wish to support clusters and networks are encouraged to do so
- church councils may support clusters and networks to their level of ability and within their areas of responsibility
- clusters and networks are encouraged to share their experiences with others in the church and the wider world through media available to the church

- following a period of experimentation, the church will learn intentionally from the experiences of clusters and networks”

From News post Nov. 28, 2017, on Remit Implementation, <http://www.united-church.ca/news/clarity-clusters-and-networks>

The Indigenous Communities of Faith in the United Church through the report of the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle (September 2017) in Call #8 Concerning Sustainable Support called for:

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;

The LIRR Network functions to facilitate reconciliation throughout the whole church. It seems unreasonable and unfaithful that an existing network responding to national Calls to Action and a building nation-to-nation relationships should have to “seek support from **local** resources” only. The support of this vitally important ministry should not be left to the possibility of no one having the responsibility to seek/provide resources, or the possibility of there being no or very limited local resources, however/wherever they might be located.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

General Council could address this issue by taking steps such as:

- 1) Immediately recognizing the establishment/existence of the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network when the 3-court model is implemented
- 2) Recognizing that the purpose of the LIRR Network is to assist communities of faith, clusters, and regions to:
 - implement the United Nations Declaration as a framework for reconciliation
 - indigenize and decolonize the church,
 - respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (in particular those directed at the churches),
 - learn about the legacy of residential schools, and the history of Indigenous peoples and their contributions
 - work ecumenically, particularly with respect to promoting KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) campaigns and initiatives as they pertain to truth and reconciliation, and Indigenous justice concerns
 - live out and theologically reflect on the meaning of the 1986 and 1998 apologies
 - and continue to explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships including a deep appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and acts of reparation in cooperation with the Indigenous church.
- 3) Maintaining the Justice and Reconciliation Fund with its current purpose and a future budget for the next 5 years.
- 4) Convening a national gathering of the LIRR Network in 2019 (self-registering, all those who have been working actively to foster dialogue, learn our shared history, and implement the TRC Calls to Action or wish to do so).

- 5) Including the oversight and nurture of the LIRR Network within the work of a national working committee within the new governance structure that would advise the General Council of the United Church on taking and animating actions on any matters relating to Indigenous justice, truth and reconciliation, and the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.**

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 2 to the General Council, with approval.

M&O 3 ENHANCING RIGHT RELATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES TO NAME OUR CHURCH

Origin: Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference

1. What is the issue?

In the ongoing effort of The United Church of Canada to engage in Right Relations with the First Peoples of Canada, we believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to recognize, make known, and use the title of “The United Church of Canada” in the languages of the First Peoples within the regional boundaries of its Conferences and Presbyteries (and what may become its Regional Councils).

2. Why is this issue important?

Whereas one’s language, mother tongue—is crucial to one’s identity, both as an individual and as a collective group of people, the recognition and use of said language is perhaps not only a means of communication, but more importantly, an indication of respect.

The loss of mother tongue was one of the results for many First Nations children who attended residential schools.

As a means to acknowledge and to make visible the existence of Indigenous people and their languages and to educate the wider church about the Indigenous people in their region, and acting upon the suggestion and request of Elder Satewas (Harvey) and Susan Gabriel, the Quebec Presbytery Living Into Right Relations (LIRR) Committee asks that as an example, the Mohawk wording for The United Church of Canada—“latekentiokwaieston ne lonteren'naientakwa ne Kanata”—be included officially with English and French on letterheads and official documents of the church in Quebec.

As another example, Cree is a large First Nations population in Quebec, and that many Inuit people call the city of Montreal their home or otherwise access services there for healthcare and more, the LIRR Committee also asks that the Cree and Inuktitut wording for The United Church of Canada be searched out and considered.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

To study translating the name The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada into local Indigenous languages present in a given region of the church, with a view to include them on letterhead and official documents of the courts of the church.

SK 6 MINISTERIAL TRAINING IN RESPONSE TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION CALL TO ACTION 60

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

On May 23, 2018, racialized and Indigenous leaders from United Churches in Saskatchewan gathered together at the *Be Bold! Pre-Conference Event* in Battleford, SK ahead of the Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Conference. Delegates met to discuss shared experiences and to dream of the United Church embracing God's mission of struggle and resistance that seeks justice and inclusion of all peoples. Participants identified or re-iterated a number of tangible and concrete first steps towards confronting the United Church's legacy of complicity with structural racism and colonialism. The participants of *Be Bold!* recognized that the good work carried out through the national church and its arms, such as Intercultural ministry, the Aboriginal Ministries Circle and Theological Colleges, should be strengthened and their scope further expanded in the future as necessary. The participants agreed to bring a proposal to the Annual Meeting 2018 of Saskatchewan Conference to recommend to General Council options for training ministerial candidates and preparing candidates to serve in Aboriginal communities of faith by responding adequately to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 60.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has asserted the importance of persons training for ministry and those who will particularly work as ministers among Aboriginal communities should have adequate knowledge of Aboriginal history, their spirituality and the violence done to them through residential schools. The Call to Action #60 puts forward this requirement to all faith communities, including all churches, in Canada.

"We call upon leaders of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence."

2. Why is this issue important?

Our denomination has taken several steps in the past decades to partner in a positive way with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada aiming at reconciliation and living out the reality of “all my relations.” And now with the Aboriginal people reaching out to us to create opportunities for contextual learning, bridge building, reconciliation and achieving racial justice, we must just seize this overture as something that we have been waiting for and which is consistent with our calling as followers of Jesus, who reconciles and makes new our lives, our communities of faith and our church structures. Here is an openness and invitation from the side of Aboriginal people, with possibilities laid out for increased mutual sharing of theological perspectives and competence for ministering in Aboriginal contexts with sensitivity. Such an endeavour has the prospect of spurring concrete expressions of bridging racial divides and addressing various systemic injustices. This proposal stresses that theological competency in the Canadian context requires the knowledge of Indigenous spiritual traditions, of the disruptive effects of colonialism on their way of life, and the ability to work towards reconciliation. This entails the development of relevant components in the theological curricula which are to be compulsory, not optional.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The United Church of Canada might encourage its testamur-granting Theological Colleges and other educational bodies to develop concerted, timely and coordinated efforts to respond to Call to Action #60 in consultation with the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle, the National Indigenous Organization and other appropriate bodies.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

No.

TOR 1 FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR LIVING INTO RIGHT RELATIONS (LIRR) NETWORK BEYOND 2018

Origin: Toronto Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling the church to continue to live out its apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canada, and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation to establish and maintain good relations. The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle have called for indigenization and decolonization of the church: this is something that all communities of faith need to engage, as Indigenous church and as descendants of the colonizing church.

In 2008, over 90 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from each Conference, a group which became known as the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network, covenanted to:

- Explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the church.
- Facilitate processes to inform and engage the church and Canadians in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) process.

With the conclusion of the TRC, and its issue of 94 Calls to Action, the LIRR Network has continued to thrive, albeit with members of some Conferences being more active than others, and within a variety of models, to respond to those Calls to Action. The General Council has identified this work as a clear priority. The Network has been supported by two General Council staff (Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animators) as well as by some hours offered by some Conference and presbytery staff. LIRR and Indigenous Justice Facebook pages, electronic newsletters, worship resources, webinars, and videos (all largely prepared and posted by staff) have been primary ways of sharing resources and ideas, and encouraging one another in taking steps on the journey of reconciliation nationally. The Justice and Reconciliation Fund with a current annual budget of \$100,000 is available to any United Church group to “foster dialogue, reconciliation, and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.”

As we move to the three-court model and a new financing model, we want to ensure that the LIRR Network is immediately recognized under the definition of a network *which “links people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church”*; and as such continues to be supported by staff and funding from the whole church.

2. Why is this issue important?

The LIRR Network was instrumental in raising the awareness of the work of the TRC across the country, and encouraging participation in TRC hearings wherever they were held. Other churches have applauded the leadership of the United Church in addressing the residential school legacy, and other Indigenous justice issues. Hundreds of members in the LIRR Network are actively engaged in drawing attention to the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action and taking steps to eliminate racism towards Indigenous peoples, to build a new relationship based on an understanding of nation-to-nation identities and appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and culture, to educate ourselves about our shared history, and to make reparations. This is the most important task before Canada and the church today. It cannot be left to people in widespread locations with limited means to search each other out, and seek resources on an ad hoc basis.

Notes from the fall 2017 General Council Executive meeting contain these comments regarding clusters and networks:

Clusters are defined as “local clusters of communities of faith that would provide community and support for communities of faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning,” while networks would “link people working on

specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church.” Before the vote on this motion was called, facilitators noted that there was a concern expressed that without financial support, clusters and network will take time to form, and that may increase the loss experienced by the loss of presbyteries. It was also suggested that there should be encouragement for establishing clusters and networks prior to the change to the Three Council Model, with everyone sharing best practices.

Furthermore, The Executive agreed that

- those involved in clusters and networks will define their own meaning and responsibilities
- church councils will not define clusters and networks
- the church is encouraged to experiment with how clusters and networks can assist in living out the faith of The United Church of Canada
- clusters and networks are encouraged to seek support from local resources
- local bodies that wish to support clusters and networks are encouraged to do so
- church councils may support clusters and networks to their level of ability and within their areas of responsibility
- clusters and networks are encouraged to share their experiences with others in the church and the wider world through media available to the church
- following a period of experimentation, the church will learn intentionally from the experiences of clusters and networks

From News post Nov. 28, 2017, on Remit Implementation, www.united-church.ca/news/clarity-clusters-and-networks

The Indigenous Communities of Faith in the United Church through the report of the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle (September 2017) in Call #8 Concerning Sustainable Support called for:

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;

The LIRR Network functions to facilitate reconciliation throughout the whole church. It seems unreasonable and unfaithful that an existing network responding to national Calls to Action and a building nation-to-nation relationships should have to “seek support from **local** resources.” The support of this vitally important ministry should not be left to the possibility of no one having the responsibility to seek/provide resources, or the possibility of there being no or very limited local resources, however/wherever they might be located.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Toronto Conference asks General Council to:

- 1) Immediately recognize the establishment/existence of the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) Network when the three-court model is implemented;**

- 2) **Recognize that the purpose of the LIRR Network is to assist communities of faith, clusters, and regions to:**
 - **implement the United Nations Declaration as a framework for reconciliation**
 - **indigenize and decolonize the church**
 - **respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (in particular those directed at the churches)**
 - **learn about the legacy of residential schools, and the history of Indigenous peoples and their contributions**
 - **work ecumenically, particularly with respect to promoting KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) campaigns and initiatives as they pertain to truth and reconciliation, and Indigenous justice concerns**
 - **live out and theologically reflect on the meaning of the 1986 and 1998 apologies**
 - **and continue to explore, develop, and nurture just and respectful relationships including a deep appreciation of Indigenous spirituality and acts of reparation;**
- 3) **Provide at least two staff persons beyond 2018 to support the ongoing work of a Living into Right Relations Network (or its equivalent);**
- 4) **Provide Mission and Service Funds to employ staff in the General Council office and in the regions to support the LIRR work, particularly use of communications media, developing and sharing resources;**
- 5) **Maintain the Justice and Reconciliation Fund with its current purpose and a budget of \$100,000 per year for the next five years;**
- 6) **Convene a national gathering of the LIRR Network in 2019 (self-registering, all those who have been working actively to foster dialogue, learn our shared history, and implement the TRC Calls to Action or wish to do so); and**
- 7) **Include the oversight and nurture of the LIRR Network within the work of a national working committee within the new governance structure that would advise the General Council of the United Church on taking and animating actions on any matters relating to Indigenous justice, truth and reconciliation, and the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal titled “Funding Support for LIRR Network Beyond 2018”

and makes that following recommendation:

Recognizing that the General Council has no authority to bind current or future courts with responsibility for property sales, we recommend that congregations, presbyteries and proposed regions be invited, when property is being sold, to consider donating the land value to right relations and Indigenous justice work as an acknowledgement that our worship centres are on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.

TOR 2 TRC CALL 60/BLANKET EXERCISE**Origin: Toronto Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God is calling our church, beginning with our ministry personnel and leaders, to deeply immersive learning about the history and legacy of settler colonialism in Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

From its longstanding proximity to the centres of power in our society to its involvement in the Residential School system, the United Church of Canada bears a heavy burden of responsibility in the ongoing work of righting relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. But as our tradition of faith reminds us, broken relationships cannot be reconciled without repentance—without recognizing and rejecting the sin that has caused the breach.

Accordingly, a crucial part of the church's work of righting relations is educating ministry personnel and other leaders of the church about the history and legacy of colonialism. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has highlighted the need for this kind of education, calling on churches to "develop and teach curriculum" for clergy and staff on the religious dimensions of colonisation (see Call to Action 60). As learning that leads to repentance, such education cannot be limited to knowing facts, but must involve our entire beings—our minds, bodies, emotions, and senses of the spiritual.

One well-established example of this kind of immersive decolonial education is the Blanket Exercise, a highly participatory and interactive workshop that aims "to build understanding about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada by walking through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. Everyone is actively involved as they step onto blankets that represent the land, and into the role of First Nations, Inuit and later Métis peoples." The workshop has been developed by KAIROS, an ecumenical social justice organisation of which the United Church is an active member, and has proven to be an effective educational and empathy-building tool.

Many who have been called to positions of service and leadership in the United Church, led by and including many of our Indigenous leaders and ministers, have already begun the work of understanding and resisting colonial legacies in their contexts of ministry, often using tools like the Blanket Exercise. However, at present, education for ministry personnel and leaders about colonisation in Canada is neither required nor held to a common standard, as it is with training on racial justice and ministry boundaries. In the absence of a denomination-wide program of education, ministers and leaders may not be prepared to follow the call of God's reconciling Spirit to repentance and right relatedness.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the General Council establish a policy that all current and future ministry personnel and church leaders undergo immersive education on the history and legacy of Canadian colonialism using a tool such as the KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Living Waters Presbytery recommends this proposal.

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal titled “TRC Call/60 Blanket Exercise”

And makes the following recommendations:

1. that this policy would not apply to Indigenous ministry personnel and lay leaders, understanding that it is the right and responsibility of the Indigenous ministries and communities of faith of The United Church to determine their own training needs;
2. that this policy be strongly encouraged for other than Indigenous lay leaders; and
3. that this training involve only the official Kairos Blanket Exercise or other tools that have been developed in collaboration with Indigenous ministries and communities..

THEME: SMALL AND RURAL MINISTRY**BC 6 MINISTRY SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION****Origin: British Columbia Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to support small and emerging communities of faith who are living out their call of discipleship without the benefit of paid accountable ministry leadership.

2. Why is this issue important?

- a. “For as much as you have given a glass a water to one of these, truly you have given it to me.” As a denomination, we are called to care for those who live out their discipleship on the edges. There are communities that do not fit the traditional mold of called or appointed ministry: those who have experienced a decline in recent years and now find themselves unable to resource their ministry with paid accountable ministry leadership; and those who have found innovative ways to partner with neighbouring communities of faith, while not losing their individual identity.
- b. “For there are many parts, yet one body.” Ecclesiological we affirm that no one manifestation of a community of faith is superior to any other. They are all equal parts of the body of Christ. As such we acknowledge our commitment, within that body, to provide the support necessary for each part to thrive. For some that means expressions of discipleship that are historically familiar and easily fit within our current polity. For others this means forging new ground that needs to be accommodated for the health of all.
- c. As some communities of faith continue to decline, their ability to provide the resource of paid accountable ministry leadership decreases proportionately.
- d. In recent years, there has been an emergence of contextual responses to the challenge of discipleship with limited institutional support and paid ministry leadership.
- d. The faithful responses that have emerged have done so without adequate institutional support, guidance, oversight, and accountability.
- e. As communities of faith become increasingly congregational we risk losing a strong, even identifiable denominational identity.
- f. The identity challenge will be enhanced, particularly in rural and isolated communities, as the primary means of connection, that is presbytery, ceases to exist on January 1, 2019.
- g. Solutions to this adaptive challenge have been forced to fit within existing structures which were not designed to support the current context.
- h. Every community of faith needs the support of paid accountable ministry leadership.
- i. There needs to be an equitable distribution of responsibility, accountability, and support within the emerging new denominational system.
- j. Pastoral charge supervisors are becoming overworked and, when they’re in called or appointed ministries, their calling/appointing community is unfairly subsidizing the cost of supervision/support in terms of time and salary.

- k. Accountability works in both directions. It isn't sufficient to say congregations are accountable to the denomination. The denomination must also be accountable to communities of faith for the support and care (or lack thereof) it offers.
- l. Communities of faith thrive when they receive the support necessary in their particular context.
- m. The existing model of preaching points grouped together in pastoral charges, with the goal of fulltime paid accountable ministry leadership, with time limited pastoral charge supervision during a time of a vacancy, is outdated and does not reflect the reality that many of our communities find themselves faced with as they faithfully respond to the call of the gospel.
- n. Pastoral Charge Supervisors are currently undertrained for this specific ministry as it has evolved over time.
- o. The wellness of ministry personnel in these adaptive models is at risk as more is being asked with fewer resources to support ministry.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a. **Develop a handbook of best practices for communities not being served by paid accountable ministry leadership.**
- b. **Develop polity that provides for alternative means of engaging paid accountable leadership other than the traditional pastoral charge model and amalgamations.**
- c. **Develop a remuneration schedule for supervisors that acknowledges the true costs of a ministry of supervision and factors in scenarios where the supervisor is not in fulltime ministry.**
- d. **Develop training and accreditation for community/congregational supervisors.**
- e. **Develop and implement a strategy so that communities without paid accountable ministry leadership will receive the support necessary to thrive in their context.**
- f. **Draw on the expertise of those who have facilitated communities of faith in their discernment of ways to be disciples utilizing emergent models of paid ministry support.**
- g. **Develop a committee and network that could both facilitate resource development and advise the General/Regional Council on matters related to small communities of faith that exist in various contexts including isolated, rural, and urban.**

BQ 6 ALTERNATE RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling our communities of faith into different relationships and different relationships require differing governance structures. Our current governance structures described in the *Manual* presume a tradition congregation and pastoral charge. A community of faith may be as simple as a few who gather together around a kitchen table or as complex as a number of congregations/pastoral charges working together sharing a team of ministry personnel.

2. Why is this issue important?

We are a relational church seeking to ensure equality and justice in our relationships. Our policies and procedures have been created to ensure these principles within a Community of Faith, between Communities of Faith and in the relationships between Courts/Councils of the church.

New forms of being church are emerging in response to contextual realities. In the absence of guidance each emerging body struggles to create structure that respects the principles outlined in the *Manual* but also find aspects of those principles unwieldy and inappropriate for their needs.

In the experience of engaging four pastoral charges (five congregations), each served by part-time ministry, in a formation of Regional Ministry which will share full-time ministry personnel numerous challenges have arisen. The objective is to have autonomy of the individual churches while also maintaining a unity and cooperation. At some points the Official Board of a two point Pastoral Charge was required to make a decision and sometimes the decision needed to be made by the two congregations. The viability of the Pastoral Charge and the two congregations were at risk when a position on the future of the two needed to be taken independently and without mutual discernment. The emerging governance structure struggles to ensure essential guidance is provided to congregations that remain both autonomous in some matters and unified in others. A specific concern was when to respect the required attendance of Ministry Personnel for quorum and when to give freedom in congregational actions so as not to overwhelm the Ministry Personnel with administrative duties and meeting attendance.

In the absence of denominational guidance the potential exists that differing structures will emerge that fail to protect the principles of equality and justice and become a barrier to the common understanding and relationships that ensure that we are a united and uniting church.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

In the development and maintenance of differing Communities of Faith, *The Manual* offers limited guidance and is often more hindrance than support. Because ministry can look so different now, Communities of Faith would benefit from:

- Guidelines that ensure created governance structure keep the spirit of our polity, or
- Governance structure alternatives that are more flexible and responsive to the contextual reality of ministry in The United Church of Canada, especially regional team ministry, at times *The Manual* is more hindrance than support.

The General Council can provide significant support and guidance and maintain some commonality among Communities of Faith and across the denominations by the development and sharing principles and structures that guide Communities of Faith in governance or provides addition Governance Structures corresponding to the new and emerging ministry relationships. Such guidance and alternatives could be outlined in *The Manual*.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

That the Bay of Quinte Conference forward proposal BQ 6 to the General Council, with approval.

MNWO 1 RURAL PRAIRIE MARGINALIZATION

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

1. What is the Issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Declare the growing feeling of marginalization the Rural Church of the Canadian Prairies is experiencing.
- Ensure the church remembers to consider the whole people of God, with particular attention to the geographical challenges when authorizing changes in governance.

2. Why is this issue important?

In the *Song of Faith*, we read:

We sing of a church
 seeking to continue the story of Jesus
 by embodying Christ's presence in the world.
 We are called together by Christ
 as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
 loving what he loved,
 living what he taught,
 striving to be faithful servants of God
 in our time and place.

As followers of Jesus, we recognize that Jesus always cared for the marginalized. The United Church of Canada, through implementation of certain policies, has increased, rather than provided care for marginalized rural congregations. For example, the elimination of the Transfer and Settlement process has negatively impacted the rural Prairie Communities of Faith who gladly helped to form leaders in the church. This rural experience led to a broader understanding of the unique needs in rural prairie ministry and a connection to rural life. That has now been lost.

When we consider the kind of governance change we are working on in a church that encompasses the whole of Canada, our thinking tends to move to broad strokes. But our geographical contexts are varied. One change that may be suggested as workable in an urban context may not work in a rural prairie setting.

3. How might the church respond?

- **The General Council could formally recognize Prairie rural congregations as marginalized communities and ensure representation on the Denominational Council.**
- **The General Council could ensure consultation occurs with a soon to be formed Prairie Rural Advocacy Cluster, prior to implementing policy changes that will impact Prairie Rural Communities of Faith.**
- **The General Council Could open the way for special circumstances arising in rural Prairie ministries to be addressed by creating “an exception” to policy to enable the continuation of a Community of Faith, e.g. appointment of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader for regular worship leadership in the absence of ministry personnel.**

MNWO 2 FUNDING RURAL MINISTRY

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

1. What is the Issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- acknowledge that there are a growing number of rural areas on the prairies where there are more vacancies than ministry personnel and a number of the ministry personnel are retired and/or part-time;
- respond to the challenging financial constraints in prairie rural communities of faith that make it difficult to hire ministry personnel and access resources to reimagine ministry in these contexts. We are open to new ways of enacting our faith in these rural areas, but it can be difficult to explore possibilities on our own and an assessment by our Administrative Region would only create more hardship on these small but vibrant communities of faith;
- understand that many of the new initiatives promoted in urban settings to revitalize and reimagine church (Embracing Spirit) do not translate to the rural prairie context.

2. Why is this issue important?

Key underlying issues

Though we identify as a uniting church the congregants in rural communities on the prairies often feel misunderstood, marginalized and alienated by our denomination. We may be dwindling in number but our connection to the Creator and the land is strong. We witness to God all around us and are striving to connect younger generations to these spiritual roots. We offer vital supports and hope in the midst of challenging times through outreach, pastoral care, strong ecumenical bonds and actively engaging the work of reconciliation.

History/background

In the past, a number of rural communities of faith on the prairies were seen as missions and therefore eligible to receive Mission & Service Fund grants to help cover the costs of ministry. But in the last decade, the reduction of M&S funds available has meant that priority for funding is given to inner-city outreach ministries in many Regions.

Implications of taking no action on this issue

We fear that our denomination is becoming increasingly urbanized, making it difficult for rural prairie communities of faith to continue. In many cases, we are the only church in town and when we disappear there will no longer be a spiritual sanctuary for people to learn about God, to encourage us, to challenge our thinking, to walk with Jesus, to call us to action, to show our love and to listen for the quiet Spirit.

3. How might the church respond?

- **The General Council could set aside 3% of M&S dollars to help fund rural ministry on the prairies.**
- **The General Council could create a staff position entitled Rural Ministries Animator who would be situated within the prairie Administrative Region (Regions 2, 4, & 5)**
- **The General Council could allow the Rural Ministries Animator to oversee the dispensing of funds to engage and support rural ministry needs. This may include developing new models of ministry, supporting and resourcing laity, and encouraging church without walls.**

MNWO 4 ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

1. What is the Issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to support Pastoral Charges (Local Ministry Units) to increase their capacity to use technology to:

- Connect with other bodies of the church for meetings, webinars, online worship, etc;
- Communicate more efficiently in the new Regional Model of being the United Church;
- Save time, money and energy through connecting by phone or internet rather than driving the increased distances;
- Support each other's congregations and build healthy, thriving, viable faith communities.

Currently many congregations do not have the money to finance the hardware or training for people to use it.

2. Why is this issue important?

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

- As the United Church evolves into larger Regions for decision making, communication by means other than face-to-face meetings will become essential.
- In many Pastoral Charges, the capacity for distance communication (phone, internet, etc.) is limited by lack of equipment, or that the equipment belongs to the minister, not the pastoral charge.
- The capacity to use technology for distance communication is lacking or limited to the minister.
- Increasing numbers of pastoral charges are without called or appointed ministry personnel for long periods of time or permanently.
- Some pastoral charges share ministry personnel making communication between locations essential.
- Though there are some volunteers in congregations who are skilled in the use of technology, many (especially older) members are fearful of technology and need support to overcome barriers to learning.
- Some pastoral charges could benefit from live-streaming of worship services or education events, webinars.
- Most congregations are able to participate in a Telephone Conference Call. While this is adequate for conducting a short business meeting, the ability to see each other and share documents, participate in webinars, share worship, etc is required for building healthy pastoral charges and communities of faith.

Developing the capacity for communication and having the equipment to do so:

- Extends the capacity for study, and for conducting meetings of the church;
- Increases the ability to extend the mission of the church to places where it might be failing;

- Provides support to one another in ‘how-to’ be church in areas such as outreach, faith formation, training (sacrament elder, worship leadership), stewardship, administration, all areas that will fall to the Community of Faith (JNAC/Ministry Profile);
- Provides the ability to fill on on-line forms thus ensuring information is transmitted speedily and accurately;
- Currently, smaller churches that cannot afford to buy the equipment are increasingly feeling left out of or abandoned by the church. These same churches are often those without ministry personnel;
- Many Pastoral Charges are no longer able to afford full time ministry. Some have been without paid ministry personnel. Some have little or no music leadership. Congregations could share online worship with others, both neighbouring and at a greater distance. Volunteer leadership could benefit from worship and music resources which are available, but they need the technology and the capacity to use these. Provision of funding for equipment and training of leaders, especially those congregations without paid ministry, would allow them to participate more fully in the ongoing life of the wider church.

What is the history/background of this issue?

A recent survey conducted by Cambrian Presbytery (14 respondents out of 24) showed:

Availability of a computer	75% have a computer in the office 16% have a computer in the sanctuary 25% have a computer for their ministry personnel 25% have no computer	
Is there a notebook or laptop computer?	Most churches have at least one available to the church and/or the minister with 7% reporting none.	
Operating System:	Predominantly Windows 10 or lower 20% MAC Linux	
Highspeed Internet in Church	NO 21%	YES 79%
Download and upload Speed	Highly variable	
Hardware	NO	YES
Printers:		100% at least 1 or more, mix of laser and inkjet
Scanner	31%	69%
Digital Projector/Screen	21%	79%
Flat Screen TV 50" or greater	54%	46%
Speaker Phone	29%	71%
Sound System		100%
Microphone	14%	86% (1-4)
Headphones for Assisted Hearing	64%	36%

Software: 4 churches skipped this question

Of the 10 churches which responded some have some familiarity with:

- Adobe Acrobat reader: 90%
- Microsoft Office for Windows: 90%
- SKYPE: 70%
- ZOOM us basic: 40%
- Dropbox basic: 50%

Software skill levels vary from Office Administrator to Ministry Personnel.

Some pastoral charges do have excellent technical capacity. Some however do not have:

- new or up-to-date equipment (much is old or borrowed or a hodgepodge)
- adequate internet connection
- sufficient band-width in the community, either upload or download speed
- the ability to share documents by email
- the ability to access webinars
- the ability to fill in in-line forms
- In some cases the equipment (e.g. computer, lap-top, printer, etc) is owned by the minister and when he or she leaves, the pastoral charge is left without.

The fact that only 14 out of 24 pastoral charges responded to this survey conducted by Survey Monkey may be a further indication of the lack of or equipment or capacity to use technology.

We acknowledge the existence of Technology Grants that are already part of the current Financial Resources Handbook Abbreviated www.united-church.ca/handbooks but challenge whether the terms of reference are adequate to meet the needs.

What are the principles informing this issue?

- Every pastoral charge, congregation, local ministry unit should be able to communicate effectively by telephone and internet, with other bodies of the church,
- As a church that values inclusion, it is important that the many national audio-visual resources that are now dependent on technology or internet access or both, are accessible by all pastoral charges.

4. How might the church respond?

The General Council could ensure there is ongoing funding for enhanced Technology Grants for pastoral charges which need to upgrade their equipment and software to a specified standard.

The General Council could ensure that Funded Training Courses and Support are available to enhance the capacity for members of the pastoral charges (lay members and ministry personnel) in the use of technology for communication and worship (especially that unique to The United Church of Canada).

The General Council could establish a requirement in the Pastoral Relations Covenant (PR 450) to include the hardware and internet access where possible.

THEME: THEOLOGY

MAR 2 1925 20 ARTICLES OF FAITH

Origin: Maritime Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe it is time for The United Church of Canada to eliminate the 1925 Twenty Articles of Faith from the “essential agreement with the doctrine of the United Church” requirement for candidates for ministry, those being admitted into ministry in the United Church and for ministry personnel who are active in ministry in The United Church of Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

The 1925 Articles of Faith were written prior to Church Union to “set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us” (Article 2.0). They were written in the language of the day, and “with relative ease due to the fact that theological developments during the latter half of the 19th century brought the three denominational traditions much closer together, in terms of what members of each denomination believed, than had been the case at an earlier time in history” (Our Words of Faith, page 10).

The Articles of Faith are written in a language that is both gender and theologically exclusive, that as noted above, reflect theological developments during the latter half of the 19th century. They do not take into account modern biblical scholarship, feminist, liberation, Black, or other progressive theological thought; nor do they reflect the scientific advances of the 20th and 21st century that necessarily influence how many in the church think about and name what they believe.

“The Doctrine Sub-Committee was also influenced...by the conviction that Canada, in the midst of dramatic population and industrial growth in the early 20th century, needed a strong national Protestant church to help the nation meet the challenges of the early 20th century” (Our Words of Faith, page 10). This is no longer the world we live in. We live in a global village, a multi-faith country and world, where the United Church is engaged in a reconciliation process with First Nations communities and in respectful dialogue with members of the Jewish and Muslim faiths. The exclusivity of the 1925 Articles of Faith not only does not reflect this, taken literally, they negate the possibility of these actions/engagement.

Thomas Kilpatrick, a member of the Church Union sub-committee tasked with writing the Doctrine section for Church Union wrote: “This doctrinal statement makes no claim to infallibility or finality. Creed revision is the inherent right, and the continual duty, of a living Church” (Our Words of Faith, page 9).

The principles informing this issue are those of ethics and justice. Put bluntly the question the church must ask itself is: is it ethical or just to ask candidates for ministry, those who desire to transfer into ministry into The United Church of Canada, or active ministry personnel, to be in “essential agreement” with the 1925 Articles of Faith that were written almost 100 years ago to

reflect the church's shared beliefs at that time, that do not take into consideration any of the theological, biblical, or scientific advances of the last century, and that do not recognize in any way that the church and our nation are part of a multi-faith, global community?

The implications of taking no action on this proposal is to continue to put candidates for ministry, those seeking admission into the United Church and those active in ministry, who are unable to be in essential agreement with all or parts of the doctrine that reflects the churches beliefs from an earlier era and was never meant to be a final word, in an ethical dilemma; to say they are in essential agreement when they really are not or to say they are not in agreement and be refused entrance into ministry or possible review if they are active in ministry.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council adopting a position to remove the 1925 Articles of Faith from the "essential agreement" requirement of the church for those entering, transferring in or already in ministry in The United Church of Canada

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The members of the Lent Study Group/Session who examined the question: What We Used to Believe and What We Now Believe, who used the 1925 Articles of Faith and the 2006 A Song of Faith to guide their discussion, came to the conclusion that it is unfair (a matter of justice), unethical and simply wrong to require anyone entering or in ministry in The United Church of Canada to be in "essential agreement" with the 1925 Articles of Faith. In fact, all the members of the study group were clear they themselves are not in essential agreement with portions of the 1925 Articles of Faith.

The 93rd Maritime Conference Annual Meeting offered an additional comment: "That there was significant discussion and concern about the meaning of essential agreement as it applies across the breadth of our church and we would like GC to clarify what that means so all are being held to roughly similar standards of answering the question."

Transmitted with concurrence to Maritime Conference by South Shore Presbytery, April 26, 2018.

Stephen Mills/Tony Orlando moved that Maritime Conference transmit Proposal 2 to the 43rd General Council with non-concurrence.

Carried

SK 2 CHANGE OF WORDING TO QUESTIONS ASKED OF CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe it is critically important at this time in the life of The United Church of Canada that the Church address the questions that are asked of candidates for ordered ministry as these are worded in the Basis of Union 11.3, particularly question 1: Do you believe in God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and do you commit yourself anew to God?

2. Why is this issue important?

The current wording of Basis of Union 11.3 creates a crisis of conscience for many candidates, a crisis that is not solved for everyone by the “in essential agreement” clause. This issue also has relevance for the whole Church in that many members and adherents of the United Church are unable in good conscience to affirm this particular concept of God.

- a) Candidates and others are aware that the traditional “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” language does not reflect the wide range of understandings of God that are held, and have been held for many years, within the United Church. Many are familiar with descriptions of God as “Mother” as well as “Father,” as “Holy Mystery,” “Holy Presence,” “Source of Life and Love,” “Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,” “Eternal One,” “Holy One,” and others.
- b) Candidates for ministry know, as do the rest of us, that the United Church has committed itself to the acknowledgement and inclusion of Indigenous spirituality in which God is typically referred to as “Creator,” or by names from the various Indigenous languages.
- c) And some will be aware that the “Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle,” representing the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, the ANCC, and the Native Ministries of BC, Ontario, and Quebec, have developed “Nine Calls to the Church” that have been approved by the GC Executive and will be presented for adoption at GC43.

In the preamble to the Calls, the statement is made: *We, the Indigenous ministries and communities of faith of The United Church, declare that we will tell our own story of what ministry means for us.... We will determine an Indigenous Testamur, a training program for ministry preparation, that will help our leaders be competent as the healers and helpers our communities are crying out for.*

It is reasonable to assume that the questions the Indigenous United Church asks of its candidates for ministry will conform to this declaration.

- d) Candidates within the United Church know, as do the rest of us, that our church claims to be *inclusive*—inclusive of a wide variety of persons and inclusive of various theologies. In the statement “What We Believe” (2004), we say:

The Bible is the shared standard for our faith, but members are not required to adhere to any particular creed or formulation of doctrine. (Emphasis added.)

If this claim is valid, why is it that candidates for ministry within this church are still required to embrace one very particular and dated formulation of doctrine?

- e) We are all aware that this issue is very much on the minds of United Church people, as evidenced by the fact that a Proposal from Toronto Conference calling for a review of the wording of Basis of Union 11.3 was just marginally defeated by a commission at GC42. We are also aware that there are frequent letters to *The Observer* about what ministers and members of the United Church “must” believe.
- f) And finally, many know that “A Song of Faith,” the most recent statement of belief adopted by the United Church and included in the Basis of Union begins with the words, “God is Holy Mystery, beyond complete knowledge, above perfect description.”

This concept, we believe, reflects a degree of humility and openness that is absent from the wording of Basis of Union 11.3.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that GC43 decide to replace the words of the first question of Basis of Union 11.3 with a formulation that allows for a broader understanding of God, for example, God who is “Holy Mystery,” followed by the words, “and do you commit yourself to God anew?”

We further propose that GC43 authorize a Remit on this matter to be circulated throughout the Church, with a view to presenting the results of the votes to GC44 for review and decision.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Are there any comments, affirmations, suggestions that the Conference would like to make with respect to this proposal?

Following the decision by Saskatchewan Conference to transmit the proposal, it was agreed that the words “for example, God who is “Holy Mystery” should be deleted.

TOR 4 RETHINKING AND UPDATING THE SOCIAL GOSPEL THEOLOGY

Origin: Toronto Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe the Trinitarian God is calling us to challenge the United Church to engage the issue of rethinking and updating the Social Gospel theology that has been central to United Church identity since its formation, leading to a change in how we engage the community in justice work.

2. Why is this issue important?

History and present context

The United Church of Canada was formed in 1925 after 25 years of negotiation with the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in Canada. This initiative took place at a time when a North American-developed theology called the Social Gospel was embraced by American Protestants. These people were descended from those who had come to the “new world” to escape persecution in England. They hoped to create a “new heaven on earth.” It was shaped by the social problems created by rapid industrialization, urbanization and increasing immigration. This theology called for the churches to step away from a theology of personal salvation towards a theology that embraced the needs of the marginalized. Matthew 25:31–46 provides a firm basis with Jesus calling on his followers to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit those sick and in prison. It prioritized social salvation above personal salvation. A central belief is that God is at work in social change, creating moral order and social justice. Its goal was a Christianized society in which cooperation, mutual respect and compassion replaced greed, competition and class conflict. Its adherents spoke out against racial inequality, especially racism against African-American descendants of slavery, extending to them the “brotherhood of man” (sic). This movement laid the groundwork for progressivism in both secular and religious ideas, including the academic fields of social ethics and sociology.

This is a theology that many still can support and embrace, but as in all theologies, there are weaknesses. It assumes that all of society is, or should be, Christian. Unaware of how colonialism was affecting their thought and action, they felt free to bring forward “the right ideas” and social critiques motivated by what they felt God was asking them to do. Many in the UCC still strongly identify with this theology today—that God is asking the church to speak out in the public square, challenging public policy on a variety of issues.

Today we live in a much different context than those who first developed the Social Gospel movement. Those making policy in the United Church are mainly from the dominant culture in Canada. Rather than being victims of discrimination and oppression, the majority of our people descend from the ones who were the perpetrators. We are beginning to be aware of how this colonial mindset has shaped our attitudes, and specifically in this instance, made us feel that what we say is important and right, that we have a special role in dictating what justice should look like in Canada and beyond. The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Reynolds, Associate Professor of Theology at Emmanuel College in Toronto, points out that the world is dealing with many issues, including climate change, religious intolerance and a lot of divisive rhetoric

(Interreligious Learning as Theological Education, EC News, The Newsletter of Emmanuel College, Winter 2017, p. 6). A key issue in Canada is the need to move towards reconciliation with our Indigenous population. We are also working on the need to integrate where we belong in the world as a nation which releases resources from the earth both here and beyond. A third issue is redefining our identity to take into account the diversity brought by many immigrants from different cultures over the years since The United Church of Canada was formed. Many from the margins are finding their voice and demanding justice in these issues and others, which calls for the church to take its advocacy in new directions.

Key underlying theological issues

1. Imago Dei

One of the difficulties humans face when living in groups is how to regard “the other.” Many destructive attitudes over the millennia have resulted from the idea that “the other” is lesser, perhaps not even fully human. We see this in many places today, from the treatment of Indigenous people by those who colonized their lands, to looking down on those who are from different cultures on the basis that their values, religions, cultures are lesser than the dominant group. This leads to dangerous labelling and unjust treatment. In our day we need a theology which challenges the dehumanizing stereotypes created by such labelling. As people of faith we are called to be part of the dialogue to create a civilization of love and a culture of life to paraphrase the words of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II.

Rather than looking at social issues as “problems” to be solved, such a theology focusses on the humanity of all, including those on the margins. It calls for respect and dignity for all. It calls for engaging those who struggle, not with the point of view of helping them but rather from the point of view of learning from them in order to develop policy that promotes a positive place for them and for everyone in society.

Such a theology uses the concept of Imago Dei. We learn in the Book of Genesis that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. We understand through the Trinitarian formula, that God is personal and relational, that human life cannot be understood apart from the mystery of the God of relationship.

Thus any society that does not do everything it can to enhance the dignity of every person within it, including those who are vulnerable and deemed insignificant, falls short of the vision God has for humanity.

Imago Dei is a relational notion, and its inclusion in the drive of the Social Gospel would enhance it tremendously. With it, people are seen as loved children of God rather than problems to be dealt with. Embracing it would fundamentally change how the UCC would reach out into the world to be part of justice-seeking efforts.

2. Feminist Theology

Elizabeth Johnson has done important work in clarifying the interrelatedness principles of the Trinitarian formulation. These reaffirm that God is not an isolated, static, ruling monarch but a

relational, dynamic interpersonal mystery of love (Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, p. 192). The use of male pronouns for God in a patriarchal society has reduced the ability to see this model without a leader and dominant person, God the Father, and subservient persons, Jesus the Son and Holy Spirit. If the Trinity is viewed hierarchically, the deeply relational aspect of the formulation is damaged. In a patriarchal model, one person would need to be the leader in order to preserve harmony and prevent chaos. When people do this, Johnson feels that the personal identities of the three persons of the Trinity “become indistinct and harmony destroyed. A different order based on mutual personal relations and shared responsibility is not envisioned” (She Who Is, 197).

Johnson posits that the very essence of God is to be in relationship. The Trinity is not a hierarchy involving domination/subordination but rather one of genuine mutuality in which there is radical equality while distinctions are respected. Such an understanding of the Trinity informs feminist principles of mutuality, relation, equality and community in diversity.

Added to the Social Gospel, these principles would bring a whole new dimension to working to create justice in the world.

Key underlying ecclesiological issues

One of the big issues for the UCC in engaging this theological shift is that people have engaged justice issues in all four courts of the church. We are not a church with a strong central body that is defining theological positions and requiring the other three courts (soon to be two courts) to adhere to them. On the other hand, the General Council of the church meets every three years with people (rather than “representatives”) coming from all across the church, to make denominationally-shaping decisions. When policy decisions are made there, they are applied across the church.

The work recommended by this proposal would not lead directly to policy, but it is to be hoped that if it were engaged, not only at General Council, but more widely in the regions and in congregations, it would lead to different policy decisions being made. Perhaps the best outcome would be for the wider church to learn about and support local initiatives that could be described in the words of The Rev. Dr. Donna Kerrigan, M.Div., D.Min., as “the small way in” that carry forward the work of reconciliation work on the reordering of the economic benefits of society, and work towards true integration of diverse groups in ways that speak of the theological underpinnings described above. She describes the efforts as “humble, caring, painstaking work.”

Dr. Thomas E. Reynolds, in speaking about interreligious learning, describes “three areas of promise” in engaging in such dialogue. First is reflection, an opportunity to learn more and analyze our own religious traditions in order to provide “a framework for challenging and dismantling harmful and divisive distortions, both past and present.” He says that such reflection helps learners grow in self-awareness and humility, recognizing the limits of their own perspectives. This can lead to fruitful relationships with others, conversations across boundaries that can lead to hospitable and respectful bonds that survive disagreement. These

two factors of reflection and relationship can lead to a third outcome, responsibility. Reynolds says: “Growth in compassion and mutual respect are significant fruits of learning in the company of one another. These require deep listening skills open to the unique experience of others. They also mark a dedication to being together in accountable and just ways, being sensitive to power relations and sharing responsibility in fashioning a common public sphere. Interreligious learning therefore addresses intolerance, and challenges discrimination and injustice through fostering cultural competencies and working for social equity” (Interreligious Learning as Theological Education, p. 6).

Key underlying missional issues

Across Canada and around the world, the UCC is a force for justice in many hands-on projects to improve people’s lives. The excellent Minutes for Mission published each year highlight the good work done and lives changed for the better. This proposal celebrates that work and gives a model for how to approach the deeper work of changing hearts and minds for broader, societal change that would reduce the need for hands-on work to lift people individually. Former Moderator, The Very Rev. Gary Paterson gave a good example of this approach during the public debate on MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying). He suggested that the UCC could be very helpful in the debate by offering their facilities and people as loci for conversations about the issue. This approach respects the variety of responses to the issue and the need for dialogue, rather than having the church advocate for a particular point of view on the issue.

Key underlying justice issues

The UCC has a long and proud history of speaking out against injustice both in Canada and beyond. The approach taken has been responsive to the context of the day. Having discussed above the present context, this proposal is asking for a conversation about what the appropriate and most effective approach is now. In many cases, analyzing the issue is less complex than figuring out how to speak publicly about it. The theology above asks that as Christians we keep ever mindful of the humanity of all involved, not only the people suffering the injustice (or the earth) but also those perpetrating the injustice. In many cases, the perpetrators or at the least, the enablers, are those wishing to advocate for change. Using the principle that dialogue includes listening to learn the story of ALL affected by a particular issue, the first step is to find dialogue partners with whom learning and transforming is possible on both sides, as described by Dr. Thomas Reynolds above. Here dialogue is defined as humbly entering into conversation with the aim of learning more, coming closer and developing improved trust in order to work towards reconciliation.

Principles informing the issue

The UCC has a long history of speaking out on justice issues. Lifting up the history and present-day context, plus the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional and justice issues described above, calls on the church to modify and refine its prophetic role.

In the case of relations with Indigenous peoples, justice for other marginalized groups, and deeper connections with other faith groups, training is required to help individuals at all levels

of the church to understand how to engage in dialogue which will be most effective to help dialogue partners grow in understanding of one another to move towards reconciliation.

Resources are available. The late Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, American Psychologist, has developed an extensive network of programs and resources to help people understand how the way they approach communicating with one another has important effects on the outcome. His program is called “Nonviolent Communication” and can be found at www.NonviolentCommunication.com.

Dr. Sharon Strand Ellison has a similar program, but aimed more at communicating in groups. Her system is called “Powerful Nondefensive Communication and can be accessed at www.pndc.com. As with the theological work previously described, Ellison identifies the dualisms of “us/them”, win/lose as destructive in the work of true dialogue. “For centuries, across lines of race, class and culture, we’ve used the “rules of war” to underpin verbal interactions.” When people feel attacked, they react defensively, creating barriers to dialogue and resolution of issues. She sees a need to change the culture in this respect, which is the intent of this proposal.

In a powerful book on Jewish–Christian dialogue, *A Dialogue for Life: Towards the Encounter of Jews and Christians*, by Silvina Chemen and Francisco Canzani, American theologian William Sloane Coffin is quoted as saying: “I believe in seekers of truth, not in possessors of truth.” This open-hearted approach to dialogue is what this proposal seeks to encourage. It is dialogue without the need to win; it “requires without economic, political, cultural and religious reductionisms, *listening, love, understanding and transformation*” (my italics) (*Dialogue of Life*, p. 174).

This proposal does not abandon the principle of advocating for those historically less able to advocate for themselves, but it adds two important dimensions not considered when the social gospel was first developed. Firstly, our society is not exclusively Christian; in fact, Christians are no longer the dominant group. Many identify as secularists, Jews, Muslims, other faiths, practitioners of Indigenous Spirituality, among many others. Renewed principles of dialogue are essential in this multi-faith world. Secondly, there was a lack of understanding about the colonial mentality that led people who had colonized the land to feel that they were superior and their message the right one without regard to the perspective of “the other” for whom they were advocating. The rethinking called for here holds as a first principle the dignity of the individual (human, animal, earth itself). The key ingredient needed is to include the “other” and the other’s situation and thinking into the approach.

Richard Rohr, Catholic theologian, talks about the action that follows faith commitment, that after transformation, it is not about doing right; it is about being in right relationship. It is not about being correct, it is about being connected.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Study and discussion is the main action requested by this proposal, with the hope that the principles of faithful and effective dialogue would find their way into policy and strategy over time. In order to facilitate these conversations, the General Council would need to engage in the conversation itself and produce resources for those in other spaces in the church to have their own conversation within their own group and then with other people in the community around them.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal entitled “Rethinking and Updating the Social Gospel Theology”

And makes the following recommendations:

1. that the appropriate General Council committee be invited to give leadership to this work;
2. that we see this as a call to action;
3. that we include as many voices as possible throughout the United Church and beyond in the consultation;
4. that we acknowledge in many ways we are engaging in conversation and relationship already and need to keep building on this; and
5. that every region have a social justice animator to help in engaging this work.

THEME: NON-PRIORITIZED**ANW 3 DISASTER ASSISTANCE STRATEGY****Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference****1. What is the issue?**

We believe God is calling us to witness to the healing love of Christ through offering compassionate accompaniment to communities of faith, key leaders and ministry personnel working in communities which have been adversely affected by natural and/or human-caused disasters. We believe that an intentional strategy is needed to support long-term recovery in disaster impacted communities of faith, with a focus on providing emotional and spiritual support to the key leaders and ministry personnel who are offering support to others.

2. Why is this issue important?

In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul reminds us that we are one body in Christ and that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” (*verse 26*)

With the advancing change in our climate, we are experiencing increased natural disasters on our continent, including flooding, ice storms, and forest fires that are causing trauma and suffering in many communities. Communities of faith are at the centre of community life, offering caring and support to those devastated in these situations. At the same time, the ministry personnel, key leaders, and congregational members are often dealing with having lost their own homes, church building and/or livelihoods because of the disaster, so these people are suffering in the midst of the post-disaster chaos even as they seek to faithfully accompany others who are suffering in the catastrophic situation.

As has been shown in past natural and human-caused catastrophic disasters, the people of The United Church of Canada are ready and willing to respond as the body of Christ, offering financial, spiritual and emotional support and encouragement. At the same time, there is no formal plan or strategy to draw together this support and deliver it in a timely manner.

Studies of communities recovering after a disaster show that the recovery takes from 5 to 7 years, depending upon the severity of the disaster, and the resources that are made available in a timely manner for the physical recovery. While people across the country quickly offer financial and emotional support in the days and weeks immediately following the disaster hitting the media, this support diminishes with time. However, those living in the midst of the disaster area face a long journey of recovery. Key leaders in these communities are often burned out after the initial stages of post-disaster response.

Church communities are well positioned within their own communities to be centres of ongoing support in the long term disaster recovery for their area. What they need is information to understand what they are facing, resources to support the journey, and compassionate accompaniment by those who understand the journey.

Background

In Alberta and Northwest Conference, over the course of 5 years (2011-2016), three large natural disasters devastated areas of Alberta, two of these being the largest of their kind in Canadian history. At the centre of each of these disasters, United Church of Canada congregations and ministry personnel were offering support and leadership during the evacuations and through all stages of the recovery. These disasters were:

- the Slave Lake wild fires in 2011
- the 2013 flooding which put 85% of High River under water and saw extensive damage and flooding in Canmore, Bragg Creek, Calgary, the Siksika First Nation, and other areas
- the 2016 Fort McMurray forest fires

Several **key experiences** out of this series of disasters in ANW Conference have led to this proposal being put forward to General Council 43:

- 1) The Executive Secretary of Alberta & Northwest Conference took leadership in connecting the ministry personnel of these three communities. Through teleconferences, the United Church minister at Slave Lake was able to provide support and insights about the post-disaster journey to the ministers at High River United Church in 2013. Then, in 2016, the ministers of High River United Church were able to provide support and insights to the minister at Fort McMurray. In each case, the information received was key in helping the congregation, newly in the midst of disaster, understand what they were facing and what they could do.
- 2) Through the Presbyterian Church in Canada, High River United Church ministry personnel were connected with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance – USA team. With funding provided through Alberta & Northwest Conference, three visits to High River by the PDA-USA team were arranged. This was the first time that the PDA-USA had worked in Canada, and they were quite happy to come to offer their expertise and skills. On their first visit, about 8 months after the disaster, community sessions were arranged for first responders, medical personnel, the town council and mayor, the fire chief, and other key front line workers during the flood, evacuation and early days of the disaster. These sessions helped everyone understand what a community goes through post-disaster and what they, as key leaders and first responders, might be experiencing. The second PDA-USA visit, about 15 months post-disaster, was a follow-up to the first, offering sessions to anyone in the community who needed emotional and spiritual support. The third visit, by one member of the PDA-USA team, took place about 27 months post-disaster and focussed on supporting the key leaders and ministry personnel of High River United Church.
- 3) Through the generous donations of churches and individuals across Canada, High River United Church was able to hire an ordained minister, trained in trauma counselling, to work alongside their incumbent ministry staff for 10 months. This minister was able to do most of the counselling and pastoral care, allowing the incumbent ministers to deal with the rebuilding of the church, the cleaning and repair of their own home, and to begin to recover emotionally from their own trauma in the situation. This person intentionally learned from the work of the PDA-USA and sought out courses to build

skills in the area of post-disaster recovery. She was then able to provide similar support in Fort McMurray following the 2016 forest fires.

The **key learnings** out of these experiences in Alberta & Northwest Conference are:

- 1) Long-term emotional and spiritual support is key to the recovering of the vitality of congregations (and communities) affected by catastrophic disasters.
- 2) Ministry personnel and key congregational leaders in disaster situations need long term (up to 5 years) support from outside of their communities to remain spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy and to be able to support the people of their congregations in their recovery
- 3) Support from someone who knows the territory of post-disaster recovery is the most helpful in understanding the chaos, the emotions, and the challenges of the situation and to find a way through to health and vitality.
- 4) Ministry personnel and key congregational leaders are already overwhelmed in post-disaster situations, making it hard for them to reach out for emotional and spiritual support just when they most need it. They need someone from the national (broader) church to take the initiative in offering support to them and to their congregation.

Resources

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance – USA, “Out of Chaos, Hope.” <http://pda.pcusa.org/>

United Church of Christ – USA – Disaster Ministries. <http://www.ucc.org/disaster>

The PDA-USA and UCC-USA both work in conjunction with National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD) to provide compassionate and practical support in communities following disasters.

Light Our Way: A Guide to Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster by National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD)

A book of resources to help understand and support people who have experienced disaster in the journey of recovery.

Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters by Laurie Kraus, David Holyan, and Bruce Wismer (John Knox Press, 2017)

The three authors of this book are all involved with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance team and bring a wealth of knowledge from their involvement.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We ask that General Council direct the formation of an intentional strategy to offer ongoing emotional and spiritual support to United Church of Canada ministry personnel and key community of faith leaders in areas affected by natural or human-caused disasters, as these people offer care to their congregations and broader communities post-disaster. This strategy could include one or more of the following:

- a. a gathering of United Church of Canada ministry personnel and key community of faith leaders from areas which have been affected by natural or human-caused disasters, who would like to be engaged in developing such a strategy, to draw on their experience and learnings, and to engage them, as they are emotionally ready, to be part of this ongoing support strategy.
- b. a national staff person who would make contact with ministry personnel and/or key community of faith leaders within the first week after a natural or human-caused disaster to determine needs for emotional, spiritual, and financial support, and to initiate an ongoing support strategy.
- c. engage conversation with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance – USA and United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries, who work together through NVOAD (*National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters*) to learn from their long experience in responding to disaster situations, with the possible view of forming a collaborative partnership with one or both of these denominations to resource and respond to Canadian churches in the midst of catastrophic situations.
- d. engage ecumenical partners, such as the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, as well as interfaith partners, to be part of a collaborative disaster response strategy modelled on the work of the PDA-USA.
- e. gather and make available worship resources and other spiritual resources developed within communities of faith who have previously experienced catastrophic disasters.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Presented by Foothills Presbytery to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference. Transmitted with concurrence by Alberta and Northwest Conference to the 43rd General Council.

ANW 7 MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe Holy Spirit is calling The United Church of Canada to be intentionally caring and welcoming for persons living with or affected by mental illness.

2. Why is this issue important?

The gospels offer multiple examples of Jesus caring for people living with illnesses. In Luke 4, when Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah, he included an example of healing in the priorities of Spirit and his mission. Jesus' healing ministry is well documented in the Gospels. This ministry also extends to those who were considered as being demon possessed. Through our contemporary lens we understand that those who were considered demon possessed would today be considered as living with mental illness. The scriptures therefore show that the healing ministry of Jesus was not confined to physical illnesses; he was also concerned about mental

illness. We who are the followers of the Christ continue his work in our present realities. The care of people living with mental illness is genuinely part of the Mission of the church.

Robert Albers, in his book *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families*, notes that mental illness is often viewed as a “socially unsanctioned illness.” In many cases there is stigma associated with mental illness. This results in a culture of shame and silence which surrounds persons who are living with mental illness and their families. In many instances persons in this situation are either ignored or made to feel that they have done something wrong. Families with persons who are living with mental illness are made to feel shame. This conspiracy of silence creates a culture where the care of persons living with mental illness is negatively affected because persons are unwilling to speak about their illness. The situation is compounded by the news media which tends to highlight only those persons living with mental illness who have committed violent acts (e.g. the recent shootings at the Parkland School in Florida) . The result is that the persons living with mental illness are presented as persons to be feared. Often times we seem to forget that the persons living with mental illness are human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God. The weight of the stigma surrounding persons who are living with mental illnesses drives many of them, and their families, into a state of unhealthy silence. This conspiracy of silence is also found in the church where it is not often that we hear about the issues of mental illness in the proclamation or programming of the church. There have also been reports where persons who are mentally ill have been asked to leave churches for fear that they will be disruptive to the worshipping community.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association in any given year, one in every 5 persons will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.¹ The Association notes that mental health in Canada affects all ages and is seen in persons of all education and income levels and in all cultures present in the country.

Other statistics from the association reveal that²

- Approximately 8% of all adults in Canada will experience major depression at some time in their lives
- 1% of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder or manic depression
- By age 40 it is estimated that 50% of Canadians will have or have had a mental illness
- Schizophrenia affects 1% of the population
- Anxiety disorders affect 5% of households causing mild to severe impairment
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death of both men and women from adolescence to middle age
- Mortality rates due to suicide among men is four times the rate among women
- Youth suicide in Canada is the 3rd highest in the industrialized world
- Suicide is among the leading causes of death among youth, ages 15–24, second only to accidents

¹ “Canadian Mental Health Association,” 2018, <https://cmha.ca/about-cmha/fast-facts-about-mental-illness>.

² “Canadian Mental Health Association.”

- Only 1 out of 5 children who need mental health services receives them

The statistics available for Canada point to the reality that mental health issues are far from being the exception or infrequent occurrence. While it is not an epidemic, there are many persons in our society who are facing mental illness or are affected by mental illness.

The Demographic Report 2017 of The United Church of Canada shows that mental health is the largest cause of insurance claims among ministry personnel and staff. The figures presented in the report suggest that this has been the case for the years 2014–2017.³ Evidence exists which continues to suggest that the average minister faces significant amounts of stress as they carry out their vocation.

The above information does not show the reality of the ways mental illness intersects with gender, race, economics and social status. Statistics reveal how frequently women, racialized people, those living in poverty, the homeless and immigrants have been diagnosed with mental illness. In some of instances these diagnoses belie issues of racism, sexism and privilege. More resources are needed to enable effective diagnoses.

The church, being a community of love, should not be silent on these issues and should intentionally respond to enable the over-all well-being of all people, including those who are living with illness (physically and mentally).

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

In response to the issue presented above, the General Council could consider the following:

- 1. Commence work to enable The United Church of Canada to be an intentionally welcoming and caring environment for those living with mental illness.**
- 2. Request that the General Secretary form a working group to help the church towards being intentionally caring and welcoming to those living with mental illness. This working group could undertake the following:**
 - a. Developing or sourcing resources which would provide accurate information about mental illness to members and congregations, and that recommendations on scope of practice and referral be included in these materials.**
 - b. Study the reality of mental illness in Canada.**
 - c. Encourage dialogue within the church about mental illness (as a way of combating stigma).**
 - d. Advocate for the issues relating to mental illness, including access to affordable treatments for people who are affected by mental illness.**
- 3. Develop a church-wide policy on Mental Health Awareness which could be useful to guide the mission of the church in its ministry with persons with mental illness.**

³ *Demographic Report 2017* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2017).

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Presented by Paul Douglas Walfall and Adam Hall to the 85th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Adopted by Alberta and Northwest Conference for submission to the 43rd General Council.

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Canadian Mental Health Association. (2018). Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://cmha.ca/about-cmha/fast-facts-about-mental-illness>.

The United Church of Canada. (2017). *Demographic Report 2017*. Toronto: The United Church of Canada. Retrieved April 30, 2018, from Demographic Report Presentation 2017: <https://commons.united-church.ca> (see the PC-MEPS folder in the Governance folder)

BC 1 ADVOCACY FOR THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF DRUG POSSESSION FOR PERSONAL USE

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

Currently in Canada the ongoing punitive approach towards simple possession of drugs for personal use has neglected to see that drug addiction is a health issue, not a crime, and therefore ought not be criminalized.

Criminalization of simple possession has unnecessarily harmed individuals, families and communities and directed police and judicial resources towards criminalizing casual and entrenched users rather than importers and suppliers and neglected to provide adequately for medical, social and rehabilitative supports.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- respond to the challenge of the impact of criminalization of drugs for personal use.

2. Why is this issue important?

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

The United Church of Canada seeks hope and healing for all persons and communities. We are committed to living out the healing ministry of Jesus in all areas of life and to take seriously the choice set before us by Moses: “To choose life, not death, blessing not curse.”

This is an issue of social justice which bears on civil society’s capacity to support those most vulnerable, including those who struggle with issues of addiction and mental health.

What is the history/background of this issue?

For all of human history human beings have used substances in forms such as alcohol, natural remedies, hallucinogenics and more recently pharmaceuticals. In most societies those substances have been both accepted and monitored, with criminalization being the route taken for those who have profited from fostering addictive behaviour.

In 2017, there were an estimated 4,000 instances of preventable overdose deaths in Canada. Drug addiction is not an issue that only affects poor urban neighbourhoods—it impacts all classes, backgrounds and neighbourhoods across Canada.

In 1954, there were only 212 drug convictions in Canada (89% were for possession). None were related to cannabis. In 2016, there were 95,417 drug arrests, with 73% of those arrests for possession with 46% of all arrests relating to cannabis.

Recently there has been an effort towards the legalization of a heretofore illegal substance, cannabis. At the same time, those who possess other substances for recreational use may easily be criminalized for simple possession. The legalization of cannabis for personal use will effect a decrease in arrests for possession. However, if the trend in drug arrests for possession continues, we can still expect to see over 35,000 drug arrests for possession of other drugs nationwide in the coming year.

In addition, the impacts of arresting and prosecuting individuals for simple possession of drugs for personal use causes harm to the individual on a personal level. The most serious immediate impact is when habitual opioid users are arrested for possession and spend several days in jail, when they return to the street and resume use, their tolerance will have dropped putting them at increased risk of overdose or overdose death. More broadly, in addition to the trauma and stigma experienced by those who are arrested for drug possession, the criminal record associated can impact the futures of both habitual and recreational drug users. A criminal record for drug possession can be a bar to future employment, impede travel, and affect personal, family and social relationships in ways that are often irrevocable.

Researchers such as Dr. Gabor Maté, Donald MacPherson (Executive Director of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition and former Drug Policy Coordinator at the City of Vancouver), SFU professor emeritus Bruce Alexander and many others have recently advocated for the treatment of drug addiction as a medical issue, providing significant evidence that the criminalization of drugs has been historically ineffective in curbing drug addiction. Further, there is consensus amongst researchers that arrests for simple possession serves only to aggravate the life of an addict and does little to contribute to the well being of communities.

In 2017, as part of First United Church Vancouver's inaugural Roddan Jubilee Lecture Series, New York Times best-selling author Johann Hari spoke about addiction and stigma, and the special role Vancouver has played in shaping research and advocacy on our scientific understanding of drug addiction. Hari's talk is available online here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pr69hCne250&t=271s.

Recognition is rising that criminalization of drugs for personal use is an ineffective tool to deal with a medical issue. Early in March 2018, the City of Vancouver's managing director of social policy Mary Clare Zak called for decriminalization of drug possession, citing drastic action needed in the midst of the opioid overdose crisis. The City of Vancouver's position is that decriminalization fits well with Vancouver's existing "Four Pillars Drug Strategy." The four pillars of the existing strategy are: harm reduction, prevention, treatment and enforcement. Local activists say that in practice there has only been focus on harm reduction and enforcement (mainly arrests for possession), and that decriminalization would both free up more resources at all levels of government to provide prevention and treatment of drug addiction, as well as allow law enforcement to focus on serious trafficking and production/importation/exportation for trafficking.

In 2017 and 2018, both the NDP and Liberal causes have begun to talk about the need to decriminalize drugs for personal use, with both caucuses pushing Prime Minister Trudeau to consider such a move. The United Nations, the World Health Organization, as well as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies support decriminalization through their work on the Global Commission on Drug Policy. The Canadian Public Health Association has also issued a draft position statement on the decriminalization of personal use of drugs.

We believe addiction is a health issue, not a criminal offense. In March 2018 the federal government announced it is beginning to reduce the restrictions and barriers to treatment of opioid addiction by allowing easier access to prescription heroin and methadone.

Even prior to church union in 1925, our founding denominations have led on social problems including drug and alcohol abuse, with temperance campaigns as early as the 1890's.

As a church, we should continue to support temperance as our goal. We believe that in the midst of today's overwhelming overdose crisis and the immense resources poured into law enforcement for enforcement and penalization of drug possession as a crime, The United Church of Canada needs to lead again on a pressing social issue by supporting shifts in public policy towards more effective and life-giving strategies to deal with the consequences of drug addiction.

What are the principles informing this issue?

- Negative effect of criminalization on individuals and communities.
- Need for adequate social and health care supports for those involved in addictions.
- Need for the church's voice to be heard on a matter of personal and societal health and justice.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

It is proposed...

- That the General Secretary of The United Church of Canada write on behalf of the General Council to the Prime Minister and Ministers of Health and Justice to advocate for the decriminalization of simple drug possession for personal use.
- That communities of faith, outreach ministries, regions and the national church engage in studies of addiction and the resulting stigma in light of the opioid crisis and the political shifts towards decriminalization of drugs for personal use.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Funding implications

We anticipate minimal financial costs, and varying staff time at different levels of the church. There are resources already available to support communities of faith and regions in local study and advocacy. Likewise, staff in the General Council Office are aware of outreach and incorporated ministries with expertise who can support national campaigns for decriminalization and government relations to that effect.

BC 2 CONCERN OVER PRESENT AND FUTURE UNITED CHURCH PENSIONERS

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

The United Church Pension Plan was established to help provide security to pensioners. It is funded by contributions from employees and employers. Current pensioners have lost 15% of their purchasing power since 2008, because no cost of living increases have been possible. If inflation continues to erode the value of pensions, retired ministers and lay employees will suffer further loss and experience significant hardship.

The Pension Board has labored diligently and with great wisdom to keep the pension plan solvent. The plan is currently able to meet all of its pension obligations. However, the amount of money in the plan would have to increase greatly in order for any increases in pension payments to be possible. The Pension Board has raised employee and employer contributions significantly and has reduced the rate at which pension credits accrue. There are no other tools available to the Pension Board.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada and its employees covenanted together to contribute to the pension fund. At one time, ordinands could not be recommended for ordination until they had signed the pension covenant.

Our denomination has a solemn responsibility to do all within its power to see that present and future pensioners have adequate income.

If no action is taken, United Church retirees face a dismal future.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could establish a fund separate from the Pension Plan, which would offer supplements based on need, to retired employees. This could possibly be funded by contributions from Conferences from the proceeds from the sale of assets of congregations which have ceased to exist.

The General Council could seek funding to improve health benefits for pensioners and also seek funding to fully cover pensioners' benefit contributions.

The General Council could lobby the Province of Ontario, where the UCC pension plan is held, to allow lump sum contributions to pension plans as was previously allowed. Sources of funding for lump sum contributions could be sought and, if allowed by the Government of Ontario, provide much-needed financial help to the pension fund.

BC 8 SUPPORT TO TERMINATE PLANS TO EXPAND THE TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Origin: British Columbia Conference

1. What is the issue?

At issue is a disregard for the safety of the natural land, water, air, and eco systems which include animals and plant life, and placing priority on financial gain over the security of the earth.

We believe Creator/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

be good stewards over the domain of the world by ensuring that we will protect the earth from undue stress and irreparable damage.

2. Why is this issue important?

Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because through the love of God, we have been given the gift of life with the responsibility to ensure the security of other life forms. Humankind is called to be good stewards of all living things that exist:

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the

cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in God’s image,
in the image of God they were created;
male and female God created them.

God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good.

(Genesis 1:26, 27, 31)

What is the history/background of this issue?

- “Since 1961, Trans Mountain has reported approximately 82 spills to the National Energy Board (NEB).
- 69.5% of Trans Mountain’s past spills have occurred at pump stations or terminals.
- The remaining 30.5% of Trans Mountain’s spills have occurred along the pipeline, with 21 incidents related to releases of crude oil from the pipeline.”

Source: www.transmountain.com/spill-history

The intent is to expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline so that it can transport Bitumen oil. Crude bitumen is the oil to be transported across British Columbia and through our waterways. Crude bitumen has been described as “garbage crude” which “has the consistency of peanut butter.”

One spill of crude bitumen is one spill too many!

Taking no action on this issue could result in the expansion of the existing pipeline to carry bitumen oil and will result in oil spills causing damage to our eco systems.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We are appealing to General Council to support us in protecting British Columbian eco-systems by calling on congregations and other communities of faith to write letters to their local leaders and MP demanding that the plans for the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion for the purpose of transporting bitumen oil be terminated.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Doug Goodwin)

that BC Conference transmit, with non-concurrence, General Council Proposal 2018-08: “Support to terminate plans to expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline” with the following comments:

BC Conference agrees with the intent of the Proposal. However, we do not concur with the suggested actions. It is the feeling of the court that while this proposal is in line with past and current United Church policy and statements on resource extraction, and Care for Creation including climate change, it may be difficult to gain full consensus on this issue in some congregations and it may be divisive in others. A more effective strategy might be to focus

campaigns on individuals and partnerships rather than congregations. We also recognize and support existing campaigns.

We also wish to note the following:

- *BC Conference and the General Council of The United Church of Canada have, in the recent and longer term past, affirmed our commitment to living with respect in creation by calling upon various federal and provincial governments to take stands against pipelines in the Mackenzie Valley, in the Northern Gateway and by calling for and supporting the divestment of shares in Fossil Fuel companies.*
- *The current iteration of disrespectful treatment of creation is embodied in the Federal Government's disregard of Indigenous voices, science-based critiques (climate impact of emissions and spill response technology), and economic based arguments against the twinning of the Kinder Morgan Pipeline proposal, especially as it involves supporting the production and transportation of diluted bitumen across our lands and over our waters.*
- *Commissioners to this meeting of BC Conference have expressed their concern for the environment, their solidarity with Indigenous communities.*
- *Commissioners to this meeting of BC Conference recognize the issue of twinning the Kinder Morgan Pipeline has divided Canadians and has the potential to divide congregations.*
- *We urge The United Church of Canada to reinforce its historic stance on pipelines, fossil fuel based climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples to meaningful consultation by all means possible including letter writing, supporting Indigenous challenges and other means as suggested by commissioners of The United Church of Canada at the gathering of the General Council of The United Church of Canada.*

GCE 14 LGBTQ+ PRIDE SUNDAY

Origin: Executive of the General Council (GC42EX)

1. What is the issue?

We ground our justice work in our faith and are called to live it out in worship and in community.

We wish to invite the wider church to honour and celebrate the lives of LGBTQ+Two Spirit people during Pride month in United Church communities of faith across Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada believes that all human beings are made in the image of God regardless of their sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Yet, even as we seek to eliminate homophobia and transphobia, we know it is within us. We acknowledge the role that religion (including Christianity) and religious-based homophobia and transphobia plays in the

violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+Two Spirit people. And we lament the pain, heartache, and lost lives that religion has contributed to both in Canada and around the world.

The God we worship inspires us to build bridges of hope and love rather than walls of hatred and fear. United Church members are called to take action to ensure that all people—regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity—enjoy their full civil and human rights in society, to work to end all forms of discrimination against them, and to support the victims of such discrimination.

In the past 30 years, less than 6% of United Church congregations have intentionally engaged in the Affirming Ministries program around LGBTIQ+Two Spirit issues and been declared an Affirming Ministry. Given the history of church transphobia and homophobia named here, The United Church of Canada can and must do better. We must continue to ask the question that the Iridesce project is asking: “How welcoming has our welcome been?” And we must allow the answers to change us.

We remain the only major Canadian church whose national policies fully and explicitly welcome gender and sexual diversity. We must live into this more fully. Our public witness is crucial—and so is our capacity to engage our ministries in this continuing struggle to live out a Gospel vision of radical inclusion. A dedicated Sunday and accompanying resources will help keep this vision in front of our church community, and the communities they serve.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Request that in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the 1988 decision on membership and ministry:

- **name the first Sunday of June as a Special Sunday for acknowledgement and celebration of LGBTIQ+Two Spirit peoples;**
- **encourage and invite all communities of faith to participate in this Special Sunday beginning in 2019;**
- **direct the General Secretary, General Council to develop Bible Studies, Liturgies and Worship Resources for this Special Sunday, including resources to help people understand the importance of Pride and the definitions of the initials in collaboration with Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble, and Affirming Ministries.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive

There are many ways that United Church members are called to live into our existing commitments to justice and stand in solidarity with our LGBTIQ+Two Spirit family here in Canada and around the world. Supporting LGBTIQ+ refugee sponsorships, becoming an Affirming Ministry, partnering with others to find ways to live out full acceptance and inclusion, are just a few of those ways.

In 1988 The United Church of Canada declared that all people, regardless of sexual orientation, are declared welcome as full members and eligible to be considered for ministry. In 2000 the

church affirmed that all sexual orientations are a gift from God, renounced the 1960 statement that homosexuality is a sin, and officially endorsed the Affirming Congregations Program and encouraged its ministries to participate. In 2009 the church affirmed the participation and ministry of transgender people, and encouraged all congregations to welcome transgender people into membership, ministry, and full participation.

In spite of these policies, the stories coming out of *Iridesce: The Living Apology*, are revealing that brokenness, unhealed wounds, grief, and anger, linger from 1988 - and from both before and after that pivotal decision. LGBTIQ+Two Spirit people, their families, friends and allies, are still fearful in the United Church, or still experience less than a full and intentional welcome. Rejection, marginalization and oppression continues to happen in United Church congregations across the country—both urban and rural. This oppression is heightened for many with the intersection of race, class and ability.

HAM 2 SUPPLEMENTING PENSION BENEFITS – 10% FROM THE SALE OF PROPERTIES

Origin: Hamilton Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to better financially support our retirees through supplementing United Church pensions.

2. Why is this issue important?

The prophets continually reminded the nation of Israel to look after the widow, the orphan and the foreigner in their midst. God has a special concern for the vulnerable in society. In today's world, the elderly and those on pensions, increasingly fall into the category of vulnerable people.

Background

- There has not been a pension benefit increase since 2009, and there is no pension increase planned for the near future. Since the last increase in 2009 the Consumer Price Index in Canada has risen by approximately 15%, leaving United Church pensioners with less and less buying power. **At present there is no “cost of living” increment in United Church Pensions.**
- The Pension Plan is fully funded on a going forward, solvency, and wind-up basis as of the last actuarial valuation. Since the number of pensioners (approximately 4,500) is greater than the number of active members (about 3,500), the Plan is largely dependent upon market conditions to improve its funded status. Two decades of low interest rates and uneven markets have revealed the vulnerability of this funding model: the Pension Plan has not been able to protect its members from inflation.

- When United Church ministries cease to exist and properties are sold, this would be the time to consider setting aside a portion of the funds to be used to supplement United Church pensions.
 - As pension law currently stands, there are restrictions on adding funds to a multi-employer pension plan such as ours. However with some creativity, other methods of supplementing retirement pensions could be developed. We imagine money accumulating in a restricted use fund until a method of augmenting pensions is developed. Just as “outside of the box thinking” was used to supplement pre-1955 pensions through the church’s Ventures in Mission campaign, now is the time for more “outside of the box” thinking to supplement retirement pensions.
 - Pensioners report that their monthly pension benefit from the UCC Pension Plan after a 30-plus year career in the United Church is typically 35%–45% of their pre-retirement earnings (including housing allowance), making retirement precarious and tense for many Pension Plan members.
 - If no action is taken to help supplement United Church pensions, in 10 years, Pension Plan members could see their buying power reduced another 15% for a total of 30% less.
 - At present the General Council cannot pass this motion for the whole church because of the way the United Church was set up in 1925. Some Conferences set aside a percentage of the sale of property to meet their allocation to support the National United Church Archives. We now recommend that each of the regions or Conferences/ Presbyteries encourage that 10% of the net proceeds of the sale of all United Church property where ministries cease to exist, into a restricted use fund of The United Church of Canada. This fund will be used to supplement pension benefits for both current and future members of the United Church Pension Plan.
- 3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**

We propose that the General Council recommend to the regions or Conferences/ Presbyteries that they encourage that 10% of the net proceeds of the sale of all United Church properties within their bounds where ministries have ceased to exist, into a restricted use fund of The United Church of Canada. This fund will be used to supplement pension benefits for both current and future members of the United Church Pension Plan once it is large enough and a distribution policy has been developed. The fund will remain in place as long as the United Church Pension Plan exists.

HAM 3 SUPPLEMENTING PENSION BENEFITS – UNITED CHURCH PENSIONERS

Origin: Hamilton Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling us to better financially support our retirees through supplementing United Church pensions.

2. Why is this issue important?

The prophets continually reminded the nation of Israel to look after the widow, the orphan and the foreigner in their midst. God has a special concern for the vulnerable in society. In today's world, the elderly and those on pensions, increasingly fall into the category of vulnerable people.

Background

- It is hard to believe that the architects of the United Church Pension Plan envisioned such a large number of pastoral charges being served by retired ministry personnel. Due to changes in the Income Tax Act these pastoral charges no longer contribute to the Pension Plan at a time when it most needs the contributions of all pastoral charges due to low interest rates. It is time to do some 'outside the box' thinking to provide another vehicle for pastoral charges being served by retired ministry personnel to contribute financially to the well being of retired ministry personnel.
- The United Church of Canada used to require equivalent contributions from pastoral charges being served by retired ministry personnel, until the Income Tax Act changed its rules and it was no longer possible. It is hoped by using a restricted use fund outside of the formal Pension Plan, that this practice can be re-instated.

Reason this practice needs to reinstated NOW

- There has not been a pension benefit increase since 2009, and there is no pension increase planned for the near future. Since the last increase in 2009 the Consumer Price Index in Canada has risen by approximately 15%, leaving United Church pensioners with less and less buying power. **At present there is no “cost of living” increment in United Church Pensions.**
- If no action is taken to help supplement UC pensions, in 10 years, Pension Plan members could see their buying power reduced by another 15% for a total of 30% less purchasing power.
- The Pension Plan is fully funded on a going forward, solvency, and wind-up basis as of the last actuarial valuation. Since the number of pensioners (approximately 4,500) is greater than the number of active members (about 3,500), the Plan is largely dependent upon market conditions to improve its funded status. Two decades of low interest rates and uneven markets have revealed the vulnerability of this funding model: the Pension Plan has not been able to protect its members from inflation.
- As pension law currently stands, there are restrictions on adding funds to a multi-employer pension plan such as ours. However with some creativity, other methods of

supplementing retirement pensions could be developed. We imagine money accumulating in a restricted use fund until a method of augmenting pensions is developed. Just as “outside of the box thinking” was used to supplement pre 1955 pensions through the church’s Venture in Mission campaign, now is the time for more “outside of the box” thinking to supplement retirement pensions.

- Pensioners report that their monthly pension benefit from the UCC Pension Plan after a thirty-plus year career in the United Church is typically 35%–45% of their pre-retirement earnings (including housing allowance), making retirement precarious and tense for many Pension Plan members.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that pastoral charges being served by retired ministry personnel be required to pay into a restricted use fund of The United Church of Canada the equivalent amount towards pensions of pastoral charges being served by non-retired ministry personnel. The fund will be used to supplement pension benefits for both current and future members of the Pension Plan once it is large enough and a distribution policy has been developed. The fund will remain in place as long as the Pension Plan exists.

LON 1 IN OUR COMMON INTEREST: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ABRAHAMIC FAITHS, DIALOGUE ON OUR DUTY TO PRESERVE GOD’S GOOD CREATION

Origin: London Conference

1. What is the issue?

At a time of deepening ecological distress, we are distressed to see injustice piled upon injustice as the marginalized peoples of the earth bear a disproportionate share of the hardship caused by climate change. We are saddened by the stress on creatures of the land, air and sea—and by the fact that increasing numbers of them face extinction. We lament the damage to biospheres that are the very cradle of earthly life. We believe that, to live with respect in God’s good creation, we must both explore the Judaeo-Christian theology of creation and learn humbly from others who have also received gifts of the Spirit, as evidenced in their scriptures and traditions. We look to the Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Islam and Judaism—whose united voices have the potential to influence 56% of humankind in their choices to respect creation. We also look toward receiving the input of Canada’s Indigenous peoples in this conversation.

We believe God is calling us in the United Church to create opportunities for the Abrahamic faiths to draw closer and share wisdom regarding their theologies of creation and their understanding of humankind’s responsibility, as a response to God’s goodness, to protect and heal creation.

2. Why is this issue important?

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

As A New Creed proclaims, we believe in God who has created and is creating, and who works in us and others by the Spirit. We acknowledge that we are called to celebrate God's presence; moreover, we profess to live with respect in creation, to love and serve others, and to address the issues of injustice and evil in our world. In calling together the Abrahamic faiths and honouring Indigenous input, we seek to prompt repentance and action, while fostering hope in many people's lives.

What is the history/background of this issue?

Today, we see God's Earth continually suffering from cataclysmic changes—many of them at least partially caused by global warming. Three examples held illustrate the scope of the problem:

First, we see that sea-ice in the Arctic has diminished in almost all areas since the late 1970s. The sea-ice cover, in its maximum extent, has dropped by an average of 2.8 percent per decade since 1979. Furthermore, NASA reports record low sea-ice cover in 2016. This is not a problem only for Canada. Global sea-ice has been shrinking dramatically. Between the years 1976-1996, it shrunk by 21,500 sq km annually, then more than doubled that rate between the years 1996–2013 to 50,500 sq km annually. Scientists cite the long-term issue as the warming of global oceans, which prevents sea-ice from forming. (See, for instance, www.nasa.gov/content/goddard/nasa-study-shows-global-sea-ice-diminishing-despite-antarctic-gains (Feb 10, 2015), and www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2016/2016-arctic-sea-ice-wintertime-extent-hits-another-record-low (March 2016). With the loss of sea-ice, the planet risks absorbing more sunlight and heating the oceans and the atmosphere, thus speeding the loss of glaciers and raising sea-levels (See, for instance, www.carbonbrief.org/five-reasons-why-the-speed-of-arctic-sea-ice-loss-matters, March 22, 2013.)

Second, we have seen the widespread destruction of forests due to large fires, diseased trees, and insect infestations. It is widely suspected that a warming climate is contributing and will continue to contribute to these assaults on Canada's forests. (See Bruce Cheadle, who cites a 2015 report by Natural Resources Canada, <https://globalnews.ca/news/2968972/climate-change-to-double-area-burned-by-forest-fires-each-year-report/> September 28, 2016.)

Third, we see periodic floods that have ravaged farmlands, in Canada and elsewhere. Not only may such floods wipe out a farmer's yearly food-crops; floods also have the potential to cause soil degradation by drowning helpful organic matter. (See Iowa State University, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/11/171124084933.htm Nov 24, 2017.)

What are the principles informing this issue?

As *A Song of Faith* proclaims, each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator, who is both in creation and beyond it. Right relations with God and each other can involve discovering ourselves as “one strand in the web of life,” growing in wisdom, and

regarding all people as kin. By joining with other members of the Abrahamic family of faiths to learn about each other's perspective on God's gift of creation and our responsibilities to that creation, we invite solidarity on a crucial issue that threatens all life on earth.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that General Council encourage congregations and other communities of faith to take action by contacting local mosques, synagogues, and Indigenous communities to investigate ways to meet and share theological perspectives on Creation and on our role in protecting the environment from further degradation.

4. Action of Intermediary Courts

Elgin Presbytery endorsed proposal, March 20, 2018, and recommended the addition of the following information:

First The United Church has steadfastly proclaimed the need for concerted action on climate change and compassion for those who suffer its effects. Here we name three of the most recent:

- a) The church has urged Canadian officials to stronger efforts in promoting peace and increasing financial aid for those most affected by climate change. (July 26, 2017, www.united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/call-government-address-root-causes-famine)
- b) Moderator Jordan Cantwell has endorsed the Canadian Council of Churches' statement *On Promoting Climate Justice and Ending Poverty in Canada*, joining diverse faith groups calling for a Canadian plan to reduce emissions, meet or surpass our targets, and slow the effects of climate change [(Sept 29, 2017) www.united-church.ca/news/canadian-faith-leaders-call-climate-justice]
- c) The UCC has signed a public statement, "Investor Expectations on Corporate Climate Lobbying," which insists that companies lobbying for policies on climate change must accept the goal of keeping global temperature increases to two degrees Celsius. Further, such companies must maintain that commitment without supporting other agencies working to undermine goals for harm reduction in climate change. [First published in 2015, www.united-church.ca/news/united-church-signs-statement-corporate-climate-lobbying]

Second: Not wishing to preclude conversation that includes many partners in many faiths, what we propose here involves creating *a small way in* by joining with our closest kin—namely Indigenous peoples and other members of the Abrahamic family of faiths—to share perspectives on a crucial issue that threatens all life on earth.

Motion Moved, seconded and carried that London Conference agrees with the issue presented in Proposal 5 from St. Andrew's United Church, St. Thomas and wishes General Council 43 to consider it.

Motion Moved, seconded and carried that London Conference agrees with the actions proposed in Proposal 5 as found on pages 47–49 in the Delegate Handbook.

M&O 2 ACCESSING THE CANADIAN OMBUDSPERSON FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTERPRISE
Origin: Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to continue to explore Canadian mining practices and human rights violation in the Philippines by educating our partners on how to access the newly appointed Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE).

2. Why is this issue important?

We are commanded by Jesus to “love our neighbours.” When Canadian Mining Companies abuse our neighbours, we are all culpable.

The recent creation of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) creates a unique opportunity to advocate for human rights and justice in the Philippines. Core is mandated to investigate human rights abuses linked to Canadian mining companies and to solve disputes or conflicts between communities and Canadian companies. It has power to independently investigate complaints, report, recommend remedies and monitor implementation of actions.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Direct the General Council to:

- 1. Offer training to the national staff of The United Church and the Beaconsfield Initiative on how to make applications to the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE);**
- 2. Create a pool of legal resources (lawyers, others trained in this area) to our partners in the Philippines bringing complaints forward to CORE;**
- 3. Create written resources on the process for submitting a claim to CORE that would be shared with United Church partners in the Philippines;**
- 4. Share information, resources and training with our partners in the Philippines on how to make applications to the Ombudsperson (CORE);**
- 5. Organize a training mission to the Philippines to inform and train our partners in the Philippines on the process of making a submission to CORE.**

Take the following actions:

- a) Encourage our church members to lobby the Canadian government to change the Mining Act in order to apply all our environmental, human rights and labour laws to the Canadian mining corporation operating outside of Canada;**

- b) Share the stories of the marginalized people in the Philippines people through church newsletters, sermons, social media, and websites;**
- c) Contact Kairos and other church partners to do the same.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

The Beaconsfield Initiative has had two exposure missions:

2010 – To establish long-term covenants with partner organizations and congregations in the Cordillera Region in the Northern Philippines;

2015 – To evaluate the impact of Canadian mining practices and interests in the Southern Philippines.

These exposure missions identified widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, some directly linked to the activities of Canadian mining companies.

The current situation continues to worsen. As documented by the Centre for Philippines Concerns (an umbrella group) some 16,000 people have been killed, the Moro people are being targeted as “terrorists” and there is a rise in clergy deaths related to their activism.

President Duterte’s government is continually disregarding human rights as evidenced by the ongoing war on drugs, the rejection of agrarian reform, the cancellation of peace talks to end the civil war, and the rejection of international aid tied to respecting human rights.

Two previous proposals have been presented on the topic of mining and human rights violation issues in the Philippines, but this proposal is the first specific to the Ombudsperson.

GC 41 (2012) M&O 1 – From Province to Province: The Beaconsfield Initiative January 1–12, 2012; Strengthening Partnerships and Studying the Impact of Canadian Mining Interests in the Philippines

GC42 (2015) M&O 20 – The Beaconsfield Initiative, Exploring Canadian Mining Practices and Human Rights Violation in the Southern Philippines, Strengthening Partnerships and Studying the Impact of Canadian Mining Interests in the Southern Philippines

MAR 1 MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING**Origin: Maritime Conference**

We, Maritime Conference, propose to General Council that as a means of strengthening their ability to work with people with mental health problems, all paid accountable clergy be required to receive training on mental health. In addition, mental health training to become a module in the curriculum for candidates for Ordered Ministry.

1. What is the issue?

We believe God is calling the church at the grassroots level to become more understanding and welcoming towards people with mental health issues. The paid accountable leaders in our church should have a high level of comfort and competency in giving leadership in this area. We propose that as a means of strengthening their ability to work with and advocate for people with mental health problems, that all paid accountable clergy be required to receive training on mental health. In addition that mental health training becomes a module in the curriculum for all candidates for Ordered Ministry.

2. Why is this issue important?

Approximately one in four Canadians is affected by mental illness. Every Pastoral Charge includes members and their families that are suffering from mental illness and the stigma attached to it. Ministry personnel frequently encounter a full spectrum of mental health issues with parishioners and neighbours in their community. The purpose of this proposal is to raise ministry personnel understanding of the mental health spectrum, to better equip them to work with their parishioners in efforts to reduce the stigma attached to and to deal with mental illness in the church and the community.

The Church in Action Working Group on Mental Health of the Church in Action Committee has held Workshops studying the role communities of faith can play in raising mental health awareness. Those attending the workshops have included experts in the field of mental health, lay people suffering from mental health issues and people with a passion to see the church become an advocate for increased public resources dedicated to mental health treatment. Workshop participants recognized that the majority of paid accountable clergy do not have the background required to take leadership on mental health in the churches and in the community.

At the May 2016 annual meeting of Maritime Conference the Working Group on Mental Health presented six action statements for consideration by the Conference. The delegates, representing pastoral charges from across the Maritimes and Bermuda, were asked to prioritize the six statements. The Conference first priority was:

To propose to General Council that as a means of strengthening their ability to work with people with mental health problems, all paid accountable clergy be required to receive training on mental health. In addition, mental health training to become a module in the curriculum for candidates for Ordered Ministry.

The 2016 Maritime Conference attendees also identified the following five priorities requiring further work. All of these priorities will require church leadership to better understand and take ownership of the issues surrounding mental health in Canada. The Working Group has established working committees tasked to develop our action approach to each of the following five priorities:

1. Training opportunities for lay leadership to start facilitate and support congregational mental health education and peer support groups;
2. Encouraging and supporting mental health study and discussion in groups such as UCW, Men's and Youth groups;
3. The United Church publically affirms the United Church's support for and acceptance of persons with mental health problems;
4. Maritime Conference facilitates collection and distribution to congregations of mental health resource information;
5. Create a mental health page on the Maritime Conference website.

The Working Group held a second workshop in November 2017 and after a full day of prayer and study decided that God was calling us to bring the issue of training for paid accountable ministry to the attention of General Council. We felt that it was time for the church to become fully engaged in combating the stigma surrounding people with mental illness and that training of church leadership should be the first step.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The Working Group recommends that Maritime Conference refer our proposal to General Council for consideration and action. The Working Group's preference is that the General Council agree to our proposal and direct the appropriate action be taken by the responsible committees. We suggest that General Council refer our proposal on ministry training for consideration by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services. In addition, we suggest that when the Board of Vocation is established that our proposal be submitted to it for consideration as it establishes standards for training and accreditation of ministry personnel.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Stephen Mills/Sean Handcock moved that Maritime Conference transmit Proposal 1 as amended to the 43rd General Council with concurrence.

Carried

MTU 2 A CALL FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND REUNIFICATION IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Origin: North Bay Presbytery Mission Committee

1. What is the issue?

- “Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security.” (Jeremiah 33:6)
- “and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)
- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

We believe God is calling us to:

- a) join other global partners in working for peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula,
- b) advocate for the importance of peace talks among the USA, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to replace the armistice of the Korean War with a peace treaty,
- c) address the suffering of the Korean people because of the Korean War which has been technically going on for more than six decades.

2. Why is this issue important?

- a) Canada was involved in the Korean War by sending over 26,000 military personnel as part of the UN forces, during which 516 Canadians lost their lives. The war is not over, but maintained as the result of an Armistice. As Canadian citizens, we are obliged to address the aftermath of the ceasefire and the ongoing suffering of Korean people as a result.
- b) Since late 19th century, The United Church of Canada (UCC) has been committed to God’s mission of peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula. The UCC is in long-term global partnership with the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). At General Council 42, in 2015, the UCC enhanced the ecumenical partnership with the PROK, celebrating a mutual recognition of ministry agreement. Both the NCCK and the PROK have struggled to work for peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula for many decades and call on global partners to join in their struggles. However, no previous General Councils have responded directly to their call. This moment is an opportunity to join with other UCC global partners who have responded in formal ways, including The United Church of Christ USA, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) USA.* As military tension in the Korean peninsula escalated dramatically since early in 2017, this is the time for the UCC to renew its commitment to God’s mission in Korea, through a commitment of General Council 43 to peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula.

What is the history/background of this issue?*

- a) The Korean War ended on July 27, 1953 with the signing of an Armistice Agreement and creation of a demilitarized zone between the two Korean regimes - designed by the USA and the Soviet Union in August 15, 1945 as only a temporary political arrangement - and

yet after sixty-five years a formal peace treaty has never been reached, leaving the peninsula and its people divided by fear and hostility, and subject to recurring incidents of violence;

- b) 2018 marks the 73rd anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese occupation, enabled by the USA through the Taft-Katsura Agreement in 1905, yet the Korean people are still not free from the occupation of extensive militarization, and of antagonistic domestic policies and Cold War international politics, intensified in recent years as South Korea, a client of U.S. military hegemony in North East Asia, has been the apex of an aggressive U.S. policy to "pivot" or reposition arms and forces into the Pacific;
- c) For more than 60 years since 1950, the USA has led sustained economic sanctions on North Korea, continues to wield wartime operational control of South Korea's military, and has deployed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system in the country to intercept missiles from North Korea, China and Russia, further threatening the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia;
- d) Communities and families separated by the Korean War and subsequent division between the North and South desire reunion and reconciliation before generations pass without ever seeing or knowing the fate of loved ones; and separated families have rarely been able to communicate or visit across the border, but rather have been kept distant, disconnected, and often are used as leverage in political negotiations;
- e) The United Church of Canada maintains a long and close partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, which, together with the National Council of Churches in Korea, the Korean Christian Federation of North Korea, and with the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly meeting in 2013 in Busan, Korea, have called on the international community to advance a new era of commitment to work for peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a) The United Church of Canada could join with global partners—the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the National Council of Churches in Korea, among others, as well as responding to the call issued by the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly, in committing to work for peace, justice and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula;
- b) The United Church of Canada could advocate that the government of the United States of America, the government of Canada and the international community through the United Nations commence a new process of peace-building throughout the Korean peninsula that includes
 - i. a commitment by all parties to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a permanent peace treaty that will finally bring an end to the state of war, and
 - ii. a mutual commitment to end provocative military exercises on the peninsula, to reduce military expenditures and to eliminate nuclear weapons on the peninsula, establishing a model for peace and demilitarization in Northeast Asia;
- c) The United Church of Canada could accompany global partners in Korea in their efforts for peace, justice and reunification, working with the governments in both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK), with the

churches and Christians in both North and South Korea, and through religious, humanitarian and advocacy initiatives, to seek the reconciliation and restoration of families and communities long divided by conflict and hostility, so that social, spiritual and psychological healing can occur among the people of Korea;

- d) The United Church of Canada could develop worship and education resources for peace, justice and reunification in the Korean peninsula and call upon its members and congregations to accompany global partners in Korea by praying for peace with their peoples and churches, recognizing the Sunday close to August 15, Korean Independence Liberation Day, as the “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”

(“A Call for Peace and Justice and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula” was an action of The 30th General Synod of The United Church of Christ, USA, 2015. It was a resource for this resolution’s history/background and proposed actions.)*

Transmitted with Concurrence by Manitou Conference

SK 4 FAIR PENSION OUTCOMES

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

1. What is the issue?

When calculating the annual pension payment to retirees who begin ministry calls/ appointments in 2018 and accumulate 30 years of pensionable service in The United Church of Canada, there is a significant detriment to pension remuneration for those ministry personnel who have had calls / appointments for those 30 years in Cost of Living (COL) groups 1–3 as compared with the pension remuneration for those who have been in calls/appointments in COL groups 4–6 for those 30 years. Additionally, ministry personnel serving in ministries that provide a manse over those 30 years of service also accrue more pension than those in COL groups 1–3 under the new compensation system regardless of in which COL group region the manse is located. (see table below)

		Years of Service	Pension Accrued/annual
1	COL 1	30	\$25,621.40
2	COL 3	30	\$28,422.16
3	COL 6	30	\$34,991.03
4	Lives in a manse	30	\$29,026.17

(See appended full tables of pension calculations on which the above summary is based.)

Prior to the new compensation model which set to come into full effect July 1, 2018, all ministry personnel pensions were calculated based on pensionable earnings of 140% of salary (without housing allowance included), which remains the calculation for those ministry personnel with manses under the new compensation model, resulting in pensions for ministry personnel which were more equitable than will be the case under the new compensation model.

2. Why is this issue important?

In the *Song of Faith* it states that “The church has not always lived up to its vision. It requires the Spirit to reorient it, helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition, challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement, for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.”

In a letter from the General Council’s Ministry and Employment Unit dated March 5, 2015, a statement was made that “A regional cost of living is incorporated into the new minimum, eliminating a separately identifiable housing allowance (letter attached). Pensionable earnings will equal 100% of this new “comprehensive” salary.

Ministry personnel who have had relatively low housing allowances will notice that moving to this new way of determining pensionable earnings may result in a decrease in the pension contribution they and their pastoral charges make as well as in the amount of pension earned. On the other hand, ministry personnel who have had relatively high housing allowances may notice that the pension contribution they and their pastoral charge make will increase as well as the amount of pension earned.”

Urban pastoral charges and those pastoral charges in higher cost of living (COL) groups tend to have more success in attracting ministry personnel for calls or appointments than do rural/remote pastoral charges in lower COL groups.

The United Church of Canada has had a long history of being a church that strives for justice for all people and prior to the 2015 introduction of the new compensation model, pension accrual for ministry personnel was calculated more equitably.

Those ministry personnel who may feel called to rural/remote pastoral charges will now have to assess if they can afford to take calls/appointments based on the detrimental pension consequences and the probability that as they age they will likely need to relocate to a larger town/city where health care and other amenities for seniors are available but where housing will also be more expensive.

There is already a shortage of ministry personnel for the vacancies in rural/remote pastoral charges across The United Church of Canada, especially ANW, SK, MNWO, and NF/LAB Conferences, and this move to greater inequity in pensions for ministry personnel will likely cause fewer to consider calls/appointments to these rural/remote pastoral charges.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the General Council direct the Pension Board and the Ministry and Employment Unit to find a way that pension accrued earnings for ministry personnel across all the COL groups under the new compensation model are made more equal.

4. For the courts transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? No.

Appended Full Tables of Pension Calculation Scenarios

***Assumptions for each of the following pension calculation scenarios:**

Co1 1 -A progressing to F

no break in pensionable service

applied 1% salary increase

Note: Pension starts below age 65 - discount factor applies

Pension starts after age 65 - service below age 65 is entitled to postponement factor

PENSION CALCULATION SCENARIO - Cost of Living Group 1

Rate	Pensionable Earnings	Accrual	Credited Service	Year	Total Credited Service	Category
0.014	46,227.00	647.18	1	2018	1	A
0.014	46,689.27	653.65	1	2019	2	A
0.014	48,818.93	683.46	1	2020	3	B
0.014	49,307.11	690.30	1	2021	4	B
0.014	51,493.25	720.91	1	2022	5	C
0.014	52,008.18	728.11	1	2023	6	C
0.014	52,528.26	735.40	1	2024	7	C
0.014	54,801.13	767.22	1	2025	8	D
0.014	55,349.14	774.89	1	2026	9	D
0.014	55,902.63	782.64	1	2027	10	D
0.014	58,259.98	815.64	1	2028	11	E
0.014	58,842.58	823.80	1	2029	12	E
0.014	59,431.01	832.03	1	2030	13	E
0.014	61,878.13	866.29	1	2031	14	F
0.014	62,496.91	874.96	1	2032	15	F
0.014	63,121.88	883.71	1	2033	16	F
0.014	63,753.10	892.54	1	2034	17	F
0.014	64,390.63	901.47	1	2035	18	F
0.014	65,034.54	910.48	1	2036	19	F
0.014	65,684.88	919.59	1	2037	20	F
0.014	66,341.73	928.78	1	2038	21	F
0.014	67,005.15	938.07	1	2039	22	F
0.014	67,675.20	947.45	1	2040	23	F
0.014	68,351.95	956.93	1	2041	24	F
0.014	69,035.47	966.50	1	2042	25	F
0.014	69,725.83	976.16	1	2043	26	F
0.014	70,423.09	985.92	1	2044	27	F
0.014	71,127.32	995.78	1	2045	28	F
0.014	71,838.59	1,005.74	1	2046	29	F
0.014	72,556.98	1,015.80	1	2047	30	F

Total Annual Pension at age 65	25,621.40	30
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PENSION CALCULATION SCENARIO - Cost of Living Group 3

Rate	Pensionable Earnings	Accrual	Credited Service	Year	Total Credited Service	Category
0.014	51,979.00	727.71	1	2018	1	A
0.014	52,498.79	734.98	1	2019	2	A
0.014	54,684.50	765.58	1	2020	3	B
0.014	55,231.35	773.24	1	2021	4	B
0.014	57,478.80	804.70	1	2022	5	C
0.014	58,053.59	812.75	1	2023	6	C
0.014	58,634.12	820.88	1	2024	7	C
0.014	60,966.98	853.54	1	2025	8	D
0.014	61,576.65	862.07	1	2026	9	D
0.014	62,192.42	870.69	1	2027	10	D
0.014	64,613.77	904.59	1	2028	11	E
0.014	65,259.91	913.64	1	2029	12	E
0.014	65,912.51	922.78	1	2030	13	E
0.014	68,423.31	957.93	1	2031	14	F
0.014	69,107.54	967.51	1	2032	15	F
0.014	69,798.62	977.18	1	2033	16	F
0.014	70,496.60	986.95	1	2034	17	F
0.014	71,201.57	996.82	1	2035	18	F
0.014	71,913.59	1,006.79	1	2036	19	F
0.014	72,632.72	1,016.86	1	2037	20	F
0.014	73,359.05	1,027.03	1	2038	21	F
0.014	74,092.64	1,037.30	1	2039	22	F
0.014	74,833.57	1,047.67	1	2040	23	F
0.014	75,581.90	1,058.15	1	2041	24	F
0.014	76,337.72	1,068.73	1	2042	25	F
0.014	77,101.10	1,079.42	1	2043	26	F
0.014	77,872.11	1,090.21	1	2044	27	F
0.014	78,650.83	1,101.11	1	2045	28	F
0.014	79,437.34	1,112.12	1	2046	29	F
0.014	80,231.71	1,123.24	1	2047	30	F

Total Annual Pension at age 65	28,422.16	30
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PENSION CALCULATION SCENARIO - Cost of Living Group 6

Rate	Pensionable Earnings	Accrual	Credited Service	Year	Total Credited Service	Category
0.014	65,467.00	916.54	1	2018	1	A
0.014	66,121.67	925.70	1	2019	2	A
0.014	68,444.63	958.22	1	2020	3	B
0.014	69,129.08	967.81	1	2021	4	B
0.014	71,514.47	1,001.20	1	2022	5	C
0.014	72,229.61	1,011.21	1	2023	6	C
0.014	72,951.91	1,021.33	1	2024	7	C
0.014	75,429.01	1,056.01	1	2025	8	D
0.014	76,183.30	1,066.57	1	2026	9	D
0.014	76,945.13	1,077.23	1	2027	10	D
0.014	79,512.91	1,113.18	1	2028	11	E
0.014	80,308.04	1,124.31	1	2029	12	E
0.014	81,111.12	1,135.56	1	2030	13	E
0.014	83,775.05	1,172.85	1	2031	14	F
0.014	84,612.80	1,184.58	1	2032	15	F
0.014	85,458.93	1,196.42	1	2033	16	F
0.014	86,313.52	1,208.39	1	2034	17	F
0.014	87,176.65	1,220.47	1	2035	18	F
0.014	88,048.42	1,232.68	1	2036	19	F
0.014	88,928.90	1,245.00	1	2037	20	F
0.014	89,818.19	1,257.45	1	2038	21	F
0.014	90,716.37	1,270.03	1	2039	22	F
0.014	91,623.54	1,282.73	1	2040	23	F
0.014	92,539.77	1,295.56	1	2041	24	F
0.014	93,465.17	1,308.51	1	2042	25	F
0.014	94,399.82	1,321.60	1	2043	26	F
0.014	95,343.82	1,334.81	1	2044	27	F
0.014	96,297.26	1,348.16	1	2045	28	F
0.014	97,260.23	1,361.64	1	2046	29	F
0.014	98,232.83	1,375.26	1	2047	30	F

Total Annual Pension at age 65	34,991.03	30
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PENSION CALCULATION SCENARIO - Living in a Manse
(Calculation based on 140% of salary)

Rate	Salary	Accrual	Credited Service	Year	Total Credited Service	Category
0.014	36,189.00	709.30	1	2018	1	A
0.014	36,550.89	716.40	1	2019	2	A
0.014	38,578.14	756.13	1	2020	3	B
0.014	38,963.92	763.69	1	2021	4	B
0.014	41,047.67	804.53	1	2022	5	C
0.014	41,458.15	812.58	1	2023	6	C
0.014	41,872.73	820.71	1	2024	7	C
0.014	44,039.03	863.16	1	2025	8	D
0.014	44,479.42	871.80	1	2026	9	D
0.014	44,924.21	880.51	1	2027	10	D
0.014	47,171.78	924.57	1	2028	11	E
0.014	47,643.50	933.81	1	2029	12	E
0.014	48,119.93	943.15	1	2030	13	E
0.014	50,453.95	988.90	1	2031	14	F
0.014	50,958.49	998.79	1	2032	15	F
0.014	51,468.07	1,008.77	1	2033	16	F
0.014	51,982.76	1,018.86	1	2034	17	F
0.014	52,502.58	1,029.05	1	2035	18	F
0.014	53,027.61	1,039.34	1	2036	19	F
0.014	53,557.88	1,049.73	1	2037	20	F
0.014	54,093.46	1,060.23	1	2038	21	F
0.014	54,634.40	1,070.83	1	2039	22	F
0.014	55,180.74	1,081.54	1	2040	23	F
0.014	55,732.55	1,092.36	1	2041	24	F
0.014	56,289.87	1,103.28	1	2042	25	F
0.014	56,852.77	1,114.31	1	2043	26	F
0.014	57,421.30	1,125.46	1	2044	27	F
0.014	57,995.51	1,136.71	1	2045	28	F
0.014	58,575.47	1,148.08	1	2046	29	F
0.014	59,161.22	1,159.56	1	2047	30	F

Total Annual Pension at age 65	29,026.17	30
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TOR 3 AN URGENT CALL FOR PEACE ACCORD IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**Origin: Toronto Conference****1. What is the issue?**

For over half a century, the people of the Korean Peninsula have lived under an armistice which was intended to be a temporary solution to the Korean War. Recent events suggest that there is potential for change in this situation.

- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)
- “So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” (Romans 14:19)

We believe God is calling us to:

- a) build global partnership to work together to bring permanent peace in the Korean peninsula.
- b) publicly support peace talks among the USA, North Korea, South Korea, and China to replace the armistice of the Korean War with a peace treaty.

2. Why is this issue important?

- a) The United Church of Canada has been committed to God’s mission of justice and peace in the Korean Peninsula since the late 19th century, sending missionaries and overseas personnel to the region.
- b) At the end of the Second World War in 1945, The United States of America and the Soviet Union divided the Korean Peninsula into North and South, along the 38th parallel. This division created conflict between the two Koreas. In 1950, war broke out when the North decided to unify the Peninsula. Canada contributed over 26,000 military personnel to the United Nations forces opposing this move. Active fighting ceased with the signing of an Armistice Agreement between North Korea and the United States of America which created a demilitarized zone. This continues to the present. There is no peace. In recent times, the United States of America has heightened the tension with North Korea, increasing its isolation and resulting in an escalation of the nuclear threat to the world. However, events around the 2018 Olympics appear to have improved the relationship between North and South Korea. Because of this, there is an expectation for a summit to occur between North Korea and The United States of America. It is important for The United Church of Canada, at this time, to renew its commitment to God’s mission in Korea by appealing to our government to become involved in the making of a permanent peace agreement in the Korean peninsula.
- c) The United Church of Canada is in long-term global partnership with the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKC – North Korea) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK – South Korea). We have sent Overseas Personnel to South Korea but stopped sending to North Korea after the 1950 Korean War.

- d) Through the Pyeong Chang 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, the Korean people have demonstrated their desire and eagerness for peaceful unification to the whole world and showed the real obstacles to bringing peace to the peninsula. The peace agreement between two Koreas would definitely release political tension in the peninsula and surrounding area. To demonstrate our commitment to God’s justice and peace, it is important that The United Church of Canada demonstrate its support to the Korean people.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The 43rd General Council is asked to take the following actions:

- a) Join other global partners in working for peace, justice, and reunification in the Korean Peninsula.
- b) Advocate for the importance of peace talks between North Korea and the United States of America to replace the armistice of the Korean War with a peace treaty.
- c) Call on the Canadian government to support a permanent peace treaty between North Korea and the United States of America (South Korea).
- d) Appeal to the United Nations to stop the economic sanctions against North Korea for humanitarian reasons.
- e) Send United Church of Canada Overseas Personnel to North Korea to work together with the churches in North Korea in addition to the current work ongoing in South Korea.
- f) Develop worship and education resources for peace, justice, and reunification in the Korean peninsula and recognize the Sunday closest to August 15th, Korean Independence Liberation Day, as the “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Northern Waters Presbytery concurs with the proposal and forwards it to Toronto Conference with the following comments:

1. Item d) Concern is expressed that this item may distract from the intent of the proposal;
2. Item e) Concern is expressed for the safety of United Church personnel being sent to North Korea.

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal titled “An Urgent Call for Peace Accord in the Korean Peninsula”

and makes the following recommendations:

- a) we acknowledge that the United Church is actively involved in South Korea and encourage our work with our partners to increase;
- b) we join with global partners including the World Council of Churches in this work;
- c) we acknowledge and advocate for the importance of peace talks through the council of churches in USA, North and South Korea;
- d) we consider sending delegates instead of overseas personnel; and

- e) any United Church of Canada overseas personnel or delegates going to North Korea do so at the request of North Korean churches.

TOR 6 INFLATION AFFECTS PENSIONERS TOO: ADDING COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE TO RETIREES' PENSION AS WITH ACTIVE MEMBERS' SALARY

Origin: Toronto Conference

1. What is the issue?

We propose that: pension plan members and stakeholders be surveyed on the question of adding a permanent cost of living allowance to the plan, as of a date to be determined, giving retirees the same benefit as that currently in place for active members. If there is substantial agreement to such implementation, the plan administrator will initiate this extended benefit as of the soonest possible date.

2. Why is this issue important?

- The plan text and goal currently states that protection against inflation erosion be made available when the administrator believes it is possible.
- The administrator has not felt it possible to undertake the traditional upgrade to pension benefits since 2009, thus eroding the benefits of retirees from that date, compared to active ministry personnel, by about 15%
- The policy for the minimum remuneration for Ministry Personnel, as active members of the plan, is to keep current with the annual inflation rate.
- There is definitely a cost to employing units as well as plan members if the cost of living allowance was added to the plan.
- This cost, in regards to employing units (pastoral charges), could be offset by grants from church funds, such as one created through the use of a portion of the proceeds of the sale of church property.
- The cost could also be borne by employing units (pastoral charges) as a way of offering justice to their staff and Ministry Personnel, equal to that being granted now, to active Ministry Personnel.
- This cost, in regards to active members of the plan could be defined by the plan's current actuarial advisors, at which point the membership, by survey or vote, could indicate their willingness to be protected against the inflation erosion currently being suffered by retired members for close to ten years.
- The administrator alone should not be asked to bear the brunt of criticism. The choice to fund cost of living allowances should come from those whom it will affect.
- Contributions to the plan since 2013 have already been increased with the effect of lowering the eventual pension benefits without the input of all parties. It is time to see if contributions may again be increased, but this time, with the effect of raising the eventual pension benefits.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The 43rd General Council should direct that:

1. Just such a survey on the question of adding a permanent cost of living allowance to the plan be conducted for all pension members on a date to be determined, giving retirees the same benefit as that currently in place for active members.
2. And if there is substantial agreement to such implementation, that the plan administrator will initiate this extended benefit as of the soonest possible date.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

Toronto Conference does not agree with the proposal entitled “Inflation Affects Pensioners Too – Adding Cost of Living Allowance to Retirees’ Pension as with Active Members’ Salary” but is passing it on to the General Council for further consideration.

With the following comments:

We acknowledge the financial implications of increases to pension benefits, based on estimates provided by Mercer, the actuarial consultants for the Pension Plan:

“A catch up since the last ad hoc increase in 2009 would require an estimated \$193 million to fund. A 1% annual indexing going forward would require \$191 million to fund. The total estimated cost of these proposals is \$384 million. The go forward indexing, alone, not including the catch up, would require that member and employer contributions increase from the current total of 15% of pensionable earnings (6% members and 9% employers) to approximately 24.5%.”

We acknowledge that the General Council has no authority to direct or restrict how the General Council Executive, acting as the legal Administrator of the Pension Plan, exercises these duties. While surveying plan members is within the authority of the General Council to direct, the outcome of any survey cannot be binding on the Executive.

At the same time, we acknowledge the justice issue that is raised in this proposal. We ask the General Council to join with us in expressing concern to the General Council Executive and the Pension Plan Board for United Church pension plan retirees who have not had an increase in pension benefits since 2009 and propose that affordable means to provide additional support or benefits to retirees be explored.

TOR 7 SEEKING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH METHODS APPLIED IN SOUTH AFRICA**Origin: Toronto Conference****1. What is the issue?**

Various legal studies and tribunals have confirmed that the Israeli treatment of Palestinians living under occupation meets the definitions of “apartheid” in the Convention Against Apartheid and “genocide” in the Convention Against the Crime of Genocide, yet Israel has ignored over 35 UN resolutions and has violated numerous international humanitarian law statutes that should be governing its treatment of Palestinians, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the terms of its membership in the United Nations. Significant but still very limited economic sanctions have not compelled Israel to stop its illegal settlement of Palestinian land, its 11-year blockade of Gaza, its ongoing ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, its relatively indiscriminate killing and imprisonment of Palestinians, or its theft of Palestinian land, water and gas resources.

Because of the consistently brutal hardships suffered by Palestinians in the occupied territories, over 170 Palestinian political parties, unions and organizations of civil society issued a call in July 2005 for a global campaign of boycott and divestment against Israel similar to that imposed against apartheid in South Africa, and the Christian Palestinian community, through National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) communications with the World Council of Churches, has repeatedly pleaded for help for its very survival from the international Christian community.

In the apartheid era in South Africa, in response to the stellar moral leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu and others, The United Church of Canada undertook leadership initiatives that included divestment and the support of boycott and sanctions strategies in its working for justice there, and Bishop Desmond Tutu himself has said many times that the situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories is even worse than the situation of the blacks under the Afrikaans governments in South Africa.

The government of Canada was slow to undertake economic measures against the South African government then, and despite being under a contractual legal obligation as a signatory of the Fourth Geneva Convention to protect the rights of Palestinian civilians under occupation, continues to provide military, political and economic support for the Israeli oppression of Palestinians—despite its own stated policy of being against the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Exemplary and non-violent moral leadership has been consistently lived out by Palestinian Christian leaders, and their pleas for boycott, divestment, and sanctions have been responded to in only a limited and lukewarm way, our United Church Unsettling Goods campaign being an example. Now cannot be said to be the time, for that time is long overdue, for us to take the prophetic moral ground, but we can now take prophetic moral strides and advocate more strongly than ever, through proposed non-violent means, for the ending of the occupation.

2. Why is this issue important?

The prophet Ezekiel said: “Thus says the Lord God: Enough, O princes of Israel: Put away violence and oppression, and...cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord God” (Ezekiel 45:9). The application of non-violent pressures on Israel to cease the occupation of Palestinian lands is no more an act of hatred against the Jews themselves, an anti-Semitic act, than the application of non-violent pressures on South Africa to cease its systematic oppression of blacks in the apartheid era could be considered an act of hatred against white people in leadership in that country.

The United Church of Canada’s Affirmation of Faith calls on us to seek justice and resist evil, and nothing less than our integrity as a church is at stake when we see systematic suffering on the part of one people in one era, and decide to take up their just cause fully, whereas we see systematic suffering on the part of another people in another era, namely our own, and refrain from taking up their just cause just as fully. Palestinian Christians are our primary partners in the land that we call holy, the land in which dwell the roots of our Jewish and Christian history and traditions, the land in which our Lord was born, lived, was crucified, undertook his passion, suffered, died, and rose to live forever at Easter. As our primary partners in this holy land, they have repeatedly told us they are under siege, their capacity to withstand the daily pressures to take up violent responses to their plight diminishing rapidly, and their need of the international Christian community’s “costly solidarity” more acute now than ever before.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We call on The United Church of Canada to take more significant leadership to end the occupation of Palestinian lands by:

- 1. Advocating with the Canadian government and corporations for a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict based on international law, particularly by calling on the government of Canada to:**
 - a) End Canadian military, political and economic support for Israel until it honors its agreed upon obligations under international humanitarian law;**
 - b) Sanction Israel as it did apartheid South Africa;**
 - c) Honour Canada's contractual obligations as a signatory to the Fourth Geneva Convention to protect Palestinian human rights; and**
 - d) Encourage a policy of boycott and divestment throughout civil society as recommended by the May 2017 UN report from the Special Rapporteur to the Occupied Territories;**
- 2. Calling upon the membership, congregations, and groups affiliated with the United Church to contribute to the realization of a just peace in Palestine and Israel through adopting a campaign of boycott and divestment against all corporations, companies, and institutions which engage in illegal or oppressive activities such as those that:**
 - a) Provide products, services, or financial support to groups or organizations that engage in violence against defenseless civilians;**

- b) **Provide products, services, or technology to any government or organization that refuses to recognize/acknowledge the human and civil rights of all inhabitants of Israel and the occupied territories;**
 - c) **Provide products, services, or technology that sustain, support, or maintain the occupation;**
 - d) **Have established facilities or operations on land internationally recognized as occupied;**
 - e) **Provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, and/or maintenance of settlements or settlement-related infrastructure on territory internationally recognized as occupied;**
 - f) **Provide finances or assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the separation barrier within the occupied Palestinian territories; and**
- 3. Supporting the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and complies with its obligations under international law, including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal

This proposal was received by South West Presbytery at their April 24, 2018 meeting and transmitted with non-concurrence.

Toronto Conference agrees with the proposal entitled “Seeking Peace in the Middle East with Methods Applied in South Africa”

And makes the following comments:

This proposal offers one way to move forward but we acknowledge that discussion of peace in the Middle East needs to occur within the context of all conversations that seek peace in the world.

We acknowledge the United Church’s colonial application of the policy of assimilation and rejection of an Indigenous understanding of spirituality. We understand that any attempt by us to state a definitive solution to the conflict in the Middle East is a form of colonialism.

We acknowledge that any action taken by the United Church with respect to the Middle East may be experienced and/or perceived as anti-Semitism. We seek justice for all peoples in Israel and Palestine.

Naming all of the above, ongoing escalation of development in the occupied zones is weakening future negotiations and needs to be stopped immediately. For this reason we feel compelled to stand up for the well-being of the Palestinian people.

The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) wrote an open letter to the World Council of Churches and its members churches which calls for a more “costly

solidarity” with regard to the suffering and hardship placed upon Palestinians who have lived under occupation since 1967.

The United Church has advanced in incremental steps its policies regarding Israel-Palestine over a number of General Councils, yet still the suffering continues unmitigated. The occupation of Palestinian lands/territories continues unabated, and people continue to suffer untold hardships due to their lack of human rights.

We believe that ongoing conversation about how we might contribute to peace in the Middle East needs to continue at the denominational level.

Reports to the 43rd General Council 2018

MODERATOR'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

I must begin this report by giving thanks. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the church as Moderator for the last three years. Every moment has been a blessing. Every step of the way I have felt the prayerful accompaniment of the church, without which I could have done nothing. Words cannot express the depth of my gratitude for the gifts I have received, the ways I have been changed, and the people whose lives have touched mine along the way. Thank you for placing your trust in me and for sharing your faith so generously.

No report can capture the breadth and depth of what you have shared, what I have learned, and how we as a church have grown over these three years. So I will attempt only to offer a smattering of stories and musings, in the hope that they will spark curiosity, conversation, and a desire to dig deeper.

You have told me that the most urgent priority facing our church today is learning how to be good relations. Almost everywhere I visited in our church, folks are seeking ways to heal the brokenness at the heart of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this land. Communities of faith are finding creative ways to bridge this divide and deepen connection with their neighbours. Several intercultural canoe trips, youth camps and other events have created space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of all ages to learn, share and build relationship together.

As we dream new possibilities for the future, folks are also naming the need for meaningful reparations for past injustices. We will need to bring our best and most creative, justice-seeking selves to this conversation.

As a church, we are just starting to recognize our need for deep, open conversations about race and privilege and how they operate in our church. This will demand great courage and great humility from all of us. Lilla Watson, an Aboriginal woman from Australia, offers this wisdom as we begin: "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Learning to recognize my own need for liberation has been essential. I do this by listening deeply, with an open mind and heart, to folks who can see what is invisible to me—the ways my thoughts and values have been distorted by colonialism and privilege. Sitting and listening with the Caretakers group, conversations with racialized members of our church, wisdom from Indigenous communities and overseas partners have all helped me become more aware of what needs healing in me. This awareness is painful, disorienting and necessary. As I come to recognize my brokenness, I find myself longing for wholeness. This is the beginning of understanding of what it means to be a good relation.

Among the highlights from these three years are the many youth and young adult gatherings I have attended. If you want to renew your faith and hope and feel excited about where our church is going, I recommend participating in Rendez-vous, or the GO Project, or Youth Forum, or a local youth event, or even the youth group that gathers in your church. I have been inspired and moved by the way young people in our church are creating communities of faith that are safe, courageous, and deeply spiritual. Here is just one of many stories I could share:

On a recent Conference visit, I spent a couple of hours one evening with youth who were invited to “come and meet the Moderator.” One young woman was celebrating her 16th birthday that day. I asked her why she was here instead of at a birthday party. She said she had come because this is where her friends are, where she feels most comfortable and safe. She spends as much time as she can at the United Church because it is where she knows she is accepted and loved.

This is the kind of community the young people in our church are building with one another! If you know young folks in your area who aren’t connected with the youth and young adult programs in our church, please consider how your faith community can support their participation.

One young adult urged me to share this message with our church. “Please,” she said, “tell people we (young people) are not disinterested in church, just because we’re not there on Sunday morning. My church happens at Wednesday evening Bible study and our Saturday evening potlucks and worship. We’re just doing church differently.”

Ecumenical and interfaith relations are central to the United Church’s understanding of ourselves and how we live out our mission. I have been blessed with opportunities to represent our church at many ecumenical and interfaith gatherings. Each of these has caused me to reflect more deeply on what it means to be a true partner in such relationships. I want to share a reflection from my experience at the Anglican General Synod meeting (like our General Council) in 2016:

The Anglican Church was wrestling with the difficult question of whether or not to change their marriage regulations to include same-sex couples. It is a gift to be asked to accompany friends through a challenging moment in their life together. It was a great honour, and a lot of work! I had to continually let go of my own hopes and desires for how the vote would go, and focus instead on holding the gathered community and the whole Anglican Church in prayer. I assured the Synod that the United Church would continue to walk with them in friendship and solidarity, regardless of the outcome of the decisions they made that week. I have reflected often since then on how I am called to practise this kind of compassion in all my relationships—especially where there is conflict. Through this experience, I learned that when we hold one another in love, our disagreements lose the power to divide us, and “opponents” become relatives.

Following the attack on the mosque in Quebec City, I heard an imam share a teaching from the Quran that has stayed with me. He said there is a story in which a student asks the Prophet how

we are to respond to oppression. The Prophet replies that when we see oppression, we are to take the hand of our neighbour...when our neighbour is the oppressed person, we take their hand to help lift them up and relieve the burden of oppression...when our neighbour is the oppressor, we take their hand to hold it back from doing harm to others. I find the beauty and humanity of this teaching very moving. Everyone is our neighbour and needs us to intervene with strength and compassion wherever there is oppression.

These experiences have confirmed for me the importance of building and nurturing relationships with our neighbours of all faiths. This is a calling at which the Kenyan church excels. I was impressed with the extent and depth of ecumenical and interfaith cooperation I witnessed in Kenya. At an interfaith clerics meeting in Mombasa, leaders from many different faith groups met to discuss how they could collectively address the political and social justice concerns that are fracturing their communities and their country. Their level of engagement and commitment to working together for the common good was inspiring.

We have so much to learn from our overseas partners. I did far more international travel in this triennium than anticipated, but every one of these visits opened my eyes to the gifts our partners bring to our relationship. As we practise genuine mutuality in all our relationships, we will be greatly enriched by the wisdom, faith, and insights of our global and local partners. We have much to offer, but even more to receive. What a blessing!

An exciting development emerging in our global relationships is the strengthening of connections and collaboration between Indigenous peoples. The Canada–Australia Indigenous Dialogue is one example of how our churches are learning from and supporting one another as we seek justice and healing in our own contexts. One participant from the Australian delegation noted—there is power in hearing your story reflected back to you in the experience of another.

One final reflection...

The time I spent with the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle gives me hope as I think about all the changes we are undertaking in the church. At the first meeting of the Caretakers I attended I felt completely overwhelmed by what we were being asked to do. The task was too big...the time was too short...the way forward was too unclear. Yet, in one short year, we went from what felt like chaos to a courageous new vision for Aboriginal ministries, which has the consensus of the whole Indigenous church. We got there by listening deeply, trusting one another, speaking from the heart, and grounding ourselves in prayer. And by seeing the messiness and uncertainty of the moment, not as obstacles on our path, but as the raw materials God uses for creating something new.

May it be so for us as we seek to be the church in these uncertain times.

Thanks be to God!

Yours in faith,
Jordan Cantwell

Moderator/Modératrice

Here is a brief description of my visits across the country...a series of events, Conferences, workshops, presentations, worship services, and preaching—my way of trying to “quicken the heart of the church” and to hear the stories, hopes, dreams, and concerns of people and congregations in all our Conferences. My sincere apologies if I have missed any community in this list. It has been a privilege to have been welcomed so warmly and to have had this opportunity to experience the breadth of what it means to be The United Church of Canada.

British Columbia Conference

BC Native Ministries Meeting 2017
UCW 55th Anniversary
EVOLVE
Windermere Valley Shared Ministry
Prince Rupert United Church
Long House Ministry
St. Andrew’s Pastoral Charge
Harmony House
Mission Site and Residential School, Williams Lake
Vancouver School of Theology
First United Church Community Ministry
Lynn Valley Pastoral Charge
North Lonsdale Pastoral Charge
West Vancouver Pastoral Charge
Dunbar-Ryerson United Church
St. Aidan’s Pastoral Charge

Saskatchewan Conference

Saskatchewan Conference Annual General Meeting 2016
St. Andrew’s College
Prairie Centre Ecumenism 2016
École Victoria School
UNJPPI Annual Meeting 2016
Open Table Dinner Church 2016
Day of Remembrance – Islamic Centre
Reconciliation Saskatoon 2017
Maple Creek Pastoral Charge
Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge, Maple Creek
Camp Shagabec
Preeceville-Sturgis Pastoral Charge
Meadow Lake United Church
Flying Dust First Nation
River Bend Presbytery Meeting
Youth East Vigil
Westminster United Church Youth Group – Humboldt

Carnduff-Alida Pastoral Charge
St. Andrew's United Church
Gainsborough United Church
Carievale United Church

Alberta and Northwest Conference

Alberta and Northwest Conference Annual General Meeting 2018
Korean/Canadian Panel Discussion 2015 – Avonmore United Church
McDougall Pastoral Charge
Deer Park Pastoral Charge
Robert McClure Pastoral Charge
Symons Valley Pastoral Charge
Red Deer Lake United Church
St. Andrew's United Church
Treaty 7 Day Celebration
An Awkward Conversation in the Church
United On Whyte Pastoral Charge (Pleasantview United Church)
Whitehorse Pastoral Charge
Gaetz Memorial Pastoral Charge
Sunnybrook Pastoral Charge
Indigenous-New Comers Dialogue
Southminster Pastoral Charge
Fort McMurray Pastoral Charge

Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Conference Annual General Meeting 2017
Conference Executive Meeting
NEECHI Youth Event – Sandy Saulteaux Centre
Opening of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
North End Stella Community Ministry
Oak Table community Ministry
Winnipeg Outreach Ministry
Westworth Pastoral Charge
Knox United Church

Manitou Conference

Ministry Personnel Retreat
Manitou Intentional Learning Community Annual Meeting 2017
Commemoration of the 1986 Apology at the Cairn: Laurentian University/St. Peter's United Church
Manitou Conference UCW
St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge
New Liskeard: St. Paul's Pastoral Charge
Spirit Dancing Presbytery Meeting

London Conference

Youth Forum Pearce Williams Christian Centre
Youth Retreat Camp Menesetung (Goderich)
Skylight Festival
London Conference Annual General Meeting 2016
Tecumseh Pastoral Charge
South Caradoc Pastoral Charge
Avondale Pastoral Charge

Hamilton Conference

Hamilton Conference Annual General Meeting 2018
Southampton and Saugeen Pastoral Charges Bruce Presbytery Meeting
Lion's Head-Pike Bay Pastoral Charge
Silver Spire Youth Event
Eramosa Pastoral Charge

Toronto Conference

Cruxifusion Conference Annual Meeting 2016
Emmanuel College
80th Anniversary of Lydia Gruchy's Ordination
Prayers for Peace – Islington United Church
Humbercrest United Church – Culte en français
Grace United Church
Trinity United Church
Alpha Korean/Bloor Street United Churches
Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Toronto Southeast Presbytery Office
Toronto Chinese (EM)
Tamil United Church
St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge
Uganda Martyrs United Church
Roncesvalles Pastoral Charge

Bay of Quinte Conference

Living into Right Relations Group – Curve Lake
Cambridge Street Pastoral Charge
Queen Street Pastoral Charge
St. Mark's United, Cannifton Pastoral Charge
Lakeridge Presbytery Youth Event
Port Perry-Prince Albert Pastoral Charge
Trinity United Church

Montreal and Ottawa Conference

Rendez-vous 2017 Montreal, QC
Courageous Conversation Gathering
Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble Conference 2016
Montreal City Mission Iftar, Montreal 2016
Worshiplude 2017
Combatting Christian-Based Homophobia and Transphobia Globally, Montreal Summit Session
Montreal City Mission
Église St. Jean
Camino de Emaús
YAYA Gathering
"Opportunity Knox Bargain Centre," St. Andrew's and Knox United Church
Parkdale United Church
Meet with local United Church Military Chaplains
City View Pastoral Charge, Clergy Retreat
Riverside Pastoral Charge
St. James Pastoral Charge
Ste. Geneviève Pastoral Charge
Sherbrooke: Plymouth-Trinity Pastoral Charges
Église St. Pierre
Montreal and Ottawa Conference Office
Trinity United Church
South Stormont Pastoral Charge (St. Andrew's-St. Mark's)
House of Lazarus, Community Outreach Mission
Rural United Ministry

Maritime Conference

Black Loyalists Centre
Trinity United, Mahone Bay
Atlantic School of Theology
Naval Chaplains, Canadian Armed Forces Base, Halifax
Shelburne (Trinity)
Liverpool (Zion) United Church
Yarmouth: Beacon Pastoral Charge
St. Stephen's United Church (Kirk-McColl)
Brookfield United Church
Three Harbours Pastoral Charge (St. John's United Church)
Tatamagouche Centre
Wilmot Pastoral Charge

Newfoundland and Labrador Conference

Spring Meeting of Conference, East and West Districts 2018
Clergy Retreat, 2017
Boyd's Cove Beothuk Interpretation Centre

Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Mud Lake United Church
Northwest River
Fraser Road United Church (Gander, NL)
Centennial United Church (Robert's Arm)
Jimmy Pratt Outreach Ministry
VOWR Radio Station
Cochrane Centre
Stella's Circle

All Native Circle Conference

ANCC Executive Meeting (Beausejour, MB)
ANCC Grand Council Youth Reunion (Beausejour, MB)
Grand Council 2017 (Pinawa, MB)
Maskwacis Samson United Church
File Hills, Wanapakew United Church
Carry the Kettle, Hurricane Hills United Church
Regina Native Outreach Ministry
Fisher River, Stevens Memorial United Church
God's Lake-God's River Pastoral Charge
Island Lake: Henry Fiddler Memorial Pastoral Charge (Garden Hill)
Johnston Garrioch Memorial United Church (Cross Lake)
Norway House, Kinosa Sip Keenanow United Church
Nelson House
Oxford House: Vernon Grieves Memorial Pastoral Charge
Red Sucker Lake United Church
Sandy Lake, ON, Adam Fiddler Memorial United Church
Deer Lake United Church
South Indian Lake, Angus Bonner Memorial United Church
Thompson Outreach
Tower's Island, Norway House
Wasagamach United Church
Keewatin Presbytery Meeting
Grand River United Church
Kahnawake United Church
Toronto Urban Native Ministry
Wasauksing/Shawanaga

British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec Congregations

Quadra Island Pastoral Charge
Haida Gwaii Pastoral Charge
Bella Coola Pastoral Charge
Gitsegukla: Hazelton Pastoral Charge
Kitimaat: First Pastoral Charge

Kispiox Pastoral Charge
Lax Kw'alaams: Anspayaxaw Pastoral Charge
Alderville Pastoral Charge
Cape Croker Pastoral Charge
Wesley Saugeen Pastoral Charge
St. Clair United Church (Amjiwnaang First Nation)
Kanesatake Pastoral Charge
Georgina Island Pastoral Charge
Christian Island Pastoral Charge
Nations Uniting House

Other

Nottawasaga – Aboriginal Ministries Consultation
Native Peoples Retreat – Five Oaks
New Ministers Intentional Learning Community – Five Oaks
Full Communion Celebration (Niagara Falls)
Truth and Reconciliation Final Report Launch – Ottawa
Toronto United Church Council Awards Night
National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering (Pinawa)

Ecumenical Gatherings

Anglican General Synod 2016
Lutheran General Synod 2017
Peoples Moving Forward Together (Manresa Centre)
Ecumenical Statement/Press Conference regarding TRC #48 (Ottawa)
Bartimaeus Institute

South Korea

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)

China

China Christian Council Consultation

El Salvador

Ecumenical Conference for Reconciliation and Peace

Jakarta, Indonesia

AMPLIFY Conference (LGBTIQ International Symposium in Jakarta)

Beit Sahour, Bethlehem

The World Council of Churches, 50 Years of Occupation, and the Ecumenical Response

Kenya

Partners Visit

Australia

Canada-Australian Dialogue

United States of America

Installation Service for Dr. John C. Dorhauer, The United Church of Christ (New York, NY)

The United Church of Canada and The United Church of Christ Full Communion Meeting
(Cleveland, OH)

The United Church of Christ General Assembly (Baltimore, MD)

ACT Now! Unite to End Racism (Washington, DC)

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The role of the Moderator for The United Church of Canada encompasses an astonishingly wide variety of responsibilities, ranging from serving as the primary spokesperson, to presiding over meetings and worship, to giving sympathetic guidance and counsel, to heartening and strengthening the whole United Church (*Manual* 4.1.3). Each of these responsibilities is significant on its own, while combined create an awe-inspiring task. According to the Governance Handbook for the General Council, the purpose of the Moderator's Advisory Committee (MAC) is to "provide advice, support and assistance to the Moderator in fulfilling the duties of the office most effectively." Little did we realize the extent to which we would be transformed in the process of fulfilling this mandate as we received the stories, the wonderings, the learning, and the longing for justice that the Moderator encountered in her term.

In August 2015, Jordan Cantwell said "you bet" to the call to offer faith-filled wisdom and leadership to The United Church of Canada in this capacity, which was affirmed by the commissioners to the 42nd General Council 2015 in Corner Brook. Within the first week of her appointment, the Moderator was sent to Korea on behalf of the denomination to represent the United Church to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and to sign the Mutual Recognition of Ministry Agreement between our two churches. In the few days between the rise of the Council and this flight, she gathered together a group of people from across the church to walk with her intentionally and prayerfully. The voices she wanted to have at the table advising and guiding her represented the commitments she had to walking in right relationship with our Indigenous friends, honouring the wisdom in the voice of young people, and living with integrity as a member of the Intercultural church. This group of virtual strangers collected by Jordan became a close-knit family as we were immensely privileged to participate in this journey with her.

We met three times in person and many times by conference call over the course of the three-year term. The first gathering included a time to establish goals and priorities for the unique way in which she would lead the church, and to help set guidelines for discerning which of the many invitations she would have the privilege to accept. These priorities were:

- Indigenous Justice and Right Relations
- Ecumenical conversation and engagement
- Youth and young adult ministry

It has been the practice of the Moderator to spend at least seven days in each of the 13 Conferences, the precise nature of the official visits to be determined by the individual Conferences and these priorities. I want to express gratitude for the care and attention that the Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker gave to the priorities of the Moderator in the planning of those visits, as well as assisting in the support for her well-being. The eagerness with which Jordan approached the role and its many opportunities for faithful service very quickly encountered the reality of the task in terms of demands on her time and heart. These dedicated staff helped lighten some of that reality by ensuring she had adequate space for rest and reflection, as well as accompanying her on these official visits by plane, car, and even

snowmobile. In addition to these official visits, the Moderator visited numerous communities of faith and gatherings, including many events focused on ministry with youth and young adults, all of which were rich learning experiences for her. A list of all the opportunities she had is appended to her report.

One of the most significant initiatives the Moderator undertook within her named priorities was to issue an invitation to each Indigenous community with a United Church of Canada connection to host her at some point during the triennium, the nature of which was determined in each context. The Moderator's Accountability Report outlines some of the scope of this work, but the piece I wish to acknowledge is the respectful way the Moderator entered each of those visits. She allowed herself to be vulnerable to the sorrow and the hope in those communities as her commitment to building right relationships and continues to share the wisdom and the call to action gleaned from those experiences with the whole church. This commitment also meant that the Moderator was not as available to accept invitations to participate in special occasions marking the life and work of this amazing United Church of ours, which the MAC supported.

Another MAC-supported initiative was discerning the means of communicating the work of the Moderator to the church. Each individual in the role of Moderator has a unique way of engaging the world and Jordan is no exception. Many people wondered what the Moderator was doing, even though we had communicated her priorities to the church, because she was not active on social media and they were unable to track her progress throughout the triennium. This is another reflection on the changing nature of the church and how it mirrors the changes in society. The humble way that Jordan offered her leadership meant that many of her experiences were known only to the people she was in relationship with at the time. Rest assured, however, our Moderator was extremely busy! As we imagine new ways of being the church together, one of the conversations should be about the way we let each other know the things on our minds and hearts to support our mutual learning and practice of faith.

In addition to the Conference visits and engagements with Indigenous communities, the Moderator made several overseas visits in a variety of capacities, again the list of which you can find linked in her report. The consequence of the expectations of travel of this role is that her time with her family was compromised, as it is for all Moderators. I want to acknowledge the deep sacrifice that her partner and daughter made on behalf of The United Church of Canada to continue to support Jordan's faithful dedication and enthusiasm for her call.

The final acknowledgement I wish to make is the contribution of all the staff throughout the church to assist the Moderator in fulfilling her mandate. In all of the Conference visits, support staff enabled the details to be smooth, allowing Jordan to be fully present to the stories being offered. Any time there was a statement or a letter to be written on a topic consistent with the values of the United Church, staff at the General Council Office provided background and feedback to ensure accuracy and thorough detail. However, the three staff who were members of the Moderator's Advisory Committee were essential in supporting her role. We were ably advised and counselled by Mary-Frances Denis and Nora Sanders, both with wisdom and

experience on what it means to be the Moderator in every word and action, and the subsequent navigation of the multiple, and sometimes competing, demands of the role. In addition, none of this would be possible without the gentle (and sometimes firm) guidance and administrative support of Susan Fortner, who held the memory of requests, visits, and experiences, while ensuring Jordan had the rest she needed. It was a gift to work with all of them.

It was a deep privilege and a great honour to accompany Jordan in this way with this circle of faithful and wise leaders. We listened to her stories of hope and sorrow, we offered guidance when she wondered where to establish boundaries, and we prayed together for three years. We were also reminded of the prayers that were being offered across the country to support the ministry of the Moderator, which greatly enhanced our role. While the pending changes to the structure of the church will necessitate changes to the concrete ways the mandate of the Moderator is lived out, it will not change the way in which a leader is called forth and chosen to quicken the hearts of the people and strengthen the whole United Church of Canada. Our final gratitude goes to Jordan for prayerfully responding to the call, for inspiring and challenging us to practise our faith in a good way, and for always reminding us that laughter and playfulness are just as important in the work of the faithful.

Tracy Murton, Chair

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the MAC Committee

Jordan Cantwell (Moderator)

Peter Short (Former Moderator)

Mary-Frances Denis (until December 2017, Program Coordinator, Media and Public Relations)

Susan Fortner (Administrative Assistant to the Moderator)

Lauren King (Member)

Étienne LeSage (Member)

Nora Sanders (General Secretary, General Council)

Russel Burns (General Council Representative)

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the day I sat down to write this report in early April, an article in *The Globe and Mail* included the following sentence: "According to a 2017 Ipsos survey, only 40 per cent of Canadians attend church compared with 63 per cent in 2006." 2006 was the year I was appointed as General Secretary of the United Church, but I am determined not to take it personally. This statistic is just one glaring reminder of the time of change and turmoil that we are living through.

It could be a bit depressing...and yet I find myself filled with hope.

The theme that the Moderator has chosen for this 43rd General Council, "Risking Faith, Daring Hope," continues a long tradition of The United Church of Canada and our predecessor churches. Faith is a risk. Faith is always a risk. Faith is about the things that are not certain. Faith is about the unseen one, the holy one, the living presence that our Song of Faith describes as "Holy Mystery." The hope that we dare to have is a gift we have through faith.

Change is nothing new to us either. The United Church of Canada was born out of change. Our forefathers (yes, nearly all were men) who came together in 1925 were responding to changes in their world and their churches. They were all giving up something of their own traditions, coming together in compromise and hope. Some of those attending the founding meeting of The United Church of Canada were going home to close their own church buildings and walk down the street to begin their new worship life in what had formerly been a "rival" church. In the midst of all this change, some of it hard, they made the choice to create a new thing. In the first issue of *The New Outlook* (*The Observer's* predecessor), the editor wrote that the church

is always in danger of getting into a habit of thinking more of conserving and standing by old methods and statements and formulas than of being friendly to things that are new and living and that, because they are so, speak of change. And a Church out of touch with the life and need of its own time may have certain virtues and excellencies, but it surely has one fatal lack.

Those who are responsible for the naming of this paper must have had some such thoughts as these in their minds. They wished it to be not only sound and Christian and wholesome in its spirit and atmosphere but they wished it to live its life with its eyes open upon a real world of which it was itself a part and in which it had a place and a work to do.

These are good words for our church in 1925 and good words for our church today.

Yes, there is an undeniable sadness about smaller churches, fewer churches, and less energy for some of our time-treasured activities.... But remember when the "Emerging Spirit" campaign

was launched (in 2006, just before I actually arrived into this role, so I can claim no credit) and it was said over and over again that its success should not be judged by “bums in pews.” That was probably said without a full understanding of what it meant, but to me it seemed right. After all, the point of church is not to sit in a certain place with certain people every Sunday morning, but to encounter our sacred stories in a way so real that we are called to follow Jesus and share his love in the world.

I am fortunate to have found that depth of connection while sitting in pews, but also in so many other settings: in the Explorers group and Sunday school classes I led, in my “cell group” in the Yellowknife United Church, in the “house church” I was part of in Iqaluit, in relationships with young GO Project leaders who billeted with us, in the Refugee Committee at Islington United where love is expressed through a hundred practical details. Being part of a worshipping congregation on Sunday mornings is a big part of who I am, but it is not the sum total of my life of faith. I recognize that for others without the same history of lifelong church attendance (perhaps especially those of younger generations), genuine encounters with the scriptures and with faith can be found in other settings. My sabbatical time last year gave me the opportunity to reflect more fully on my own small group experiences, and to hear the stories of others engaged in a variety of ministries. This only strengthened my sense that when we are open to doing things in different ways, we can find ourselves journeying along paths that are deeply fulfilling.

Over the past six years (three years of study by the Comprehensive Review Task Group, followed by three years of remit discussions, voting, and preparation for implementation), our church has acknowledged that the world around us is changing. We need to either make changes ourselves or wait passively for the inevitable changes to roll over us. One of the things that gives me hope is the willingness of the church (evidenced by the strong results of the remit voting) to enter into change, even when the picture of where all of this will lead remains misty. It is hard to intentionally step into the unknown, even though we unthinkingly do so all the time.

When the Conference Presidents, Presidents-Elect, and Leading Elder met in February of this year some were serving in roles that will likely be obsolete after General Council, and some were preparing for roles that will likely be abbreviated and focused on endings. Despite this, the mood of the conversations was practical, hopeful, and grounded in faith. Elaine Beattie, president of Montreal and Ottawa Conference, shared a story of her personal experience of change. It went something like this: “I am an immigrant to Canada. When I arrived in Montreal 30 some years ago I knew where it was on the map, and knew as much about Montreal and Canada as I could learn from reading about it. I was as well prepared as I could be, but I did not know what it would be like at all. I did not know what it would smell like, sound like, or feel like. I had to experience the place before I could understand these things. It was hard at first. I had big adjustments to make. I am so glad that I made those adjustments and came to know this as my home.”

The changes that we are working our way through right now are structural ones. They are important, but only insofar as our structures enable us to be the church that we yearn to be. We want to be a church that shares our living faith with next generations and that makes a positive difference in the world. I find hope in the opportunity we will have, as we live into new structures, to discern about who and what we are as a church. To chart new paths in how we can share the love of God in our homes, our communities, and our world.

I find hope, too, in the way that we have kept faith at our core, even in the midst of all the distracting discussions about the practical issues and details of structural change. Congregations, camps, youth events, refugee support groups, community ministries, networks, United Church Women's groups, small groups, campus ministries, and so many others continue to touch people's lives in real and sustaining ways. We have continued to be a place where people can turn in times of need. There couldn't be a better example than the prayer offered by the Rev. Brenda Curtis at the vigil in Humboldt as the community struggled to make sense of the deaths of so many who were part of the Broncos hockey team in April's horrific bus crash:

Holy and merciful God, as we leave here, help us to know that in times of tragedy when we can see no way through the pain, help us to know we can put our trust and our faith in you. In life, in death, and in life beyond death, you are always with us tender God, encouraging us, loving us, and opening a path of healing for us all.

Much of the focus as we prepare for this year's General Council will be on the "Comprehensive Renewal" changes to our structure, and the associated "remit" and "remit implementation planning" work. One of the hardest things during the past three years, and especially the past few months, has been the uncertainty about the future roles of staff colleagues, especially those serving in the Conferences and presbyteries. Their faithful commitment to the work of the church, even as they faced the possibility of personal upheaval, has been inspiring. Appended to this report you will find a full report from the Remit Implementation Working Group, which was co-chaired by Alan Hall and Peter Hartmans, and supported with great energy and commitment by David Allen. I am so grateful for the way in which they have led this important work.

In the long story of our church, the Calls to the Church from the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle may prove to be the most significant change that is coming to the 43rd General Council. This was work that was noted by the Comprehensive Review Task Group as needed, but it was work that they could not do. It could only be done by the Indigenous leadership in the church. The vision the Caretakers offer us calls us to live more fully into the kinds of relationships envisaged by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Being part of a church that names a commitment to right relations, and is willing to take concrete steps to honour that commitment, fills me with hope.

We can find hope, too, in our church's active commitments to intercultural ministries, to our efforts to understand White privilege, in our continued leadership to recognize and support the

rights of LGBTQ2S people wherever they live, and in our support for Ministries in French through the possibility of new covenantal relationships. In all these areas, our efforts are imperfect; we have much to learn and much to achieve. I appreciated the title that the Intercultural Ministry Committee of Alberta and Northwest Conference gave to the conference they hosted last fall: “An Awkward Conversation.” It is indeed awkward to talk about these things, but risking awkward conversations is an important step forward

I remember that it was just a few weeks after the 42nd General Council that a photo of the body of a dead toddler, a tiny refugee who did not make it safely to a safe shore, jarred the world into realizing the extent of the crisis in Syria. The immediate and sustained response by so many in our United Church communities, and the working connections forged with community partners, has offered us all a taste of church at its best.

As we seek to respond to our world’s environmental problems, we repeat the familiar words in A New Creed about “living with respect in Creation.” We need to make them more than just good words. We can find hope in the commitment to “greening the church” as demonstrated by the March 2018 Executive’s approval of a five-year plan (including financial support to congregations) to reduce the carbon emissions in our church buildings.

As we continue to live into the partnership principles from previous councils, new and continuing partnerships for The United Church of Canada are an exciting element of our lives together these days. Much of our work within Canada, as well as our global work, is done with partners on the ground working to improve the lives of people where they live. It’s a very different approach than the missionary practice at the time of church union that focused on converting people to Christianity. For me, opportunities to visit partners in Korea, China, and Colombia since the last General Council, to welcome church leaders visiting Canada, and to engage with members of the Partner Council, have deepened my understanding of the value of partnership.

We are finding strength and companionship in our Full Communion relationship with the United Church of Christ and in the mutual recognition of ministries agreements with the Presbyterian Church Republic of Korea and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Having begun these new forms of relationship with the approval of the last General Council, we are working to develop another Full Communion agreement with the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. Also important are our relationships with migrant churches, such as those from Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Haiti, who wish to retain something of their own identity while also maintaining a connection with us. Within Canada, we are having discussions with the Presbyterian Church on the future possibility of sharing office space, and with both Presbyterians and Anglicans about possibilities for sharing services.

The 42nd General Council also directed the establishment of an innovation fund, now called Embracing the Spirit, to support creative work in the new and renewing ministries across the church. This activity offers a hopeful reminder that even as we mourn the end of treasured

ministries that are no longer sustainable, there are exciting new practices and communities of faith emerging.

The new approaches to work and faith at the 43rd General Council are cause for hope too. A new way of doing business is aimed at making room for a more diverse body of people to have a voice. It also aims to have more fulsome discussions of the broader issues involved before the courts discerns what actions to take. I'm excited about the introduction of a Festival of Faith alongside the business meeting. It will remind us that we are a church and that we make all decisions in the context of our faith.

In this, my 12th year serving you as General Secretary, I can say that it remains a privilege to serve God and this church alongside so many staff colleagues, elected leaders, ministers, and dedicated members. I am grateful for all the support and encouragement I have received, and must name in particular the present Moderator Jordan Cantwell and each of her predecessors since 2006, as well as my Supervision Committee, currently chaired by the wise, kind, and faithful Sybil Wilson.

I have chosen to use the report to speak about the broader context of the United Church in these times. You can find more detail on all the work of the General Council Office throughout the triennium through my reports to the Executive of the General Council on the United Church Commons site (commons.united-church.ca).

I look forward to hearing from you, and to engaging with your questions at General Council—and you do not need to wait until then. Feel free to be in touch with me any time.

I leave you with these words from Roman 15:13:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nora Sanders
General Secretary, General Council

REPORT FROM THE REMIT IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP

Summary

This report provides highlights of the work that has been done and remains to be done if GC43 chooses to enact the remits that have been approved by presbyteries and pastoral charges.

Background

In 2016, the General Secretary appointed a Remit Scenario Planning Working Group to do initial thinking about how the various remits would be implemented if all or some of the remits were enacted. The working group consisted of Alan Hall (General Council Office; co-chair), Peter Hartmans (Executive Secretary, Hamilton Conference; co-chair), Executive Secretaries David Allen (Toronto), David Hewitt (Maritime), and Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa (London), and General Council Office Executive Ministers/Officers Michael Blair (Church in Mission), Erik Mathiesen (Finance), and Kate Rodd (Communication). Cheryl Jourdain (All Native Circle Conference) and Maggie Dieter (McLeod) (Aboriginal Ministries Council) were available for consultation on the implications of remit implementation on the Indigenous Church. Jane Rounthwaite was retained as a consultant for the initial work; Stephanie Uyesugi provided administrative support.

When the remit vote approved the proposed changes, the Remit Scenario Planning Working Group became the Remit Implementation Working Group. It began its work in July 2017. David Allen transitioned to become Remit Implementation Project Leader; Thivan Hoang was hired as administrative support. Lori Ransom was seconded from the Aboriginal Ministries Council to focus on the Calls to the Church (see page 440).

Work done prior to GC43

Indigenous Church

During this triennium, significant work has been done regarding the Indigenous Church's mission and ministry as part of The United Church of Canada. GC43 will receive Calls to the Church; see page 440. Founded on the principles of Indigenous self-determination as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, this document provides a vision for how the Indigenous Church will govern itself and implement the remits, if enacted by GC43, in relationship with the rest of the church.

United Church of Canada Act

Legal counsel are working with parliamentary counsel to develop draft legislation, which would be introduced in the fall of 2018 if the remits are enacted by the 43rd General Council. Senator Peter Harder has agreed to introduce the bill in the Senate, and MP Rev. Rob Oliphant has agreed to introduce the bill in the House of Commons. Amendments to provincial legislation will be developed using the federal bill as a model.

Remit 1: Three Council Model

Most of the working group's work has focused on the move from a four-court to a three-council model of church governance.

Boundaries: On September 30, 2017, the recalled GC42 approved the establishment and membership of a commission to determine the boundaries of the regional councils. The commission's interim report was released January 10, 2018; following further consultation, the final report was released February 27, 2018. See the commission's report at www.united-church.ca/news/final-report-regional-council-boundaries. GC43 will consider a proposal to receive the report of the commission and to thank the members of the commission for their work within a tight timeline.

Consultation with General Council Executive: In November 2017 the working group consulted on a number of matters that would assist future planning.

- The remit used "cooperation" language around property and pastoral relations. The Executive confirmed that cooperation will be as defined in policy statements. See the GCE Workbook, page 15, in 2016-11-18 GCE Meeting on commons.united-church.ca.
- The Executive made a statement on how clusters and networks will function within the church. See GS 71 Clusters and Networks in the GCE Workbook, page 200, in 2017-11-18 GCE Meeting on commons.united-church.ca.
- The Executive approved two categories of funding for the regional councils. See GS 69 Funding Categories (GCE Workbook, page 194) and GS 69 Remit Implementation - Funding Categories PowerPoint in 2017-11-18 GCE Meeting on commons.united-church.ca.
- The Executive made a statement about who has decision-making authority regarding funds currently held by presbyteries, Conferences, financial corporations and extension councils. See GS 70 Local Resources in GCE Workbook, page 199, in 2017-11-18 GCE Meeting on commons.united-church.ca.

Staffing: After the release of the Boundaries Commission's final report, the working group developed a number of staffing models. Feedback resulted in a new staffing model wherein six Executive Ministers would serve two or three regional councils each, with each regional council having a high degree of autonomy in determining other staff. See Staffing Model – Regional Councils on commons.united-church.ca. The General Secretary proposed a process, working with regional leadership, for the provisional hiring of Executive Ministers. The Executive Ministers were appointed by the General Council Sub-Executive on March 22, 2018. See www.united-church.ca/news/provisional-executive-ministers-appointed.

Shared services: In accord with Remit 1, the working group researched a variety of ways in which the Denominational Council level of the church could provide technical services to the regional councils as a way of saving money and increasing efficiency. Areas that were explored included accounting, archives, database and a variety of IT items, etc. Discussion on these items continues.

Transitional work: Presbyteries and Conferences have been requested to provide names of people who are willing to do transitional work to ensure that the regional councils can function on January 1, 2019. These groups will provide advice to the provisionally appointed Executive Ministers on staffing and shared services. GC43 will be asked to approve the appointment of 16 regional council transitional commissions to enable the necessary work to be done, and to provide a governing structure for the regional councils until they can elect their own governing officials.

Denominational Council Executive: Most of the thinking about the role of the Denominational Council Executive has been done through the Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda in consultation with other permanent committees. Conferences have been requested to nominate people to serve on the Executive. The Nominations Committee will present names to GC43. Because the Denominational Council will be meeting annually to fulfill corporate requirements for an annual meeting, the Executive will have additional opportunities to be accountable to the Denominational Council.

Remit 3: Office of Vocation

The development of the Office of Vocation is happening in consultation with various groups: Conference representatives to a consultation in October 2017, ongoing meetings with folk from the Indigenous Church, La Table, current Conference Personnel Ministers, and others. The Office of Vocation advisory group has helped shape the direction, along with the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, in particular the nominations process for the Board of Vocation and its committees and the relationship between the Board of Vocation and the candidacy boards referenced in the candidacy pathway remit. A progress report was offered over YouTube Live in May. Print resources are in development.

Remit 4: Funding a New Model

Additional financial information is being developed and will be distributed in May.

The Permanent Committee on Finance reviewed the processes to be followed if this remit is enacted. All assessment-related administration and billing will be done through the Denominational Council office. Pastoral charges will learn of their upcoming assessments by October 15 each year. They will remit electronic payments on a monthly basis. When the latest statistical forms were distributed to the church in early 2018, an assessment calculator was added so church treasurers could calculate the anticipated assessment for the upcoming year. It is anticipated that the assessment level will be set by the Denominational Council every three years at the Denominational Council meeting.

The funding model allocates both assessment and Mission & Service revenue to the denomination and regions based on four key principles:

1. Greater sharing of resources
2. Clearer delineation of the funding for governance and shared services versus mission and ministry
3. Assured regional income for the first two years

4. Living within our means

It is anticipated that the allocation of resources between the Denominational Council, regional councils, and Indigenous Church will be reviewed triennially.

Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway

A series of webinars on the candidacy pathway was offered to the current education and students system in March, clarifying for candidates their process through the transition. Resources are in development. In light of the One Order remit not passing, a pathway for designated lay ministers that parallels the candidacy pathway is being developed.

The Working Group did not spend time on the following remits (remits 2, 5, 6, 8)

Remit 2 – Elimination of Transfer and Settlement: The Basis of Union will be amended if GC43 enacts this remit, while the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services has developed policy and process proposals for the call and appointment of ministry personnel. Information about this will be shared once it becomes available.

Remit 5 – Ministry Partners within Mutual Recognition of Ministry Agreements: Interim processes had been established by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services. The Basis of Union will be amended if GC43 enacts this remit.

Remit 6 – One Order of Ministry: This remit did not receive the required number of presbytery and pastoral charge votes to allow for enactment by GC43. The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and staff are working on the ongoing implications of this remit not being approved.

Remit 8 – A Step Towards a New Model of Membership: The Basis of Union will be amended if GC43 enacts this remit.

Work to be done following GC43

Indigenous Church

Governance: The Aboriginal Ministries Council will make proposals to GC43 concerning the establishment of the Elders' Council, the new national Indigenous organization, and the future of the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, consistent with Call 5 in the Calls to the Church document. GC43 also will receive a proposal to extend the term of the Aboriginal Ministries Council to provide for a period of transitional governance of the Indigenous Church until the new national Indigenous organization is created.

Dual Belonging: Call 6 in the Calls to the Church document speaks to the right of Indigenous Church communities to choose their relationships within a three-council structure and the right to dual belonging. This means Indigenous communities of faith have the right to belong fully to a regional council, and to belong fully to a new national Indigenous organization. In keeping with the principle of Indigenous self-determination, the Boundaries Commission honoured a

request from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle to provide time for Indigenous communities of faith to choose their relationships with the new regional councils. It is expected that decisions about these relationships will be made by the early fall of 2018 followed by a process of covenanting between the regional councils, the Indigenous Church, and Indigenous communities of faith.

Office of Vocation: Calls 1 to 3 relate to the establishment of the Office of Vocation, the new candidacy pathway, and formation for ministry. The Indigenous Church will continue to work closely with Ministry and Employment to ensure implementation of these Calls to the Church (see Remits 3 and 7 above for additional information).

Remit 1: Three Council Model

The recalled GC42 determined that the implementation date will be January 1, 2019.

Staffing: Regional Executive Ministers will work with regional council leadership to finalize staff positions within the regional councils. Current staff who are not continuing into the new structure will receive notice and severance in mid-August. A September gathering is planned for regional council staff, Denominational Council deployed staff, and a variety of Denominational Council staff to focus on being a team that provides support for communities of faith.

Shared services: Administrative staff will be gathered in the late fall to be trained on software and technology. This gathering will assist with coordination amongst the regional councils and the Denominational Council staff and should ensure greater comfort and competence on the various hardware and software.

Transition checklists: Presbyteries and Conferences have been supplied with checklists of tasks to be accomplished to ensure an orderly transition to the regional council structure.

Regional council transitional commissions: A proposal to GC43 outlines the roles and responsibilities for the regional council transitional commissions. There will be significant work for them to do in the summer and fall of 2018. The people on these commissions will be named by regions, and formally appointed by the General Council.

Denominational Council Executive: The Denominational Council Executive will take office January 1, 2019; however, it will meet a number of times during the fall of 2018 for training and planning for how it will function.

Remit 2: Elimination of Transfer and Settlement

General Council will be asked to adopt new policies for the call and appointment of ministry personnel to communities of faith.

Remit 3: Office of Vocation

Resources will be finalized for the Office of Vocation. Positions will be filled for both elected members and deployed Office of Vocation ministers (staff). Training will be offered in

November. Reviewers, investigators, and conflict resolution facilitators will be recruited and trained. The IT data project, which includes a shared database for use by the Office of Vocation that will be accessible to ministry personnel, continues in design and testing.

Remit 4: Funding a New Model

As noted earlier, pastoral charges will receive their assessment notices by October 15.

Remit 5: Ministry Partners within Mutual Recognition of Ministry Agreements

The Basis of Union and By-laws will be revised to reflect this change if the remit is enacted.

Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway

Resources will be finalized for the candidacy pathway. Positions will be filled for both elected members and deployed Office of Vocation ministers (staff). Training will be offered in November. Reviewers, investigators, and conflict resolution facilitators will be recruited and trained. The IT data project, which includes a shared database for use by the Office of Vocation that will be accessible to ministry personnel, continues in design and testing.

No further action required on

Remit 6: One Order of Ministry: see earlier note.

Remit 8: A Step Towards a New Model of Membership

Communication

The working group has spent considerable time communicating about what is happening:

- The United Church's website has information on a regular basis; see www.united-church.ca; search for "remit implementation."
- E-ssentials is sent to every pastoral charge giving highlights of the most recent activities.
- A remit implementation newsletter is sent out every couple of weeks; individuals can sign up for these regular updates.
- A postcard was included in the January Infopac letting people know how to get information.
- A webinar about the work of the Boundaries Commission happened in January, followed by additional webinars in the spring and fall on other topics.
- Half-page ads in *The Observer* have been running every month since January and will continue to do so until December.
- People can gather news from Facebook and Twitter.
- A dedicated e-mail address has been set up so people can submit their own questions; this e-mail address is included on virtually all of the communications that have been sent out.

EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: Moderator, General Secretary, and Chairs of Permanent Committees

The Executive of the General Council has met seven times this triennium, including a brief meeting right after the end of the 42nd General Council to welcome the new Moderator and appoint a Sub-Executive for any necessary business arising before the first full meeting of the Executive in November 2015. Of the remaining six meetings, three were held in person and three by video-conference call. The use of video-conference technology has been a significant innovation that has enabled cost savings, reduction of our carbon footprint, and care of our members' time commitments. This approach has offered new ways to engage that have enhanced our in-person meetings and preparation for meetings as well. The minutes of the Executive meetings have been shared with the church through Web postings throughout the triennium and can be found at commons.united-church.ca.

The following notes offer other highlights of the Executive's work as offered by the permanent committees and the Aboriginal Ministries Council.

Aboriginal Ministries Council

The Aboriginal Ministries Consultation has been a significant focus of the Aboriginal Ministries Council throughout this triennium. The framework for this conversation was approved by the General Council Executive in November 2015. In March 2016 The United Church of Canada implemented the norm, principles, and standards of the United Nations. This statement was the framework for the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, a group of Indigenous leaders from across the church, who carried out the process of consultation that resulted in the document entitled ***Calls to the Church***. The document was affirmed by Indigenous participants at the 2017 National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering.

Later in the fall of 2017 the Caretakers sent a statement to the Boundaries Commission asking for time to define, design, and understand the implications of changes for Indigenous communities of faith. The statement communicated the consensus within Indigenous community to move in the direction of fully belonging to both a Regional body and a National Indigenous Body; and, how the Indigenous church has just begun to explore the implications of developing, in partnership with Regions, covenants that are relevant and contextual. The statement also flagged how Regions may need to be made aware that covenant making will be part of their formational work.

The *Calls to the Church/Remit Implementation Project* is a process to design and implement:

1. The nine calls outlined in the *Calls to Church* report
2. A communications strategy
3. The development of proposal(s) emerging from the *Calls to the Church*; as well supporting documents/resources for General Council 43

Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker, All Native Circle Conference, and Maggie Dieter (McLeod), Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice, are staff leads overseeing the project.

They are supported by Lori Ransom, Indigenous Justice and Residential School Animator, who has been seconded to the position of *Calls to the Church /Remit Implementation Project Manager* for a six-month period, which commenced October 16, 2017.

The Real Property and Capital Plan Task Group, a working Group of the Aboriginal Ministries Council, continues to take steps toward implementing the Real Property and Capital Plan. The plan outlines these objectives: a) review assessments of properties and update reports for the purpose of determining priorities; b) support communities of faith in the development of a vision statement that expresses their ministry; c) develop and implement a communication; d) build capacity for communities of faith to identify contractors and trades workers; e) upgrade the physical state of real property in accordance to local cultural values with respect to safety, comfort, and aesthetics; f) consult with communities of faith, stakeholders, and partners to determine which buildings need to be safely demolished; g) build capacity for communities of faith to assume responsibility for the management and operations of the property; h) create opportunity for the church and communities of faith to gain a deeper understanding of real property title within the various communities.

Project approvals totalled \$187,000 in 2017. The anticipated total for 2018 projects is \$250,000. The Task Group is scheduled May 5–6, 2018 in Kahnawake, QC.

The focus of this meeting is a review of policies and to consider implications for the implementation of the ***Calls to the Church*** of the document.

A National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering was held in July of 2017 in Pinawa, Manitoba. For several decades, Indigenous communities of faith have gathered nationally to discuss matters of self-determination, spirituality, and their relationship with The United Church of Canada. This gathering, in addition to considering and affirming the Caretakers Report, included learning opportunities through an Education Day, a presentation on workplace equity, institutional racism, and cultural competency by Dr. Shauneen Pete of the University of Regina, and the presence of representatives of the Uniting Church in Australia through the Moderator's Canadian–Australian Dialogue on Reconciliation.

Permanent Committee on Finance

Members of the committee continually repeat the mantra that “financial resources are tools to accomplish our mission.” This committee's role is to enable elected members to have a clear understanding of finances in order to enhance their decision-making. Thus, throughout this term, the committee used these principles to guide its work:

1. Ground ourselves theologically.
2. Provide clarity in a concise manner.
3. Focus on the future.
4. Recognize that we are being called to do things differently.

The triennium began with the realization that it was necessary to continue cost reduction efforts while devoting considerable time and effort to the financial aspects of remit modelling and implementation scenarios. Consequently the committee devoted much of its time to helping shape the design and underlying financial principles of Remit 4, in addition to dealing with regular financial monitoring and oversight duties. With the approval of the remits, even more time was focused on implementation planning. While we continue to face the reality of declining revenues, operating results were generally better than expected due to strong investment returns and expense management. In an unexpected development, a landlord inducement led the General Council Office to reduce its environmental and financial footprint by 60% in 2017, consolidating to one open-concept floor with greatly improved digital capacity and overall efficiency. The committee has been meeting electronically for many years, but we were pleased to see this method expanded to include the recall of General Council to deal with a few hours of business and for the General Council Executive to also meet this way and achieve significant savings in cost but also staff and volunteer time. On a more operational note, interest rates for national loan programs were reduced, we now set aside 50% of bequests for the long-term benefit of the church, external financial audits report continuous improvement in controls, and we switched the national UCC Protect insurance program to a new carrier to lower costs. As the triennium closes, we are able to report that the church is better positioned to manage the financial changes ahead, including provision for restructuring costs and change management considerations such as assuring region core revenues for a time.

The Committee has continued to focus on philanthropy. Congregational stewardship programs were strengthened over the triennium, and regionally deployed staff roles increasingly focused on supporting congregational stewardship and Mission & Service giving—to inspire, to ask, and to thank. While core giving continues to decline in proportion to membership, we believe the rate of decline has slowed, and each year in the triennium giving exceeded our conservative budget assumption. A key design element in Remit 4 was the commitment to devote Mission & Service giving exclusively to mission and ministry. Looking forward, the focus will continue to be on increasing participation.

At beginning of the triennium, the Treasury Investment Committee implemented the General Council directive to divest of Carbon 200 equity holdings. Through our ongoing relationship with SHARE and relationships with other like-minded groups, the church has returned to its leadership role in the Canadian faith community as activist shareholder. Key areas of focus include climate change, free and informed consent of Indigenous peoples, and human rights concerns.

The Finance Committee 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.

Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda

The role of the Governance and Agenda Committee is to assist in developing and refining the structures, policies, and procedures that facilitate the work of the General Council and its Executive to enable the church to carry out our role in God's mission.

Meeting Planning and Management

The Committee:

- Considered best practices to enable effective conversations at General Council and General Council Executive. This included considering consensus and other decision-making models with the result of a new business model, making use of technology to enable advance conversations, and exploration of topics through video conference.
- Managed the transition to online Executive meetings and the full online meeting of the recalled meeting of the 42nd General Council.
- Kept theological reflection, worship, and intercultural considerations in front of the Executive in its decision-making.

Governance

The Committee:

- Assisted the Executive in setting and managing priorities.
- Developed and maintained resources for the use of the Executive, including policy handbook, resource handbook, member directory and online document repository (commons.united-church.ca), and intercultural lens.
- Planned for potential remit implementation with recommendations around establishing the Boundaries Commission, a new Denominational Executive, governance requirements and policies for three-council model.
- Drafted various governance policies related to the new three-council model.
- Assisted the General Secretary to define objectives and ends for the Comprehensive Renewal Implementation.

Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services

The many components of the work of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services in this triennium overlap, and some have timelines stretching over several triennia of survey, research, test, and, now, provisionally implementation. All are focused on faithful discernment, calling forth, and equipping, healthy and sustainable engagement, and ongoing support and supervision. The overall objective of all is the nurturing of effective leadership and healthy pastoral relationships.

Discerning, Calling Forth, and Equipping

The Committee has benefited from greater analysis of ministry personnel demographics to understand the personnel needs of the church and the choices ministry personnel are making about retirement. Both help inform recruitment practices. With the passage of the candidacy pathway remit, attention has been given to understanding the learnings from the pilot Conferences, informing the development of new policies and the integration of the pathway

into an Office of Vocation. The committee also undertook an extensive review of policies for admitting ministers from other denominations, learning from current experience and by the work of the Migrant Church Working Group.

Engaging

The work of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project is the culmination of 17 years of studies and tests of pastoral relations processes and oversight and discipline policies. The findings of the tests across the church have informed the proposals for implementing the candidacy pathway and for new pastoral relations processes necessary because of the elimination of transfer and settlement. A report on this work is included with these meeting materials. The Committee has also developed new policies for the re-engagement of ministry personnel drawing a United Church pension that conform to income tax and pension regulations while also responding to the needs of these ministry personnel and the church. The personnel records resource is being updated. This is an important part of building a user-friendly database and covenant hub to support the work of both the Office of Vocation and the new pastoral relations process.

Supporting and Supervising

The development of the Office of Vocation in anticipation of the remit being enacted has been a major part of the work of the Permanent Committee, drawing on the experience of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships tests. The comprehensive compensation model for ministry personnel completes its three-year rollout in July of this year, and a review of pastoral charge cost of living group assignments in light of changing real estate values has been completed. Group benefits are reviewed annually by the Committee. In order to comply with the General Council 42 resolution to amend the disability policy, the Restorative Care Plan was successfully extended to employees of existing participating employers and to those mission units, outreach ministries, and other ministries.

The Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy was reviewed and revisions adopted in a new Sexual Misconduct: Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures. Police records check procedures were also reviewed and revised. A working group has been researching the concept of an association of ministers. It is expected to report to the Committee in the fall.

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.

Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry

The Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry has been experimenting with alternative ways of engaging their work. Over the course of the triennium the committee has had three face-to-face meetings, alternating each face-to-face gathering with electronic meetings. The committee made a commitment early in its mandate this triennium to use a

consensus decision-making process; it also experimented with the new decision-making framework that will be used at the 43rd General Council

The importance of reconciliation and living into right relationships was a key framing of the work of the Committee this triennium. The committee hosted two workshops with the help of the Aboriginal Ministries Circle to explore the significance of the church's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the programmatic life of the church. In addition, building on civil society discourse of *Black Lives Matter*, the committee hosted a workshop on White Privilege and subsequently, made recommendations for a similar workshop for the Executive of the General Council and for the development of a White privilege working group. The committee also carved out a space for an "order of the day" to reflect on issues of gender and racial justice as it continues its journey to live into the church's commitment to becoming intercultural. The order of the day allowed the committee to attend to the questions: "who is affected by the decision being made?" and "notice who is missing?"

A significant piece of the work emerging is related to global migration and the displacement of peoples. The Migrant Church working group has done some critical work to move us beyond just working with migrant church communities to engaging with the factors that contribute to the over 200 million persons on the move globally. The committee has developed some principles to guide this work into the future.

The Permanent Committee continues to benefit from the presence of global partners who accompany its work. We have benefited from the contributions of Horacio Mesones representing the Latin American and Caribbean partnership program and Rev. Min Heui Cheon/Rev. Dr. Sungkook Park representing the Asia partnership program. The committee's accompaniment of the Partner Council has also been transformative.

The program work of the Permanent Committee is broad, interconnected, and complex. Some work items continue to be implemented with staff, working with a variety of networks. The following are some of the ongoing pieces of work that the committee has engaged with over the triennium: Children's Ministry Strategy, Education Centres and Lay Education Strategy, Faith Formation, Unsettling Goods Campaign and Peacebuilding in Palestine Israel, The Living Apology Project, Ministries in French, the Vision Fund, a Global LGBTQI2+ Consultation, and the Property Renewal work done through EDGE. The committee has grounded its work in worship, study, and community building as it seeks to live into its identity and ministry as "the people of God."

Theological Reflection and Intercultural Work

In doing its work throughout the triennium, the Executive has been guided by worship, prayer, and theological reflection. We are grateful for the theological reflections provided at the Executive meetings by Connie denBok, John Young, Quinn Caldwell (from the United Church of Christ), Cheryl Jourdain, and Bill Smith. The Executive has also been guided by the church's commitment to become an intercultural church and the UN Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples. We offer appreciation to those who assisted the Executive to keep these lenses in their work and decision making, including those serving with the UN Declaration Task Group and Jennifer Henry from KAIROS for her educational work with the Executive on White privilege.

ABORIGINAL MINISTRIES COUNCIL REPORT

Origin: Aboriginal Ministries Council Report

Executive Summary

The Aboriginal Ministries Council is responsible for being a decision-making body taking direction from the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gatherings, and preparing and proposing work to the Executive of the General Council.

During its first meeting of the triennium, members of the Aboriginal Ministries Council (the Council) expressed their gratitude for the church's ongoing steps toward right relationship with Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Coming out of the 42nd General Council in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, there were questions of how the decisions made there would impact our denomination and the Indigenous church. The Council noted the complexity of this time where apprehension about upcoming changes co-exist alongside the hope that is in reconciliation.

At their February 2018 meeting, the Council shared memories of the late Rick Balson, Executive of the General Council representative. They gave thanks for his service and for the relationship he developed with the Council.

The 2015–2018 Aboriginal Ministries Council membership:

- British Columbia Native Ministries: Marie Dickens; Lori Lewis; Lawrence Sankey, Co-chair
- All Native Circle Conference: Russel Burns, All Tribes Presbytery; Janet Sigurdson, Plains Presbytery; Norma General-Lickers, Great Lakes Waterways Presbytery; Beatrice McPherson, Keewatin Presbytery
- Ontario and Quebec Native Ministries: George Montour (Chairperson); Susan Gabriel; Gabrielle Lamouche; Tricia Monague
- Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre: Lee Claus; Stan McKay
- Executive of the General Council: Rick Balson
- Executive Minister, Maggie Dieter (McLeod)
- Past members: Richard Balson, Executive of General Council Cascade (term start: Aug-15 – end: Jan-18); Gilbert Jackson, British Columbia Native Ministries (term start: Aug-15 – end: May-16); Wanda Montour, Ontario and Quebec Native Ministries (term start: Aug-12 – end: Apr-17); Grant Queskekapow, Keewatin Presbytery (term start: Aug-15 – end: May-16)

Aboriginal Ministries Consultation

The Aboriginal Ministries Consultation has been the significant focus for the Indigenous church throughout this triennium. The recommendation for the consultation arose out the Comprehensive Review Task Group report and the decision that followed at General Council 42, acknowledging that more time was needed for decision-making about future structures of Aboriginal ministries. The framework for the consultation process is outlined in GC42–CR2. It included a call for a small group of members of the Executive of General Council to be present to the process as listeners. This group came to be known as the Accompaniers.

The first consultation (March 31–April 3, 2016) began with The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell, along with representatives from the Council, delivering a statement on the church's response to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #48. This call points to a framework for reconciliation grounded in the "principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UN Declaration)." An honour song offered by Misty Creek drummers and singers from Christian Island First Nation marked this foundational moment in the church's journey toward reconciliation. The broken chalice, a significant symbol at the Living into Right Relations event in 2008, and the trowel that was used to lay new stones at the Sudbury cairn in 2009, were placed in a central area of focus as a reminder of the church's shared history and faith.

As the process evolved, a group of Indigenous leaders, known as the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, carried forward a process of consultation that resulted in the document entitled *Calls to the Church*. Indigenous participants at the 2017 National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering (NASG) affirmed the document.

In the fall of 2017, the Caretakers sent a statement to the Boundaries Commission requesting time to define, design, and understand the implications of changes for Indigenous Communities of Faith. It communicated the consensus to move in the direction of fully belonging to both a Regional body and a National Indigenous body. The Indigenous church has just begun to explore the implications of developing, in partnership with Regions, covenants that are relevant and contextual. There was recognition that Regions will need to be made aware that covenant making with Indigenous Communities of faith will be part of their formational work.

Also in the fall of 2017, the *Calls to the Church/Remit Implementation Project* began a process to design and implement: a) the nine calls outlined in the *Calls to the Church*; b) a communications strategy; c) the development of proposal(s) emerging from the *Calls to the Church*; and supporting documents and resources for General Council 43.

Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker, All Native Circle Conference and Maggie Dieter (McLeod), Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice have overseen the project. They are supported by Lori Ransom, Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animator, who has been seconded to the position of *Calls to the Church/Remit Implementation Project Manager*. The Project Manager works in collaboration with the Remit Implementation Task Group, the Office of Vocation Task Group, and other groups within the Indigenous church.

Throughout the months of January to March 2018, six caucus groups were organized for communicating with Indigenous Communities of Faith about the *Calls to the Church*. Members of the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle provided leadership at each caucus group. Seventy-two people from thirty-six Communities of Faith attended one of six caucus groups: urban Indigenous church members; Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre students and staff; British Columbia Native Ministries; Keewatin Presbytery; Ontario-Quebec Native Ministries and Great Lakes Waterways Presbytery; and Plains and All Tribes presbyteries.

A common theme was articulated by one of the participants: “It’s not that we don’t want change, we want to understand.” Much time was spent discussing the subject of “dual belonging” (Call 6) and the relationships to be formed with the new regional councils, if the remits are adopted by General Council 43. Concerns were raised to ensure a strong Indigenous voice is heard within the regional decision-making bodies of the church; at the same time, opportunities were identified to work collaboratively with regional councils on reconciliation, the implementation of the UN Declaration, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. The importance of prayer and ceremony in covenant making with the new regional councils was lifted up repeatedly.

At the time this report was being written, a timeline and frequently asked questions on the implementation project was being developed. It will be the first of many communiqués to be widely distributed and discussed within the many parts of the church, particularly Indigenous Communities of Faith.

Indigenous Real Property

The Real Property and Capital Plan Task Group, a working group of the Council, continues to take steps to implement the Real Property and Capital Plan. The plan outlines these objectives: a) review assessments of properties and update reports for the purpose of determining priorities; b) support Communities of Faith in the development of a vision statement that expresses their ministry; c) develop and implement a communication plan; d) build capacity for Communities of Faith to identify contractors and trades workers; e) upgrade the physical state of real property in accordance to local cultural values with respect to safety, comfort, and aesthetics; f) consult with Communities of Faith, stakeholders, and partners to determine which buildings need to be safely demolished; g) build capacity for Communities of Faith to assume responsibility for the management and operations of the property, and; h) create opportunity for the church and Communities of Faith to gain a deeper understanding of real property title within the various communities.

In October 2016, the Council engaged with the All Native Circle Conference’s (ANCC) Council on Sharing to determine a path for working together to implement the plan. At that time, the Council also indicated its intention to invite non-Indigenous Presbyteries and Communities of Faith to consider directing a portion of proceeds from the sale of church properties to the Indigenous Real Property Fund as a gesture of reconciliation. In doing so, providing a tangible way for Communities of Faith to engage in reparation.

In 2017, real property projects totalled \$187,000. The anticipated total for 2018 projects is \$250,000. The Task Group met face to face May 5–6, 2018 with a focus to review current policies and consider implications related to real property and the implementation of the *Calls to the Church*.

Reparation and Reconciliation

The Council has begun a discussion on the topic of reparation in the context of reconciliation within the United Church. At the forefront of this conversation is the question, “How can there

be equity for Indigenous Peoples?” In light of the destruction of language, culture, society, and spirituality there is much to repair. Reparation goes beyond addressing the sharing of resources. The presence of the church within our communities is an expression of reparation. It signals a relationship. Further reparation is not charity. It must be understood to be at the very heart of the church’s mission to restore dignity to all.

A wider conversation is needed within the whole church. Society continues to see Indigenous peoples as burdens. How will the church move from a history of oppression to shared life? Is the church prepared to allow reparation to affect its theology?

2017 National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering

For several decades, Indigenous Communities of Faith have gathered nationally to discuss matters of self-determination, spirituality, and their relationship with The United Church of Canada. This gathering, currently known as the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering, took place in July 2017 at the Wilderness Edge Resort and Conference Centre on the Treaty One Territory (Pinawa, MB). It was preceded by an Education Day.

The Gathering hosted the Moderator’s Canadian–Australian Dialogue on Reconciliation. The encounter explored common experiences of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through initiatives like apology making, and truth and reconciliation commissions.

Dr. Shauneen Pete, an educator from Saskatchewan, presented on her experiences working within academic institutions on issues of workplace equity, institutional racism, and cultural competency. Connections were made on these issues and the work of reconciliation. She encouraged the church to engage leaders and Communities of Faith in educational initiatives related to Indigenous history and current issues.

The next National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering will be held in August 2019 at the Geneva Park Convention Centre, the traditional territories of the Williams Treaties (Orillia, ON), to mark the inauguration of the new National Indigenous Organization.

Anniversary of the 1986 Apology

In 2016, the United Church recognized the 30th Anniversary of the 1986 Apology. The church remembered, too, the Indigenous church’s response, *“that the Apology is not symbolic but that these are the words of action and sincerity.”*

Along with 30 years of living out the apology, the church had the 94 Calls to Actions released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in June 2015, which were described as a road map for reconciliation. The question to be asked of the church is: is it ready to say what it believes reconciliation to be, and why it has such hope in it? Future generations wait to hear a response.

The Sudbury Cairn

In the spring of 2015, all parties that have an interest in the cairn began to maintain a unified file to capture the many aspects of it. The various parties (Aboriginal Ministries Council; All Native Circle Conference; Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools; Manitou Conference; Sudbury Presbytery; Laurentian University; and United Church Archives) met in December 2015 to discuss the development of protocols on ceremony, routine care, maintenance; improvements, landscaping, signage, and access; as well as education and the preservation of the history.

In March 2013, the Council made recommendation to improve the site by displaying the new crest and solar lighting. The Council names that reflecting Indigenous culture renewal is an important consideration for future developments.

Community and Leadership Development

Leadership development remains a priority for the Council. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation process revealed an urgent need for spiritual and emotional healing. New awareness of the urgency to equip ministry personnel and lay leaders to serve in these challenging contexts has arisen. Ministry personnel need competencies in counselling and ongoing continuing education, particularly in the areas of trauma, boundary training, history, and culture.

The church must begin to imagine options for Communities of Faith that have not had ministry leadership for an extended period. A conversation about how communities understand their relationship with the United Church will be a helpful starting point. This involves regular community visits and contact by Aboriginal Ministries staff.

Recruitment and support of individuals considering ministry with Indigenous communities must be in place. There has especially been a dramatic decline in Indigenous candidates for ministry in Ontario and Quebec since the Francis Sandy Theological Centre closed. A discernment and recruitment event was held at Nations Uniting (Ohsweken, ON) in May 2017 in partnership with the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and Nations Uniting. Three enquirers, each with an Elder support person from their community, participated. The Council supports the ongoing delivery of this program.

The Council also heard concerns for ministers serving Indigenous Communities of Faith in Ontario and in Quebec who are unable to attend the annual spring retreat at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. The need for continuing education for non-Indigenous ministry personnel is a particular concern. To this end, a ministers' gathering to deepen understanding of ministry in Indigenous communities and Indigenous ways of practising spirituality and theology took place at Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre in October 2017. This event will be offered annually with financial support and direction from the Council.

Visiting Indigenous Communities of Faith to strengthen relationships through listening is a priority for The Right Reverend Jordan Cantwell's term as Moderator. Aboriginal Ministries staff

supported the Moderator in this initiative by accompanying her on these visits and following up on issues identified during the visits.

The Native Peoples Retreat celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2016. Historically, participants from Aboriginal communities of faith in Ontario and Quebec have gathered at Five Oaks (Paris, ON). The gathering includes programs on faith development and cultural renewal for all generations. Nations Uniting, with the support of Aboriginal Ministries staff, assumed administrative and planning responsibilities for the retreat starting in 2017.

Youth Development

In the fall of 2016, Marlena Squash, an Indigenous young adult from British Columbia, offered her insights as to how the Indigenous church might engage youth and young adults. She affirmed that the church can be a place of welcome and acceptance. She reported that many youth and young adults in First Nation communities feel there is no community for them to belong. There are many who are seeking to discover their gifts. Marlena reminded the Council that all youth come with story and vulnerability. As she has become more involved with the church, she has noticed patterns at church meetings - they were very much the same. She offered a challenge to the church to move forward and take action.

The Youth Leadership programs ensure that programming is relevant and culturally appropriate for Indigenous youth through a variety of initiatives: Neechi (Cree for “friend”) is a joint initiative between Aboriginal Ministries and the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario; Wampum is an initiative between Aboriginal Ministries and Five Oaks. Both were created in response to the adversity that affects many Indigenous young people. Neechi and Wampum assist in the healing process of mending broken relationships by supporting the non-Indigenous youth in developing healthy attitudes toward Indigenous peoples and space for Indigenous youth to learn about their culture. Both Neechi and Wampum happen every summer for youth between the ages of 14–17.

Many Youth and Young Adult (YAYA) leaders within the church are designing and delivering reconciliation programming for youth, however, it is not always done effectively. The Youth Leadership Coordinator and YAYA Leader at British Columbia Conference delivered training at the 2017 Youth and Young Adult Regional Gathering. Sessions on White privilege, lived realities of Indigenous young people, and pathways to reconciliation are examples of some of the workshops that were offered. *Got Reconciliation* programming was designed to build on leader’s abilities to offer programs that are safe and welcoming.

The Youth Leadership Coordinator ensures that Indigenous youth have the opportunity to attend various events that will help them overcome adversity and grow into strong Indigenous leaders.

Healing Programs

The Healing Fund was initially planned to be a five-year fundraising and educational campaign (1995–1999) to address the legacy of the Indian residential school. The Healing Fund continues

to be one facet of the church's ongoing reconciliation initiatives. On average, it grants \$300,000 per annum to Indigenous communities and organizations who are seeking to deliver healing, language, and cultural programs. Efforts have been underway to establish strategies for new efficiencies in the granting process, promotion of the fund, and to amend the guidelines to reflect the principles of the UN Declaration.

The Alvin Dixon Memorial Bursary Fund celebrates the life and work of the late Alvin Dixon, an Elder and leader in the church who passed in 2014. Alvin's contributions to the church include chairing the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools, and serving as a member of the Aboriginal Ministries Council and the Executive of the General Council. This endowed fund held by The United Church of Canada Foundation will support educational initiatives for Indigenous students. The fund was seeded by a one-time grant of \$31,000 from the 2014 unspent Dorothy Jenkins Trust Fund. The Council has set a goal to raise \$100,000 to the fund before inviting applications for bursaries.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG): Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice staff offered a webinar in May 2015 with Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, Interim President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, and April Eve Wiberg, Coordinator of Stolen Sisters in Edmonton. There were 24 participants; 61 registered for the event and have subsequently viewed the taped version. Many participants expressed a renewed commitment to deepen their understanding of the issue surrounding MMIWG.

The Healing Programs Coordinator attended the National Inquiry on November 21–23, 2018, in Saskatoon, SK, to stand in solidarity with the families of the Missing and Murdered and to witness the National Inquiry process. Members of the Council were also encouraged to attend public forums at the National Inquiry nearest them. Four members were able to attend the following forums in late 2017: Russel Burns in Edmonton, AB; Janet Sigurdson in Saskatoon, SK; Gabrielle Lamouche in Malotienam, QC; and Lee Claus in Thunder Bay, ON. Council members and staff provided an account of their experiences at the National Inquiry through blogs and social media.

The Healing Programs Coordinator also reached out to local Indigenous communities and United Church networks where the National Inquiry was located. Several agencies and ally networks were contacted in Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Thunder Bay. The focus of the outreach was to connect on aftercare programs. The Friendship Centre in Saskatoon opened their space for families to access a variety of support services. The Women Walking Together, an Indigenous Women's Missing and Murdered Advocacy Group in Saskatoon, also received support by holding a round dance to honour the families. During the round dance, the Mayor of Saskatoon recognized The United Church of Canada for its work in supporting the families.

LGBTQTwo Spirit Global Consultation

The Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice, participated in the LGBTQTwo Spirit Global Consultation held in Geneva Park (Orillia, ON) in November 2017. LGBTQTwo Spirit issues have been all but absent on the Indigenous Church's agenda. In part,

the cause of this disconnect is a result of the colonial views, practices, and policies that church and government imposed upon Canada's Indigenous Peoples, most of which devalued Indigenous ways of being. Tragically, a harmful legacy remains for many individuals, families, and communities. The Council understands this transformative ministry of consciousness-raising will require a great deal of courage. There are no illusions that this can or will happen tomorrow. The Council supports the promotion of a dialogue within the Indigenous Church that explores how this consciousness-raising might be present at meetings and spiritual gatherings, and what the implications are for ministry formation.

Proposal for transmission to General Council 43

AMC 2 – Implementation of the Calls to the Church

Calls to the Church document: see page 440

CARETAKERS OF OUR INDIGENOUS CIRCLE CALLS TO THE CHURCH

PREAMBLE: THE WORDS BEFORE ALL OTHER WORDS

The Indigenous ministries of The United Church of Canada have been about the work of ministry since the beginning in 1925 with roots in the 19th-century work of Methodist and Presbyterian ministries. 2018 marks the 193rd Anniversary of the Grand River Methodist Mission. This long history has seen bright beginnings and dark days and is poised on the brink of a Kairos moment as it faces the future.

Indigenous people have met regularly over many decades and held deep and ongoing conversations about matters relating to our Indigenous work and our relationship with the United Church. We have been evolving, struggling, adapting and growing since that time and even losing ground too. We do not want to lose the gains we have achieved through the years in any future developments.

Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration): The TRC Calls to Action embrace of the UN Declaration. The United Church adopted the UN Declaration and reported how their policies in reference to their Indigenous constituents reflect this on March 31, 2016. As the church implements this framework for reconciliation it has committed to developing mechanisms to report on its progress. The UN Declaration is about establishing and maintaining respectful relationship, Indigenous self-government, and Indigenous land rights in their traditional territories. This means the Indigenous faith community must exercise a truly Indigenous self-determination and possess a sustainable land-based support.

The Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples has been embraced by the United Church. The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, 42nd Moderator has noted the obligation to ensure "our policies, practices, and programs align with the "principles, norms, and standards" of the Declaration. The United Church has apologized for its colonial application of the policy of assimilation and acknowledged its impoverishment by the rejection of an Indigenous understanding of spirituality.

It is the desire to live into right relations with a repentant church and pursue the original Indigenous desire for friendship, peace and the strength that comes from respect that the following calls are made. May they be received in the spirit of reconciliation in which they are made.

We Will Say What Indigenous Ministry Is

British Columbia Elder Alberta Billy said, "We have our own way of doing things." Other Elders have said the same thing especially when there was a conflict with the expectations of the broader western church. This is where colonial policies and procedures have worked against the

Indigenous community. Our Elders have cried out for our own churches, leaders, training programs, and support systems.

We, the Indigenous ministries and communities of faith of The United Church, declare that we will tell our own story of what ministry means for us. We will decide for ourselves who we are, who constitutes our ministries groups and practices. Colonialism took community control away from us and placed it in a colonial center of authority. Recovery from colonialism is our path moving forward. We will determine an Indigenous Testamur, a training program for ministry preparation, that will help our leaders be competent as the healers and helpers our communities are crying out for. We will recruit and oversee the development of our ministry training students and assist their placement and support in our communities.

We Will Do Indigenous Theology

Our own Indigenous understanding of the Christ story is what we need. We are Indigenous nations, tribes, confederacies with clans and Elders. Creator has placed us in our sacred lands and taught us to harvest the food just as the first humans in the Bible. Our ways, of seeing and being in this earth, are much like the Hebrew people. We can hear creation and have learned from all our relations, the animals, the water folk, the plant families, our mother the earth, etc. We hear in the groaning of the earth the sufferings of Christ. We feel the preciousness of life and the sanctity of love in our communities and lands.

Part of our work will challenge the colonial vision of Jesus and western theology. Our Indigenous languages, ways of life, spiritualities, and connection to our traditional lands will be restored. We are finding our own spirituality and Indigenous understanding of Jesus and his work in our communities. We will see through our eyes who Jesus is and decide for ourselves what this means for us as ministries and communities of faith. We are thankful for our roots in the work of the church in our past but we will shape our future through our own perspectives. The Spirit gives us authority to do this and we will listen to our siblings in the larger community of faith.

We Will Say Who We Are

The concept of identity is a complicated issue within Indigenous communities. The very notion of being an “Indigenous” person is a European construct. Prior to European contact, the people of Turtle Island identified themselves as members of their own tribes, nations, or communities. Intermarriage was common and many children were “mixed-blood” as a result of this, yet accepted in their communities. Many nations have always practised traditional adoptions, self-determining who is part of their communities.

With European contact, these many nations and tribes became lumped into one homogenous group known as “Indigenous, Aboriginal, or Indian.” This has caused Indigenous people to be viewed as a single nation, erasing the reality of many nations with different social, cultural, and spiritual beliefs and traditions. Eurocentrism introduced identity politics based on race, blood quantum, and what people look like. This raises the question of whether being Indigenous is a racial, ethnic, cultural, legal, political, or genetic identity. Blood quantum, which serves no other

purpose then to limit, and eventually, eradicate Indigenous identity is in direct opposition to the traditional notion of Indigeneity being one's connection to the land, culture, and recognition within a tribe, nation, or community.

We affirm that Indigenous people and Indigenous communities of faith will self-determine who is part of the Indigenous church.

A Healing Church

Our "roots" as Indigenous peoples, are what the Creator has made us to be. We are embracing who we are as Creator made us. The Indigenous church will be an instrument of healing our identity and a place of renewal of our cultures. Our roots have been broken by colonialism and we will restore them.

Wounds came from being told we are wrong and the loss of language and culture. Our recovery from these negative influences means that we must have a process that is trauma-informed. We won't be healed by a western medical model but a trauma-informed approach. It is not helpful to treat people who struggle with addictions as criminals, but rather we must take a healing approach. The colonial system has been dehumanizing for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. We will expand our work from the end of life to the beginning of life. We will restore the whole circle of life: infancy and childhood, youth, adult and Elder stages.

We will maintain right relations with the broader United Church and educate them about our need to Indigenize our work and decolonize what continues to harm us. We do not want to experience the feeling of exclusion at the table of decision or have our concerns minimized by others. We will teach you who we are, what our values are, and place into practice how we want to work among ourselves and with others. We have faith that the Spirit of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of creation, and the love of God will move us forward on the road of true reconciliation so that we can know "the beloved community" of "All Our Relations.

The Earth Is Our Provider

The earth is our ground of being. The earth is our Mother. The earth is our sustenance. The earth is our Eden. Creator made us from our Mother the Earth. Access to the earth has been stolen from us and others now eat from her provisions. We have been marginalized and separated from our own lands. It was stolen from us by a false Doctrine of Discovery. This doctrine was repudiated by the United Church. We must return to the provisions of the land. The land will sustain us as it has for millennia.

Furthermore, our traditional territories are not equivalent to reserves that were created and maintained by the colonial Indian Act. Many urban¹ Indigenous Peoples are still living in their

¹ The word "urban" lacks the diversity envisioned by the urban Indigenous Caretakers. By "urban," we mean those who have left their home communities, as well as those who have been born and raised in villages, towns, and cities across Canada, some willingly and some against their will.

traditional territory even though they no longer live, and perhaps may have never connected, on reserve. Indigenous spirituality is not confined to buildings, but is connected to the land.

The United Church is asset rich. Rich in land and properties. These lands were stolen by false promises in treaty negotiations. We meant to invite settlers to our lands and that we would share it. It would feed us both. But we are cut off from the land. Justice in land matters must be about reparations and not only apologies. Reconciliation is not just heads and hearts that feel bad but hands and feet that do tangible good. Selling church properties is a matter of Indigenous land justice or injustice. We are grateful for every effort churches, presbyteries, Conferences, and the General Council have done to give back to the Indigenous ministries when churches decommission and properties are sold. May this justice flow like a river.

Calls to the Church

1. Concerning an Office of Vocation: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering all the meetings in our history where Indigenous and missional clergy met to fellowship, pray together, strategize and minister among Indigenous peoples;*
- *Affirming our support for all clergy ministering in our Indigenous communities;*
- *Acknowledging the need for clergy accountability in Indigenous communities;*
- *Acknowledging the need to limit harm done unintentionally or otherwise by clergy in our Indigenous faith communities;*
- *Knowing ministry in our Indigenous communities often differs from that in non-Indigenous communities;*
- *Supportive of evaluating and dealing with ministerial matters with Indigenous values and processes;*
- *Mindful of the UN Declaration's call for Indigenous self-governance and adequate resources to achieve this;*
- *Affirming the Indigenous community's right to determine our own ministry personnel;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call 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 Indigenous ministry policy.**

2. Concerning Indigenous Ministry Formation Accompaniment and Oversight: We Remember, We Say

- *Acknowledging the success of supportive and sensitive Indigenous accompaniment and oversight in the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (DJSRC) and the Francis Sandy Theological Centre (FSTC) programs and partnership with All Native Circle Conference, Presbyteries and communities of faith;*

- *Recognizing these student resources have continued in the program of Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, the amalgamation of DJSRC and FSTC;*
- *Recognizing the struggle of Indigenous students in the non-Indigenous United Church system through lack of understanding of Indigenous ways;*
- *Acknowledging the success of the Councils on Learning in overseeing Indigenous students in ministry training;*
- *Recognizing the vast educational requirements to ensure a proper level of support, encouragement and guidance for Indigenous students in non-Indigenous churches, presbyteries, and conferences;*
- *Recognizing the value of Indigenous language and cultural competency in Indigenous ministry training;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**
3. Concerning Indigenous Communities of Faith Approved Ministry Placement: We Remember, We Say
- *Remembering Elder and first Indigenous Moderator of the United Church the Very Reverend Stan McKay Jr.'s words, "Given the trend of the church and cut backs, full-time paid accountable ministry is not going to be our future."*
 - *Remembering the success of previous graduates of DJSRC and FSTC in non-traditional "ministry" placements;*
 - *Recognizing that many Indigenous communities and educational authorities are not really interested in training church leaders;*
 - *Acknowledging the call from our Indigenous communities and support of educational authorities for healing arts training for Indigenous students, as in: trauma recovery,*

intergeneration effect of trauma, counseling, and other therapies and means of wellness that comes from Indigenous ways;

- *Realizing the ministry call of Jesus was to “heal the broken hearted, recover the sight of the blind, set the captive free and proclaim the time of equity and freedom” and that this call is answered by students in ministry training;*
- *Recognizing the relational Indigenous community ways and the need to expand what “ministry” means as was the successful Presbytery-approved ministry placements outside of the church;*
- *Remembering the great Six Nations educational work done by Nations Uniting in responding to the land claim conflict in Caledonia, Ontario in 2006;*
- *Valuing the great work being done in the Indigenous LGBTQ-2SA+ community;*
- *Affirming our future lies with Indigenous youth and all the great work being done among and by them;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**

4. Concerning Indigenous Testamur: We Remember, We Say

- *Acknowledging the ill-fit and sometimes even harm from some well-meaning but poorly prepared ministers working in our Indigenous faith communities;*
- *Remembering the 1970’s Indian Ministry Training Program;*
- *Remembering the dreams and hope of our elders Dr. Jessie Saulteaux and Mr. Francis Sandy to have our own Indigenously trained ministry leadership for our communities;*
- *Remembering the establishment of Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (DJSRC) in 1984;*
- *Remembering the establishment of Francis Sandy Theological Centre (FSTC) in 1987;*
- *Remembering the work of the Wabung process that was the foundation for the amalgamation of DJSRC and FSTC into the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre (SSSC) as the National Aboriginal ministry training school of The United Church of Canada in 2011;*
- *Acknowledging the fundamental linguistic and cultural differences in the Indigenous communities of faith in The UCC;*
- *Committed to the dignity affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People including the right to self-determination on our own Indigenous terms and in keeping with our own Indigenous spiritual values;*
- *Convinced by our Elders that a fundamentally differing approach, structure and value system is what Indigenous faith communities are calling for and need for a healthy*

recovery of community and sustainability;

- *Believing that when The United Church of Canada's policy conflicts with Indigenous community values that community values come first;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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;**
 - i. That this Indigenous Testamur be determined by the Indigenous faith communities of the United Church with consideration for all the geographic and linguistic differences across Canada;**
 - ii. That in this Indigenous Testamur it is recognized that Indigenous communities of faith are free to determine how they respond to all Indigenous issues and that outside authorities will not impose their values on the local community;**
 - iii. That Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre be entrusted with overseeing the completion of this Indigenous Testamur;**
 - iv. That this Indigenous Testamur contain components to ensure competency in non-Indigenous United Church communities;**
 - v. That this Indigenous Testamur provide training for The United Church of Canada's order of ministry including ordination, commissioning, designated lay ministry or other expressions of Indigenous ministry approved by the Indigenous communities of faith (urban included);**
 - 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;**
 - i. That this curriculum be included in the continuing education requirement for ongoing accreditation for ministers within the United Church;**
 - ii. That all United Church ministers be educated in this curriculum in their continuing education;**
 - 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.**
5. Concerning a National Indigenous Organization for Support and Fellowship: We Remember, We Say
- *Remembering The 1980's national Aboriginal ministry consultations that eventually became the current National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering;*
 - *Remembering Keewatin Presbytery as the first Indigenous presbytery in The United*

Church of Canada in 1982;

- *Remembering the establishment in 1982 of the National Native Ministries Council in The United Church of Canada to oversee the work of the first National Native Ministries Coordinator, Rev. Stan McKay Jr.;*
- *Remembering the local work that led to the formation of All Tribes, Plains, and Great Lakes presbyteries that were the basis of All Native Circle Conference;*
- *Remembering the historic establishment of All Native Circle Conference, the first Indigenous conference and one that crossed colonial boundaries in 1988;*
- *Remembering the establishment of BC Native Ministries, in 1988;*
- *Remembering the establishment of Ontario Quebec Native Ministries in 1989;*
- *Remembering the establishment of the Aboriginal Ministries Council and its staff the Aboriginal Ministries Circle at General Council Office and beyond in 2008;*
- *Remembering all the Ecumenical gatherings over the decades;*
- *Knowing urban Indigenous ministry often differs from that in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities;*
- *Remembering that according to the 2006 Census, more than half of people identifying themselves in some way as Indigenous reside in urban areas; and*
- *Believing the time has come to foster and support the creation of more urban Indigenous ministries;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

A. A National Indigenous Elders Council:

- i. **with equitable representation from across the country;**
- ii. **Elders who are lifted-up by communities;**
- iii. **with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings.**

B. A National Indigenous Organization:

- i. **comprising various kinds of members like Elders, youth, strategic thinkers, knowledge keepers, and carriers of the history;**
- ii. **members who are lifted-up by the Indigenous communities of faith; including those in urban settings;**
- iii. **with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings;**
- iv. **with a national Indigenous ministry support staff team:**
 - **ministry facilitating staffing to serve all the Indigenous communities of faith;**
 - **distributed equitably across the nation to serve all Indigenous communities of faith;**
 - **with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings.**
- v. **Continued opportunities for the gathering, working together, and supportive work of all the Indigenous faith communities in the United Church, including a National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering, as well as regional and cluster gatherings. These gatherings will honour the cultural and linguistic regions of**

- the Indigenous communities;**
- vi. That this office organization support a national network of urban Indigenous Ministries.**
 - vii. When we meet, we will honour the local protocols (as determined by the local communities of faith) and we will honour our Elders.**
 - viii. Strong communications strategy and resources necessary to accomplish the work of a national Indigenous organization.**
 - ix. Strengthened relationships between the Indigenous communities of faith and the rest of the United Church with requested Indigenous representation provided for in all aspects of the United Church;**
 - x. Education of all United Church personnel, programs and groups in Indigenous history, culture and contemporary issues to strengthen relations with Indigenous communities of faith and the United Church and to reignite the spiritual, cultural, holistic and healing renewal of whole church.**

6. Concerning Belonging: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering that during the formation of the first all Indigenous Keewatin Presbytery in 1982 our Elders said we are drawing aside to find ourselves and then we will be back;*
- *Affirming that the Indigenous communities of faith desire to remain a part of The United Church of Canada;*
- *Appreciating our long history of Indigenous ministry that pre-dates the formation of The UCC;*
- *Desiring to live into right relations with The UCC and to find out what the apologies of 1986 and 1998 mean;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**

7. Concerning Indigenous Community Leadership and Consensus Building; We Remember, We Say

- *Thankful for our predecessors who embarked upon a path that was radical, inclusive, progressive, and courageous for its time. And, that like every generation who's understanding of what it means to be inclusive is ever evolving we realize that our predecessors had a limited and flawed understanding of what it means to be inclusive And, that by recognizing this past we seek to heal relationships that have been broken and to forge new relationships in the future.*

- *Remembering the legacy of the Indian Methodist heritage work prior to the start of the UCC with the first Methodist church at Six Nations in 1822;*
- *Remembering that not all Indian Methodist churches joined the United Church in 1925;*
- *Remembering the legacy of Indian Presbyterian heritage work prior to the start of the UCC;*
- *Remembering all the elders, men and women, youth, and children of our Indigenous communities of faith who began, nurtured and supported the work of the church in their communities;*
- *Recognizing the omission of Indigenous faith communities in the establishment of The United Church of Canada in 1925 and the corrective measures taken in Ottawa in 2012 at General Council 41 to amend the Basis of Union to include this history and legacy;*
- *Acknowledging the redesign of The United Church of Canada’s crest to include the four colors of many Indigenous communities and the Mohawk phrase “Akwe Nia’Tetewá:neren” meaning “All My Relations” at General Council 41 in Ottawa in 2012;*
- *Wanting to live in right relations with The United Church of Canada on our own Indigenous terms;*
- *Honouring our Elders who have long stood up for our people in The United Church of Canada from the very beginning;*
- *Remembering the Indigenous community consultations in gatherings and Indigenous communities of faith;*
- *Recognizing the need to honour each Indigenous cultural territory and community of faith in their own decision making processes;*
- *Wanting to ensure a grassroots leadership in making change in the Indigenous communities of faith;*
- *Remembering that Indigenous consensus is not a simple ideal where every single person must agree before the community moves ahead but that individuals also consent to the overwhelming support of decisions and chose to be gracious and not undermine them, even though they may not fully agree with the larger community;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**
8. Concerning Sustainable Support: We Remember, We Say
- *Realizing the Doctrine of Discovery rests on the illegitimate claims of Christian superiority in the Papal Bulls of 1453, 1454 and 1493;*

- *Understanding that the 1793 Royal Proclamation rests on the Doctrine of Discovery and is the basis of colonial claims to underlying radical title to Indigenous lands;*
- *Remembering that the United Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery;*
- *Realizing that the sale United Church properties involves Indigenous claims to the land.*
- *Realizing that the UN Declaration is a framework for reconciliation that includes these principles: Indigenous peoples right to participate in decision-making; right to land and resources; and right to self-determination.*
- *Recognizing that a significant number of Indigenous Peoples now dwell in urban communities;*

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**

9. Concerning sexual orientation and diversity: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering that gender diversity is a revered part of our heritage before colonization;*
- *Realizing that the role of 2-Spirit people in ceremonies and spiritual practices remains relevant to the overall well-being of all our communities;*
- *Recognizing that many LGBTQ2A+² Indigenous people leave their home communities because of intolerance introduced by the colonizers;*
- *Realizing that many LGBTQ2A+ young people are at high risk for suicide;*
- *Remembering the policy that was passed at General Council 40 which: "affirms the participation and ministry of trans people, and encourages all congregations to welcome trans people into membership, ministry, and full participation;"*

² LGBTQ2A+ is a placeholder that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual, queer, asexual, 2-Spirit and everyone else! The understanding behind the acronym is that sexuality and gender are fluid and not limited to male and female.

We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:

- 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.**

Caretakers Member List

Ray Jones, BC Native Ministries

George Montour, Aboriginal Ministries Council

Lawrence Sankey, Aboriginal Ministries Council

Janet Sigurdson, Council of Learning, All Native Circle Conference

Bernice Saulteaux, Leading Elder, All Native Circle Conference

Susan Beaver, Great Lakes Waterways Presbytery

Robert Patton, Chair of Council on Sharing

Marlene Lightening, General Council Representative, All Native Circle Conference

Gloria Cook, All Native Circle Conference

Evelyn Broadfoot, All Native Circle Conference Alternative

John Thompson, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, Chair of Board

Martha Pedoniquotte, Ontario and Quebec Native Ministries

Lee Claus, Aboriginal Ministries Council, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre Board member

Teresa Burnett-Cole, Urban Indigenous – Ottawa

RW Hoekstra, Urban Indigenous – Edmonton

Staff

Maggie McLeod, Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice

Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker, All Native Circle Conference

Adrian Jacobs, Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

Lisa Anwar, BC Native Ministries

COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS JUSTICE AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS REPORT

Executive Summary

The Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools was established by the Executive of the General Council in 1998. Its mandate, renewed and expanded in 2010, is to:

- a) Co-ordinate all aspects of the issues related to Indian residential schools, including the legal, pastoral, communications, alternate resolution possibilities, healing and reconciliation initiatives, and financial planning;
- b) Assist the church to live out its apologies through theological reflection and through education and advocacy for Indigenous justice issues including but not limited to land, rights, treaties, the impacts of colonialism, and racism;
- c) Work in partnership with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and collaborate with Kairos, ecumenical partners and Indigenous organizations;
- d) Make full reports, and recommendations as required, to the General Secretary and each meeting of the Executive of the General Council.

In all its work, the Committee is guided by the church's Apologies of 1986 and 1998, and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). This report captures highlights of this triennium's work.

The Committee reports to each meeting of the Executive of General Council, maintains the Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice section of the United Church website, issues an electronic newsletter, "Living into Right Relations," and has a Facebook page. A separate website, www.thechildrenremembered.ca, provides information on all of the residential schools that the United Church operated.

The Committee meets twice a year, sometimes in community to connect with local residential school survivors and churches. In the past triennium, the Committee met in Toronto, Winnipeg, Morley, Alberta, and by teleconference. We gratefully acknowledge the significant contributions of former member Vic Wiebe, who had to step down for family reasons in 2017; honorary Elder Murray Whetung, who has been unable to travel; and former staff person Cecile Fausak, who retired in 2016 after 13 years' service to the General Council.

Membership

All Native Circle Conference: Norma General-Lickers and William Snow

BC Native Ministries Council: Barbara Wilson and Ray Jones

Ontario/Quebec Native congregations: Martha Pedoniquotte and Ken Albert

Executive of General Council representatives: Cathy Anderson and Norm Seli

General Secretary, General Council: Nora Sanders

Moderator (ex-officio): Jordan Cantwell

Staff Support: Executive Minister of the Aboriginal Ministries Council: Maggie Dieter (McLeod);

Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animators: Sara Stratton and Lori Ransom; GCO

Archivist: Nichole Vonk; Program Support: Erin Parsons

Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA)

In May 2006, The United Church of Canada became a signatory to the largest settlement agreement in Canadian history as a result of its role in the Indian residential school system. The other parties were former students, the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Government of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the Corporation of Catholic Entities, a legal body representing 51 Catholic orders and dioceses which operated schools.

The Settlement Agreement was implemented in September 2007 and contained five pillars: Common Experience Payment (CEP), Independent Assessment Process (IAP), a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), funds for Commemoration, and funds for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF).

In terms of implementation, Common Experience Payments have been made; almost all of the claims that went forward under the Independent Assessment Process have been dealt with; commemoration activities have been supported; funding was provided to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to extend its mandate; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has concluded, with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation established to house its history.

The Settlement Agreement is not yet closed and representatives of the Parties continue to meet to monitor outstanding issues, and to work together on the Calls to Action which pertain to them. The exception is the Corporation of Catholic Entities, which was released from the Agreement in 2015.

1. **Financial Obligations:** The United Church was subject to a two-stage payment structure under IRSSA. The base obligation of \$6,455,020 was met. A second stage payment of \$436,150 would have become due only if fundraising by the Catholic Entities exceeded \$20,000,000. In 2015, it became apparent that the Catholic Entities would not reach that goal, and the United Church's second stage payment obligation was therefore nullified.
2. **Document Obligations:** Under the Agreement, the United Church was committed to provide all relevant documents in its possession to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. These are now in the collection of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) in Winnipeg. Staff at the United Church Archives in Toronto continue to monitor the accession of new materials, including current working documents related to the Settlement Agreement.

The Committee has approved an archival project related to day schools (schools run on reserves where students returned home at night), some of which were operated by the United Church and its antecedents. The project will gather and digitize archival materials related to United Church day schools, and to create narrative histories of these schools. These materials will be shared with the other Parties to the Settlement Agreement and the NCTR.

3. Independent Assessment Process (IAP): As of April 3, 2018, the IAP Secretariat reports receiving a total of 38,098 claims. Of these, 37,660 have been resolved and 438 are in progress. A total of 26,613 hearings were held and 25 remain to take place. Total awards and negotiated settlements paid is \$2.601 billion. Total compensation paid, including legal fees and disbursements, is \$3.158 billion. The United Church has received 2,877 abuse claims. This is 7.55 percent of the total claims the IAP Secretariat received, a percentage somewhat less than the estimated 10–12 percent of students who attended United Church residential schools of the total residential school student population. United Church representatives have attended 328 hearings. The admission of claims and holding of hearings is virtually complete. The remaining work is largely in sending letters of apology, filing decisions, and closing files.

On April 10, 2017, individuals who had represented The United Church of Canada at IAP hearings, as well as at the precursor Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) hearings, gathered by videoconference to reflect on their experiences. Participants spoke to the deep sense of responsibility and humility evoked by their attendance at the hearings. They spoke about the courage of the residential school survivors and their generosity in responding to the Church representatives' presence and words of apology. They spoke to how the experience had profoundly affected their personal journeys of faith and deepened their ongoing commitment to the work of healing and reconciliation. In early September 2017 the Moderator, who had attended the April gathering, sent a letter of gratitude to the 47 people who had represented the Church in 328 ADR and IAP hearings.

Disposition of IAP records is currently at issue. The October 2017 Supreme Court of Canada *Fontaine* decision upheld that individuals had the right to destroy records related to their claims after a 15-year retention period at the IAP Secretariat. Parties to the Agreement are now seeking direction on what they must do with records in their possession. Direction is also being sought on how to inform survivors of the ruling so that they can decide what they want done with their records.

4. Truth and Reconciliation Commission: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was formally concluded in December 2015 with the release of a Final Report. United Church residential school survivors were a part of those events, along with General Council representatives. See below for the United Church's response to the 94 Calls to Action which were a part of the Final Report.
5. Outstanding Issues: Parties have agreed to work together to resolve legal issues related to but not necessarily covered in the Settlement Agreement. These include claims related to: day schools; day scholars (students who attended a residential school during the day but returned home at night); the administrative split (a structural change to the running of schools and residences in the 1960s); student-on-student abuse; and the Sixties Scoop. The government is engaged in settlement negotiations in all these areas. No legal ramifications have been identified for the churches, though there could well be documentary implications.

In a related matter, the Parties to the Agreement are collaborating in a “lessons learned” exercise to assess what did and did not work well in the design and implementation of the Agreement. It is hoped that this exercise, which will be survivor-centered and trauma-informed, will provide meaningful input into future settlement agreements and the ongoing work of implementing the TRC Calls to Action.

TRC Calls to Action

The TRC Calls to Action were released in June 2015, and reiterated at the December 2015 closing of the TRC. The Settlement Agreement Churches endorsed all 94 Calls to Action. The United Church monitors and acts on those in which it is specifically named as a church or a party to the Agreement, as well as those related to issues of Indigenous justice.

1. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Of particular note is call to Action 46, a call to the churches to implement the principles, norms, and standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework of reconciliation. In 2015, the Committee requested a task group be created to help guide this work within the non-Indigenous Church.

On March 30, 2016, the United Church participated in the release of an ecumenical statement on the Declaration; Moderator Jordan Cantwell joined with other church leaders and former TRC Commissioner Dr. Marie Wilson on Parliament Hill for the event. One day later, the United Church released its own statement on implementing the Declaration at the launch of the Aboriginal Ministries Consultation.

Education and capacity-building on the Declaration continue as structures shift in response to the remits and the *Calls to the Church* from the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle. Implementation of the Declaration by the government (Call to Action 43) has been a significant focus of advocacy in the last triennium. The United Church was a key player in the campaign to pass Bill C-262 (an act to harmonize Canadian law with the Declaration) into law. At the time of writing, that campaign had influenced the government’s decision to support the private members’ bill, which was in committee before returning to the House for third reading.

2. Covenant of Reconciliation: Call to Action 46 concerns the creation, by Parties to the Agreement, of a Covenant of Reconciliation which rejects concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery in favour of the UN Declaration and treaty/nation-to-nation relationships. This work is at an initial stage.

Indigenous Justice

The United Church has a strong history of advocacy on Indigenous land and treaty rights; water; education; social welfare policy; health care; and missing/murdered Indigenous women and girls. We monitor and take action on those Calls to Action related to these areas. All have been reflected in education and advocacy initiatives in the last triennium.

In addition, we apply the principles of the UN Declaration to justice initiatives undertaken in partnership with the Church in Mission (CIM) unit—for example, climate justice and addressing White privilege. In the fall of 2018 CIM and IJRS will co-host a consultation on the intersection of climate justice and Indigenous rights policy in the United Church.

Working with the Aboriginal Ministries Council, we have identified youth engagement in Indigenous Justice work as a priority, and will be holding a dialogue forum on this in late 2018.

Responding to the Legacy of Church Mission and Ministry in Indigenous Communities

An ecumenical working group has begun meeting to discuss the ongoing colonial legacy of church mission and ministry among Indigenous peoples. The goal is to respond to TRC Call to Action 61, which articulates a vision for regional dialogues on “Indigenous spirituality, self-determination and reconciliation.” While churches have apologized for their role in residential schools and continue to work to address the residential school’s legacy, the legacy of spiritual violence and Christian supremacy in Indigenous communities extends beyond what happened in the schools.

The following churches and organizations are represented on the working group: the Anglican Church of Canada, the Christian Reformed Church of North America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, KAIROS, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Mennonite Church Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Salvation Army, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and The United Church of Canada. The group understands and is sensitive to the diversity of perspectives on the topic of spirituality among Indigenous nations across the country and the need to move thoughtfully and respectfully. This includes being sensitive to relationships among denominations within Indigenous communities.

Right Relations

1. The Anniversary of the Apologies: The Church’s 1986 Apology to Indigenous Peoples for its role in colonization saw its 30th anniversary in August 2016, while the Apology for residential schools (1998) will see its 20th anniversary in October 2018. These apologies, and the events which led to them, continue to have a profound impact on our church. The 30th anniversary of the 1986 Apology was marked in Sudbury at the site where the Apology was given. The Committee collaborated with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and Manitou Conference to create a meaningful event with the inclusion of many original participants, including Elder Alberta Billy and The Very Rev. Bob Smith. Planning for the 20th anniversary of the 1998 Apology is underway.
2. Canada–Australia Dialogue: Part of being in right relations involves exploring the connections not just as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, but also across borders. The Committee and the Aboriginal Ministries Council collaborated with the Moderator’s office in a reconciliation dialogue with the Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in 2017–18. An Australian delegation visited British Columbia and Saskatchewan and attended the All Native Circle Conference’s Grand Council and the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering in Pinawa, Manitoba, in July

2017. A return group of Canadians visited Australia in March 2018. They experienced rich cultural diversity, time on the land, and a period of serious contemplation of the intersection of gospel and culture. A strong partnership has been formed between our peoples and our churches, rooted in our similar yet distinct histories of colonization.

3. Living into Right Relations Network: Indigenous Justice staff met with key contacts from the Living into Right Relations (LIRR) network to discuss the ongoing work of reconciliation in the context of the changing church. Further to this meeting, the Committee affirmed the following objectives for community engagement going forward:
 - a) Explore, develop, and support just and respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.
 - b) Provide education on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and stimulate responses.
 - c) Provide education about Canada's and the church's role in the colonization of Indigenous peoples, the need for apology, the generational impacts of residential schools, systemic racism, culture and spirituality, shared history, and treaties (as per TRC Call to Action #59). This includes providing opportunities to learn together, share truth, and increase cultural competency and safety.
 - d) Be present, show up where Indigenous people are seeking justice, celebrating, remembering, mourning, learning, protesting, rallying, and praying.
 - e) Build capacity, leadership development, empower and equip people for the work.

The Committee also affirmed the importance of the LIRR network in carrying out this work. Since the network's inception in 2008, its members have built knowledge and skills, created resources, and developed local relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations both inside and outside of the church and ecumenically. The LIRR network will continue to have critically important roles to play in responding to the Calls to the Church, implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the TRC Calls to Action.

4. Being Good Relations: The work of reconciliation remains at a critical phase for both the church and the nation. In collaboration with the Task Group on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Committee has concluded that for the next triennium it will focus on education and animation within the framework of "Being Good Relations." Envisioned being in integral relationship with the Calls to the Church, Being Good Relations will, through prayerful study and action, continue to challenge and help the church embody its commitments to the Apologies, the TRC Calls to Action, and the UN Declaration. In this way, it responds directly to the challenge contained in Remit 1, "[to live] in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth Community," and as such is an essential part of the church's movement forward into the new structure. This work will be guided by a working group, the form of which is yet to be determined.

Doctrine of Discovery

In August 2015 a gathering was held at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre in Espanola, Ontario, to follow up to the United Church's action to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. The Aboriginal Ministries Circle, Indigenous Justice, and Church in Mission staff collaborated to plan and resource this working event. A team of four facilitators led the participants through a process to awaken United Church constituencies on the ongoing colonial legacy that affects the church and all Canadians. The gathering invited strategies to embody the apologies, the repudiation, and the commitment to reconciliation. A [new section of the website](#) was developed to reflect this work and some new resources on the Doctrine of Discovery.

Justice and Reconciliation Fund

Applications to the Justice and Reconciliation Fund have increased to the point that demand now outstrips capacity of the Fund to respond. From January 2016 to April 2018, the Fund has granted almost \$272,000 to 55 projects. The Committee celebrates the increasing interest in and attention to relationship building, educating communities of faith, and living out of the Church's apologies to Indigenous peoples. The Fund benefited from a decision taken by Paisley United Church in Paisley, Ontario (Bruce Presbytery of Hamilton Conference), which closed in 2014. The congregation decided to direct a portion of the proceeds of the sale of its building to the ongoing work of building right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The CIJRS, in turn, affirmed a plan to top up the \$75,000 allocated annually to the Justice and Reconciliation Fund by \$25,000 per year from the Paisley legacy, which is being held by the United Church Foundation.

IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION

Origin: Task Group on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Introduction

The Task Group on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, created by the Executive of General Council in November 2015, responds to the missional call to right relationship and a ministry of reconciliation, and to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, specifically Call to Action 48, which entreats the church to adopt the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

The calls to right relationship and the ministry of reconciliation underlie the United Church's long history of advocacy for Indigenous justice and our commitment to address our own complicity in colonization, residential schools, and the social inequalities that continue to be experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada today.

The Task Group includes representatives from the Permanent Committees, the Aboriginal Ministries Council, the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools, three Conferences, and the Mission and Service Fund. These representatives are:

Ken Albert, Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools
Russell Daye, Maritime Conference
Greg Glatz, Mission and Service Fund
John Hurst, PC Finance
Bev Kostichuk, PC Governance and Agenda
Will Kunder, Manitou Conference
Jean Macdonald, PC Ministry and Employment
Mark Marshall, London Conference (stepped down, fall 2017)
Mary Royal-Duczek, PC Programs
Janet Sigurdson, Aboriginal Ministries Council
William Snow, All Native Circle Conference
Brian Thorpe, Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Staff Support:

Sara Stratton, Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation Animator
Maggie Dieter, Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries and Indigenous Justice

The Task Group was mandated to:

- a) Develop and implement a process to engage the whole church in complying with this Call to Action, providing a mechanism with which to assess compliance; and
- b) Develop, by March 31, 2016, as recommended by the commission, a statement to the Canadian public indicating how the church is living out this call, and a format for ongoing reporting.

The second part of this mandate has been fulfilled, with a statement issued at the launch of the Aboriginal Ministries Council Consultation on 31 March 2016 and an ongoing summary of the church's response to the Calls to Action, including those related to the UN Declaration. These are among the resources available on the church's UN Declaration webpage (www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples).

The first part of this mandate is significantly underway at various levels of the church.

Educational opportunities on the UN Declaration have been provided to General Council Executive, Permanent Committees, and Staff Leaders. Training has begun for staff. Committees have also been asked to engage in a process of policy review and have been furnished with an assessment tool to help them with this process. Some committees are further along in this process than others. Committees have reported that it is easier to factor the UN Declaration's principles, norms, and standards into emerging policy than it is to revise older policy. The Task Group believes that governance structures still need encouragement in this work, particularly given the impending changes in structure.

Conference engagement has also been undertaken, though given the impending shift to regions, it has taken an education and advocacy framework rather than one oriented to policy and structural review. This included a request for agenda time at the spring 2017 Conference meetings. A video was prepared linking the principles, norms, and standards of the UN Declaration to the issues facing Indigenous communities today, and a workshop prepared to encourage advocacy with the federal government for implementation of the UN Declaration (Call to Action 43). Varying levels of engagement were reported. This, plus the work emerging from the Caretakers' *Calls to the Church* and the remit implementation team, indicate to the Task Group the necessity of continued outreach to the regional councils as they begin to take shape in late 2018 and become the new structure in 2019. Continued outreach to communities of faith is also required. The Task Group (in conjunction with the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools) therefore supports an education and advocacy focus on "Being Good Relations" for the whole of the next triennium.

In summation, the Task Group does not foresee the work of policy review and of implementation of the UN Declaration at all levels of the church being completed before the Task Group's mandate ends at General Council 43, and therefore supports the creation of a home or structure in which to house the oversight of this work as the new structure of the church unfolds.

THEOLOGY AND INTER-CHURCH INTER-FAITH COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Executive Summary

As a committee of the General Council, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has been working during this triennium on projects carried over from the previous triennium (Adoption, Hindu–United Church Relations, Land and Covenant, Medical Assistance in Dying, and Membership), new projects (Aboriginal Spiritualities and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification), dialogues with the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, and the church’s ongoing ecumenical and inter-faith relations. The Committee produced major reports on Theologies of Adoption and Medical Assistance in Dying. This workbook contains two proposals to this 43rd General Council: a report on membership, and a statement on Hindu–United Church relations.

Introduction

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee is a committee of the General Council. We provide regular updates on our work to the Executive of the General Council, and are called to full accountability at the General Councils held every three years under our current organization. This accountability report, therefore, will address matters that have been referred to us by the 42nd General Council, issues that have arisen during this 2015–18 triennium, and also work that has carried over from the previous triennium.

Ongoing Work

Aboriginal Spiritualities

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee and its predecessor, the Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, have helped to facilitate the church’s efforts at dialogue and seeking understanding with Jews, Muslims, and Hindus through the major study documents *Bearing Faithful Witness, That They May Know Each Other*, and *Honouring the Divine in Each Other*. The Committee’s focus on Indigenous issues in the Land and Covenant work has assisted it in recognizing that Aboriginal Spiritualities should be looked at in a concerted way, building on the work done in *The Circle and the Cross* document adopted at the 39th General Council.

Most references to date, including *The Circle and the Cross*, have spoken of “Aboriginal spirituality.” During the Committee’s meeting in October 2015, it became apparent that there is diversity in the spirituality of Indigenous peoples in Canada that requires the use of the plural “Aboriginal Spiritualities.” As well, it is intended that consultation on Aboriginal Spiritualities include dialogue on Indigenous spiritualities in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America, and elsewhere. The Committee is also aware that there is great sensitivity in Indigenous communities about spiritualities, with tensions between people who follow traditional teachings and people who practise Christianity.

This is a long-term project, similar to the previous three major inter-faith study documents, and it is not work the Committee can do alone. An approach was made to the Aboriginal Ministries Council to gauge interest in a collaborative undertaking that will eventually result in a document that will be commended to the church for study. During 2017 it became apparent

that there are so many issues now facing Indigenous churches that producing a full report is not possible or needed at this time.

The Committee continues to be willing to take up this project at a time appropriate for the Aboriginal Ministries Council.

Adoption

In November 2013 the General Council Executive directed the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to research and write a position paper regarding adoption and to create a United Church of Canada statement on adoption, giving consideration to other denominational statements on adoption and to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This request by the Executive was the result of a report from the Adoptions Task Group it had established in March 2013, following meetings with individuals and organizations concerned with the experiences of women whose children were placed for adoption from maternity homes operated by the United Church during the period from 1940 to 1980.

This was a major piece of work and a multi-faceted project that continued into this triennium, and included a consultation inviting feedback with stories of adoption. The report on Theologies of Adoption was submitted to the General Council Executive at its March 2018 meeting and adopted by them. The report reflected theologically on scripture connected with adoption, theological motifs raised in the stories submitted as part of the consultation, and issues of family and adoption in Canadian society. Among the topics covered in the report are the role of the United Church in historic maternity facilities, adoption from Aboriginal communities, forced adoption, child welfare, adoption in the LGBTTTQ+ community, and international adoption including interracial and intercultural adoption. In its work, the Committee was struck by the complexity of these issues. For some—whether an adoptee, an adoptive parent, or a parent who placed a child for adoption—the experience has been largely positive. For others, the experience has been negative, and for still others, mixed.

Committee chair Daniel Hayward testified to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in April 2018 as part of that committee's hearings on adoption policy.

Anglican–United Church Dialogue

In 2016 the Anglican–United Church dialogue released *Called to Unity in Mission: A Report of the Anglican Church of Canada–United Church of Canada Dialogue, 2012–2016*. The report offered recommendations in relation to coordinating mission activities more closely, sharing resources, and ongoing conversation about ministry, including episcopacy. With the acceptance of these recommendations by each denomination, a new phase of the dialogue began in 2017, focusing on pursuing the way forward on mutual recognition of ministry between our two churches, including renewed support for ecumenical shared ministries.

Hindu–United Church Relations

Work was begun by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee following the 40th General Council to study Hindu–United Church relations. This study followed earlier studies of

the United Church's relations with Judaism and Islam. It is believed to be the first major examination by a Christian denomination of relations with Hinduism, and is groundbreaking in that sense.

The study resource *Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church–Hindu Relations Today* was completed prior to the 42nd General Council and made available online for study and response by communities of faith. The Committee invited comments on a proposed statement on Hindu–United Church relations as the basis for revising the statement to be presented to the 43rd General Council. As stated in the proposal containing the statement (found elsewhere in this workbook), the Committee was disappointed to receive few responses to the study. However, the study period coincided with intense activity in communities of faith voting on remits.

The Committee is going forward with the proposing the statement to this General Council in order to encourage continued dialogue with our Hindu neighbours, and as another step in deepening our relationships with other faith traditions.

Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations

Committee chair Daniel Hayward was part of The United Church of Canada's delegation visiting China from November 28 to December 8, 2015, at the invitation of the China Christian Council and the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China. At the same time, Committee member Mathias Ross, along with Executive Minister Michael Blair, represented the United Church at the 9th Consultation of United and Uniting Churches, held in Chennai, India, from November 25 to December 2, 2015, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission.

Committee member Teresa Burnett-Cole serves on the World Methodist Council, which met in Houston, Texas, as part of the 21st World Methodist Conference from August 30 to September 3, 2016.

Member Grace Eun Kyung Lee represents the Committee on the Migrant Church Working Group, which seeks to expand the United Church's links to communities of faith affiliated with denominations outside Canada.

The World Council of Churches is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. The celebration began on January 7 with a service at Chongwenmen Church in Beijing—a church visited by The United Church of Canada delegation two years previously. At the World Council of Churches' Central Committee meeting in Trondheim, Norway, in June 2016, The United Church of Canada's representative, Miriam Spies, was elected to the Worship Planning Committee for the World Council's 11th Assembly in 2021. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee lifts up the active engagement of a significant number of United Church of Canada elected members and staff with the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches.

This triennium has seen the implementation of the agreements signed at the 42nd General Council on Full Communion with the United Church of Christ and Mutual Recognition of Ministry with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The Committee has sought to live out Full Communion with the United Church of Christ in ways that have included work on a joint response to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, an ecclesiology document from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Discussions began in this triennium with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee chair Daniel Hayward participated in meetings with the Disciples in April and September 2017 on a possible Full Communion agreement. The United Church was invited to name one of two representatives of North American communions who are full voting members of the General Board, the governing body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Committee chair Daniel Hayward was appointed, and attended the General Board meeting held in Newton, Iowa, from April 14 to 17, 2018, where the Board approved a proposal to move toward Full Communion between the two denominations. In this workbook there is a proposal that this 43rd General Council declare and celebrate that a state of Full Communion exists with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Justification

In 2016 the World Communion of Reformed Churches (of which The United Church of Canada is a member) asked member churches for feedback on the Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. Associating with the declaration would place the Reformed churches within a widening ecumenical consensus on a fundamental doctrine, which already includes the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches, and is affirmed in substance by the Anglican Communion.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee responded to this request in October 2016, stating that The United Church of Canada welcomes and rejoices in such further movement toward Christian unity. The Committee especially welcomed the fact that this further unity is rooted in the doctrine of justification, God's unmerited, unconditional, freedom-giving love for all people and God's creation. The Committee also affirmed and celebrated the Joint Declaration's emphasis on the unity between justification and sanctification, as well as justification and justice.

Based on the responses from member churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches' Executive Committee decided in December 2016 to hold a ceremony of association with the Joint Declaration during the World Communion's General Council, in Leipzig, Germany, from June 29 to July 7, 2017. The United Church of Canada had a substantial presence at this World Communion gathering, including elected member delegates, staff, resource people, and stewards.

Land and Covenant

During the previous triennium the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee began an examination of the issue of land in Israel and Palestine from a covenantal perspective. It was quickly realized that land needed to be understood, not just in the biblical concept of land as it pertains to Israel and Palestine, but also from the perspective of the land within Canada and the relationship of both Indigenous and settler peoples to the land.

The Committee has continued to work throughout this triennium in a study of the theologies of land, rooted in the Canadian context and particularly in Indigenous title and stewardship, but open to local and global issues. In the next triennium, 2018–21, the Committee will be preparing and disseminating a study guide that could include prayers, scripture, questions, and background resources on issues of Theologies of Land, such as conquest, stewardship, care for creation, land and identity, relationality, and Indigenous perspectives on land as foundational.

Medical Assistance in Dying

At the request of the General Council Executive in March 2015, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has been working to examine the theological implications of Medical Assistance in Dying and to offer guidance to the Executive on the development of a church statement on this issue. This work included a consultation in Toronto in September 2016 with theologians, ethicists, physicians, and people with disabilities and their allies.

A statement composed by the Committee was presented to the Executive at the May 2017 meeting and adopted as an official statement of the church. Briefly, the statement expresses that The United Church in Canada is not opposed in principle to the federal legislation allowing assistance in dying and to such assistance being the informed, free choice of terminally ill patients. There are occasions where unrelenting suffering and what we know about the effect of pain on the human body can make Medical Assistance in Dying a preferable option. However, the church urges a cautious approach by legislators and medical professionals implementing these laws, as well as by individuals, families, and communities of faith who are considering making use of this option. We advocate an affirmation of the dignity and intrinsic worth of every life in relation to community, and community-focused and theologically robust discernment on a case-by-case basis that also ensures the protection and care of those potentially made vulnerable (e.g., people with disabilities, the frail elderly, those with mental illnesses, those without personal advocates) by legislation permitting Medical Assistance in Dying. To this end, it is important to engage communities of faith, and the broader community, in conversations about death and dying, and to develop greater capacity to assist members of the church who are facing end of life decisions.

Work is underway to supplement the statement with resources for study, sermon development, worship, personal contemplation, and conversation that assist individuals, families, health care professionals, leaders, and communities of faith in dealing with the challenges presented by end of life decisions from advance care planning to Medical Assistance in Dying.

Membership

Membership has been a focus of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee's work in the last two trienniums. The Committee reported to the 42nd General Council on a new model of membership for the church; General Council then directed 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 a recommendation of membership for the church.

The Committee produced a study document for circulation throughout the church in the winter of 2017, using two different models—Model One, a slightly amended version of the United Church's current model, and Model Two, a new and different model. It was hoped that the responses received would give an indication of the mind of the church about membership. However, it is clear from the responses to the study document that there is no consensus within the church regarding membership. A summary of the responses received, the two visions of membership, the Committee's current thinking, and recommendations for possible action by this General Council can be found in the proposal on membership elsewhere in this workbook.

Roman Catholic–United Church Dialogue

This dialogue has continued discussions on our churches' responses to the ecological crisis. The dialogue has recently released *The Hope within Us: A Report on Climate Change by the Roman Catholic–United Church Dialogue in Canada*. The report reflects on our theology of creation in relation to climate change and calls our people to unite in common witness and action for creation's well-being. The dialogue also prepared an Earth Hour Vigil as a worship resource for ecumenical witness. With the completion of this report, the dialogue is now moving into conversations about ministry, with emphasis on exploring the ministries of all the people of God, in particular how lay people are called into ministry in God's mission.

Summary

The Committee's accountability report to the 42nd General Council concluded that "as can be seen in this report, we have been assigned a vast array of tasks from a variety of concerns within the church." This has continued to be very much the case in this triennium. And it is still the case that tackling such a diverse body of work requires committee members with experience and agility in handling matters of theology and church polity, and a diversity of interests and backgrounds. All of the Committee's members deserve the thanks of the General Council for the time and effort they have devoted to theological questions and the ecumenical and inter-faith relations of The United Church of Canada.

Committee Members This Triennium

Daniel Hayward (chair), Darlene Brewer, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Alison Etter, Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Carmen Lansdowne, Grace Eun Kyung Lee, Martha Martin, Mathias Ross, Earle Sharam, Bill Steadman, Ryan Slifka, Collin Smith, Brian Thorpe

Staff Support

John Young, Gail Allan

Recommendations

TICIF 1 Report on Membership

TICIF 2 Proposed Statement: Honouring the Divine in Each Other: United Church–Hindu Relations Today

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HEALTHY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS REPORT

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Background

The work of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships (ELHPR) project is the culmination of study and testing of pastoral relations processes and oversight and discipline policies for the past 18 years.¹

The 41st General Council, 2012 authorized the testing of new ways of doing pastoral relations and oversight and discipline under the following principles:

- a) Flexible to contextual and regional differences across the church;
- b) Supported within the overall financial capacity of the church;
- c) Reflective of, but not limited to, a model within which:
 1. The pastoral charge and the presbytery be accountable for the discernment and articulation of mission and ministry leadership needs, and the support and nurture of pastoral relationships and ministry personnel;
 2. The conference be accountable for the pastoral relations processes related to placement, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel; and finally
 3. The courts resource pastoral relations as well as oversight and discipline policies with trained paid accountable staff.

The Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project was originally designed around 10 program goals:

1. improving the “fit” of pastoral relationships as reported by ministers and pastoral charges
2. increasing the number of ministers and pastoral charges who report having a “healthy relationship”
3. increasing the number of ministers who state that they receive the support they need to perform their ministry well
4. decreasing the number of ministry personnel who report that they feel isolated
5. increasing the vitality of pastoral charges and other local ministries
6. proving viability within overall financial capacity
7. decreasing volunteer workload
8. increasing the competency for handling pastoral relations, oversight and discipline
9. increasing the consistency within each Conference in how pastoral relations, oversight and discipline are handled; and
10. increasing the efficiency of pastoral relations, oversight and discipline.

The Conferences participating in the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project include: British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario,

¹ If you would like to know more about the background of the ELHPR project, we offer this presentation for your information: <https://sway.com/nuKMTu8IChknfXs0?ref=Link>.

Manitou, London, Toronto, Bay of Quinte, Montreal and Ottawa, Hamilton, and Maritime. The participating Conferences were given allowance by the Sub-Executive of the General Council (commons.united-church.ca; search “2013-05-16 GCSE,” p. 75) to operate outside of some of the pastoral relations policies of *The Manual* for the sake and length of their Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships test.

Each of the Conferences designed their own test model, which resulted in four types of tests:

1. movement of all pastoral relations and oversight and discipline policies to Conference, with a focus on collegial support and programming in the presbyteries (British Columbia, London, and Toronto);
2. movement of all pastoral relations and oversight and discipline policies to Conference, with a focus on collegial support and programming in the presbytery, but with the test limited to one presbytery within the Conference (Hamilton and Manitou);
3. test through the Conference, but limited to select policy/procedural policy changes (Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario); and
4. test within two or more presbyteries, and limited to select policy/procedural policy changes (Maritime, Bay of Quinte, and Montreal and Ottawa).

The participation of Saskatchewan Conference was focused on the collection of data regarding the financial and volunteer hours associated with current pastoral relations and oversight and discipline processes. For a number of reasons, including geographical challenges, the data collected did not allow for a comparison with the whole project.

These tests were evaluated during the first and second years and a summary of these evaluations were reported to the 42nd General Council, 2015 (commons.united-church.ca; search “GC42-2015 Record of Proceedings,” p. 657). Also in 2015, the Executive of the General Council approved that the recommendations contained in the report inform the development of new policies consistent with the directions determined by the 42nd General Council, 2015 with respect to church polity and structure. Subsequently, the 42nd General Council, 2015 authorized that the testing continue until such time as new polity and policies are established.

Update during This Triennium

In 2016, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS) formed a new Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships working group to monitor the tests and evaluate the principles associated with the model, and develop policy change proposals. The goal of this group was to evaluate and harvest findings from the test projects to inform the remit implementation process related to the Three Council model, the Office of Vocation and the elimination of Transfer and Settlement, which necessitates changes to the pastoral relations processes.

The focus of the working group was:

1. to identify the consistent principles used in this project that the church values enough to carry forward, and what was tried, but can be let go of (divided into policy and best practices);

2. outline what policies would be needed for ELHPR depending on which remits pass;
3. bring non-participating Conferences into the conversation

The working group collected data from nearly every Conference, including Conferences involved in the project tests and those who were not. These data were organized according to current policies, processes, and practices for pastoral relations, vocational support for ministry personnel, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel, the role of Ministry and Personnel committees, and presbytery pastoral oversight. The data provided the working group with an overview of current policies and practices, in these areas, in testing and non-testing Conferences.

After reviewing these data, the working group sought to gather more narrative comments from the testing Conferences, in particular. In March 2017 members of the working group and resource staff hosted Conference-based conversations with Conference staff, Conference and presbytery leaders in the areas of pastoral oversight, oversight and discipline, and the project testing, ministry personnel involved in the search process during the testing, and pastoral charge leaders involved in work of the tests, such as search and interview processes, mission articulation or M&P Committee annual assessments. The objective of these conversations was to harvest narratives, but also to collect effective and non-effective practices from the testing Conferences. The All Native Circle Conference were also included in this piece of consultation to enable the working group to gain an understanding of how this Conference has adapted pastoral relations policies and processes for their contextual realities.

The working group reviewed the results and findings of these conversations. The group also utilized the Conference's own project evaluations, which many of the testing Conferences shared. In all of its harvesting of information, the working group learned how important clear and consistent communication was within the testing Conferences. It was valuable to maximize communication. The group learned how important communication will be in the transition process to new systems and this learning will inform new policy implementation.

Six themes emerged from this final evaluative harvesting of the project:

a) **Ministry profiles: *naming our faith community story***

The group harvested information on both profiles of pastoral charge and of ministry personnel. From the testing, it was apparent that it is helpful for both pastoral charges and ministry personnel to name who they are and what are they called to do. Profiles help to identify the essence of one's ministry and calling. Also, it is helpful for the profiles to be flexible not formulaic, and can draw upon prior work, like a JNAC report. Profiles need to be easily completed by a pastoral charge without a lot of staff support, and not necessarily linked to pastoral charge transition.

b) **Accompaniment/Resourcing**

The current system of two presbytery representatives being heavily involved in every step of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee and Joint Search Committee processes requires far too much volunteer energy and can slow down the process. The testing identified how

helpful it was to have a liaison or presbyter offer support from the Conference with a defined number of connections with the search committee without having to be at every committee gathering or every congregational meeting. The testing showed that this type of accompaniment allowed for a speedier process. The liaison provided oversight to the process on behalf of the denomination and acted as a resource for the search committee in their process. The group also learned that the resourcing and training of interview teams by one staff person can be challenging within current capacity. However, it can be a challenge for dedicated presbytery volunteers to let go of their involvement in the pastoral relations process, in the midst of change.

c) Application process

The working group harvested information on different ways that testing Conferences processed applications by ministry personnel to fill a vacancy. Many testing Conferences had the Conference personnel minister collect applications and check eligibility before forwarding to the interview committee. However, there was an incorrect perception that the personnel minister was not only checking the application for completion and eligibility but doing some vetting to only send the most appropriate applications forward. The working group was worried about one staff person being responsible for this step in the process and what would happen if they were ill or on leave for a period of time. Although, the verification of completeness of an application and the check of the applicant's eligibility before forwarding to the interview team was found to be very helpful and positively received. The working group also harvested the benefits and challenges of the matching tool used in Toronto Conference, which also was a tool to connect pastoral charges with anonymous ministry personnel through their profiles. The tool did not use any algorithms to predict best fit or best match. The working group was attracted by the justice-focus of the matching tool, which sought to address bias and cultural assumptions in matching ministry personnel and pastoral charges for calls and appointments. The working group learned how it had allowed racialized ministry personnel to get an interview when they previously would not have.

d) Care of pastoral charges

The working group learned that simplified processes, like a living ministry profile or an essence statement, could enable the presbytery or Conference to know about the ministry in a pastoral charge and encourage it. Through the creation of these profiles, the presbytery sought to fulfill their pastoral oversight responsibility. With the movement of so much work to the Conference, presbyteries in some testing Conferences were uncertain how to fulfill their pastoral oversight responsibility. While the focus shifted to accompaniment and relationship building, this was challenging for some presbyteries in some testing Conferences.

e) Collegiality

The working group harvested information on building collegiality among communities of faith and among ministry personnel, within the testing Conferences. As part of their goal of building healthy pastoral relationships, some testing Conferences intentionally focused on

leadership development of ministry personnel, through the use of retreats and learning circles. The working group heard that this was very beneficial and created energy within the presbytery. The move of oversight and discipline to Conference in many testing Conferences meant that presbytery could be a place of developing healthy relationships. In some of the testing Conferences, the group learned how important it was to determine how the staff-based support to ministry personnel (via a minister to the ministers) could be done separately from those involved in the pastoral relation or disciplinary processes. There was also a harvesting of learning that collegiality will not appear when other work and responsibilities are taken away, collegiality needs intention to make it happen.

These five themes that came out of the evaluation were used to create the new covenant process.

f) **Oversight and discipline harvesting for the Office of Vocation**

The working group was not only focused on harvesting information related to pastoral relations from the testing Conferences, but also gathered learning related to oversight and discipline. The Office of Vocation will have responsibility for the accreditation, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel, if the remit is enacted and implemented. The working group learned how heavy a toll oversight and discipline can be for presbyteries. It was important to learn that it was beneficial to separate the people (either staff or a small commission) involved in a disciplinary process from the people involved in pastoral relations work and the support of pastoral charges. The testing Conferences relied on staff for support in oversight and disciplinary processes, especially in the informal work before something escalates to a review. The harvesting of the working group confirmed the value of having the court of collegiality separate from the court of oversight of ministry personnel.

The working group, along with the Office of Vocation advisory group (also appointed by PC-MEPS), used the information gathered through the process of harvesting to inform the drafting of policies to guide the new covenant process, new covenant policy, and the Office of Vocation. Through the fall of 2017, the ELHPR working group collaborated with the Office of Vocation advisory group in consulting different stakeholders to gather feedback on these drafts. The details of these consultations are included in the policy proposals.

The working group is grateful for the testing Conferences for their work in the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships project and their willingness to share their insights, learning, and evaluation with the working group during their mandate this triennium. The working group expresses gratitude to the testing Conferences for their generosity in contributing their resources to the development of new resources to support new policies. The working group is grateful to the many faithful and competent presbytery and Conference volunteers throughout our church who have dedicated many hours to the work of pastoral relations and oversight and discipline.

Recommendations

That the General Council

- Receive this report for information;
- Thank the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships Working Group, and the working groups that have come before in the direction of this project; and
- Thank the Conferences for their participation in this project.

MANUAL COMMITTEE REPORT**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

The Manual Committee is composed of the following six elected members:

Linda Anderson	Peter Bishop
Alan Boyd	Fred Braman
John Burton (Chair)	Mary-Beth Moriarty

Cynthia Gunn, one of the church's Legal/Judicial Counsel, serves as a corresponding member.

The role of the Manual Committee is to assist the General Secretary, General Council in her responsibility for preparing *The Manual* and conducting remits.

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. The Committee also drafts remits, which are circulated by the General Secretary to presbyteries (and pastoral charges as required) after the form and content of the remits have been approved by the Executive of the General Council.

During the past triennium, Cindy Randall and George Thurlow completed their terms as elected members. The Committee is grateful for their service and welcomed Linda Anderson and Fred Braman to its work.

The 2016 edition of *The Manual* is the first edition to be published following the complete rewriting of the by-laws in the 2013 edition. The Committee had received positive feedback from the wider church on the style and format of the 2013 edition and so followed the same approach for the 2016 edition. It was made available both in hardcopy format and as a PDF document on the General Council website.

The Committee held three in-person meetings during the triennium: in September 2015, May 2017, and September 2017; and one meeting by conference call in October 2015.

At the two meetings in 2015 the Committee's primary agenda was the drafting of changes to *The Manual* to reflect the policy decisions made by the 42nd General Council 2015. The Committee also drafted the remits that had been authorized by the 42nd General Council in 2015. Both tasks are time-sensitive, given the deadlines for publication of *The Manual* and the issuance of remits.

The Committee recognized that if these remits are enacted, the changes to the Basis of Union would be the most substantive ones ever made to the Polity and Order of Ministry sections. In drafting the remits, the Committee decided to keep to the wording of the actual decisions adopted by the 42nd General Council 2015 rather than preparing specific new wording for the

Basis of Union and including it in the remits themselves as in the past. That gave the Committee the benefit of more time after the remits were issued to consider the best approach to revising the Basis of Union and to prepare those revisions in a thoughtful way.

As part of that process, the Committee devoted one of its meetings to reviewing the existing constitutional documents of the United Church and visioning a new approach that might better fit the current church context. The learnings from that conversation have been shared with the General Secretary for future consideration.

There are no proposals from the General Secretary to the 43rd General Council 2018 for specific improvements to the wording of the existing by-laws. While it is customary for the Committee to recommend to the General Secretary that she initiate such proposals, the current remits (if enacted by the 43rd General Council 2018) will require significant rewriting of the by-laws in any case. That task will be the Committee's primary and immediate focus in the next triennium.

John W. Burton
Chairperson

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: The Nominations Committee, Executive of the General Council

The General Council and its Executive are supported in their mandates, in part, through the work of a number of committees and task groups as well as people serving as representatives of The United Church of Canada with various partner organizations. The Nominations Committee is charged with recommending the members who will serve on these committees and in these roles. 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.

The majority of the Nominations Committee's work is on behalf of the Executive. This triennium, there are three areas of note where the committee served on behalf of the General Council directly:

- 1) Boundaries Commission: The Nominations Committee was directed by the Executive to bring to the special meeting of the 42nd General Council a recommendation of 7–9 members to serve as the Boundaries Commission. This call for nominations resulted in 50 nominations from across the church. The recommended 9 members were appointed by the 42nd General Council.
- 2) Denominational Council Executive, 2019–2021: The Nominations Committee was directed by the 42nd General Council, at its meeting in September 2017, to bring to the 43rd General Council a recommendation of 15 members to serve along with the Moderator, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary as the Denominational Council Executive. Nominations are being brought forward by the Conferences and the Aboriginal Ministries Council. The Nominations Committee anticipates up to 66 nominations for these 15 positions. The Nominations Committee's recommendation will come forward as proposal *Nominations 1*.
- 3) Committees accountable to the General Council: Each triennium, the Nominations Committee recommends members to serve on those committees directly accountable to the General Council, or coordinates these recommendations on behalf of Conferences. The Nominations Committee's recommendations for these committees will come forward as proposal *Nominations 2*.

In offering its recommendations, the Nominations Committee follows the related guidelines and polices set by the Executive of the General Council, makes use of spiritual discernment practices, and respects the United Church's commitments to diversity, becoming an intercultural church, and embracing the leadership of youth and young adult members.

Appreciation for Those Who Have Served

The Nominations Committee notes with appreciation those who served as members of the Executive, General Council committees, and the Boundaries Commission of the General Council during this past triennium.

Archives and History Committee: Wayne Harris (chairperson), Julielynn Anderson, Edward Avey, Joan Benoit, Rod Coates, Diana Duncan-Fletcher, Mary Gooley, John Haas, Gerald Hobbs Pamela McLeod, Dawn Monroe, Helen Reed

Audit Committee: Hugh Johnson (chairperson), John Hurst, Lindsay Mohn, Robin Pilkey, Garnet Webster, Leah Weiss

Judicial Committee: Margaret McKechney (Chairperson), Ted Black, John H. Brown, Gail Christy, Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier, Ronald K. Coughlin, Ken Fraser, Bob Gibson, Diana Ginn, Lynda Goy-Flint (Executive), Lorraine Harkness, James H. Hillson (Executive), Fannie Hudson, Marilee Iverson, Jon Jessiman (Executive), Laurie E. Joe, Penny Keel (Executive), Stan Lanyon, Bob Little, Donald Little, Steven Longmoore (Executive), Susan MacAlpine-Gillis, Paul Macklin (Executive), Gary Magarrell, Kathleen McCallum (Executive), Ben McKay, Ellen Mole, Brad Morrison (Executive), Charlene Orr, Cindy Randall, Paul Reed, Barbara Anne Reynolds, Walter Rilkoff, Florence Sanna, Kerri Seward, Joan Silcox-Smith, Betty Lou Skogen, David Smith (Executive), Greg Smith-Young, Lorna Standingready (Executive), Nancy Steeves, Paul Stott, Steve Wilson (Executive), Robert Wright, Ruth Wright

Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee: Daniel Hayward (Chairperson), Darlene Brewer, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Alison Etter, Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Grace Lee, Carmen Lansdowne, Martha Martin, Mathias Ross, Earle Sharam, Ryan Slifka, Collin Smith, Bill Steadman, Brian Thorpe.

Transfer Committee: Philip Newman (Chairperson)

Boundaries Commission: Andrew Richardson (Chairperson), Nicole Beaudry, Mark Laird, Ryan McNally, Marion Parly, Janet L. Sigurdson, Lorraine Stewart, Gordon Waldie, Sarah Jane Wetelainen

The Executive of the 42nd General Council: Jordan Cantwell (Moderator), Gary Paterson (Immediate Past Moderator), John E. Ambrose (corresponding), Cathy Anderson, Janice Asiiimwe, Richard Balson (deceased), Félix Bigirimana, Miriam Bowlby, Susan Brodrick, Jean Brown, Wendy Brown, Janice Brownlee, Graham Brownmiller, Phyllis Buchner (corresponding), Russel Burns, Brenda Curtis, Kenneth DeLisle, Larry Doyle, Judith Evenden, David Fines, Paula Gale, Vilvan Gunasingham, Nelson Hart, Cathy Hamilton, Sean Handcock, Adam Hanley, Andrea Harrison, Dan Hayward, Lauren Hodgson (corresponding), Sungmin Jung, Deb Kigar, Bev Kostichuk, Gabrielle Lamouche, Aidan Legault, Lori Lewis, Marlene Lightning, Jean Macdonald, Jim McKibbin, George Montour, Peggy Mulambya-Kabonde (corresponding), Caroline Penhale, Tim Reaburn, Noah Richardson, Donna Rumpel,

Lawrence Sankey, Phillip Schuyler, Michael Shewburg, Janet Sigurdson, Norm Seli, Miriam Spies, Anna Stewart, Nancy Sutherland (corresponding), Norma Thompson, Erin Todd, Pauline Walker, Vic Wiebe, Donalee Williams, Sybil Wilson, Doug Wright.

Faithfully submitted, by Graham Brownmiller, chairperson, on behalf of the Nominations Committee:

Paula Gale – Newfoundland and Labrador
Sean Handcock – Maritime
Andrea Harrison/Cathy Hamilton – Montreal and Ottawa
Judith Evenden – Bay of Quinte
Jim McKibbin – Toronto
Tim Reaburn – Hamilton
Doug Wright – London
Erin Todd – Manitou
Anna Stewart – Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
Brenda Curtis – Saskatchewan
Donalee Williams – Alberta and Northwest
Graham Brownmiller – British Columbia
Marlene Lightning – All Native Circle
Diane Bosman and Shirley Welch (staff)

Recommendations

Nominations 1 – Recommendations for Appointment to the Denominational Council Executive

Nominations 2 – Recommendations for Appointment to the Committees of the General Council

JUDICIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Judicial Committee (which meets as an Executive of 13 of the 52 members, 4 named by each Conference) held eight meetings by telephone conference in the period since August 2015. The Executive considered whether or not to hear three appeals and was directed to hold a formal hearing.

The Executive of the Judicial Committee deals primarily with appeals at the General Council level from Decisions of Formal or Appeal Hearing panels, Conferences, the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council and from Rulings made by the General Secretary of the General Council.

During this term, Reverend Margaret McKechney chaired the meetings and Nora Sanders acted as secretary. New representatives to the Executive from several Conferences joined the Executive as of August 2015, including Reverend Lynda Goy-Flint for Newfoundland and Labrador, Ms. Laurie Joe for Montreal and Ottawa, Mr. David Smith for Hamilton, and Reverend Steve Wilson for the Conference of Manitoba and Western Ontario. Mr. Paul Stott was appointed to the position to represent Toronto Conference in March 2017; Reverend Jim Hillson resigned as the representative on the Executive for Alberta and Northwest Conference in November 2016.

In the term from 2015 to 2018, the following items were dealt with and are reported here:

Item 1

Reverend Gretta Vosper appealed General Secretary Ruling 15-001-R. Nora Sanders did not participate in any of the discussion or decision making concerning whether or not to hear the appeal. At the time this matter was considered Toronto Conference did not have a representative on the Executive. The Executive first considered the preliminary objection that the appellant was not directly affected by the Ruling. The objection was dismissed and the Executive proceeded to consider the submissions by the appellant and the respondent with respect to whether or not the appeal meets the grounds for appeal. The Executive concluded it would not hear the appeal as the grounds for an appeal were not met. Reasons for the decision not to hear the appeal were provided to the appellant, Reverend Vosper.

Item 2

Reverend Karen Rodman appealed a decision of London Conference as a result of a review. Reverend Brad Morrison, member of the Executive from London Conference did not participate in the deliberations with respect to whether or not to hear this appeal. Submissions made by Reverend Rodman and London Conference were considered by the Executive and the decision was made not to hear the appeal as it did not meet the grounds for appeal. Reasons for the decision were provided to the parties.

Item 3

Gibsons United Church appealed the decisions of Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery related to the sale of their church. Jon Jessiman, representative to the Executive from British Columbia did not participate in the deliberations with respect to this matter. The Executive considered the submissions of the parties and decided not to hear the appeal as it did not meet the grounds for appeal.

Item 4

Toronto Conference requested General Council to hold a formal hearing to consider whether to place Reverend Gretta Vosper's name on the Discontinued List (Disciplinary). The Sub-Executive of General Council directed the Judicial Committee to hold the hearing and report the results to the Executive of General Council. The Judicial Committee Executive appointed Justice Robert Blair, Reverend Roslyn Campbell, and Reverend Kate Crawford to hold the hearing.

Members of the Judicial Committee

Reverend Margaret McKechney, Acting Chair, Judicial Committee Executive, Saskatchewan Conference

Lynda Goy-Flint, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference

Jon Jessiman, British Columbia

Laurie Joe, Montreal and Ottawa

Steven Longmoore, Maritime Conference

Paul Macklin, Bay of Quinte Conference

Kathleen McCallum, Manitou Conference

Brad Morrison, London Conference

David Smith, Hamilton Conference

Lorna Standingready, All Native Circle Conference

Paul Stott, Toronto Conference

Steve Wilson, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

CONFERENCE RECORDS REVIEW (2012–2015)

Background

The Manual provides:

Oversight of Conferences

E.2.3.1 General

The General Council is responsible for the oversight of the Conferences.

This responsibility includes

(b) reviewing the records of the Conferences.

Past practice has been for the General Council to appoint a committee of Commissioners to review the records of each Conference (including Executive and Sub-Executive) for the previous triennium. The review used to take place over the course of the meeting of the General Council, with the committee reporting its findings by the end of the meeting. For the committee, reviewing these records was a huge time commitment that had the potential to affect their availability to participate fully in the various sessions of the General Council. There is no requirement in *The Manual* that this review take place at the meeting of the General Council.

GC41 set out a process to be followed, which was to appoint a Task Group to review the records with a report to GC42. Subsequent to GC42, and in an effort to continue to simplify the processes for review of Conference records, the records were sent to staff in the General Council Office.

Process

In preparation for the review, Conference Records were submitted electronically in advance of 42nd General Council 2015. All Conference records were received, though one was submitted in hard copy only.

The minutes of each Conference were reviewed.

Findings

The minutes of the Conferences for the triennium concluding August 2015 were reviewed by General Council staff. The minutes of the Conferences are in order. The format of the minutes is appropriate and minutes of the Conferences reflect the work that is being done and is within the scope of the authority of the Conferences.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Structure and Responsibilities

The Archives and History Committee (AHC) is a mandatory standing committee of General Council, which is, according to *The Manual* (Section E4.8.3a), responsible for coordinating and promoting the archival and historical activity of the United Church.

The AHC consists of a Chair, appointed by General Council; two representatives from the Academic Community, also appointed by General Council; one representative from each of the 13 Conferences; the General Secretary or designate; and the General Council Archivist as a resource person. The Executive of the AHC includes the Chair, the General Council Archivist, the General Secretary or designate, and two other members selected from the AHC.

For the first two years of the triennium, the AHC met in person once a year for a day and a half to transact its business. During the last part of the triennium, the AHC met a number of times electronically.

Sub-Committees

There are currently two sub-committees reporting to the Archives and History Committee:

- **Historic Sites:** Wayne Harris (Chair), Julielynn Anderson (MAR), Nichole Vonk (Staff Resource), Dawn Munroe (MAN), and Gerald Hobbs (BC). This Sub-Committee is responsible for updating the “Honouring Our Heritage” website, located at www.ucheritage.ca, and vetting submissions. More will be said later.
- **Artifacts:** Julielynn Anderson (MAR), Sarah Wallace (MAR Conf Archives), Nichole Vonk (Staff Resource), Mary Gooley (TOR). The purpose of this Sub-Committee is to investigate how to manage artifacts from various levels of the church.

The United Church Archives Network

The Network consists of the professional archivists of the United Church: the General Council Archivist (Nichole Vonk) and the Conference Archivists. The five Central Conferences (London, Hamilton, Toronto, Bay of Quinte, and Manitou) have one full-time archivist (Erin Greeno). The General Council Archives and the Archives of the five Central Conferences operate from the same location: 40 Oak Street, Toronto.

The other Conferences—British Columbia, Alberta and Northwest, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, All Native Circle, Montreal and Ottawa, Maritime, and Newfoundland and Labrador—each have a part-time archivist. They are located in a variety of locations: provincial archive facilities, universities, Conference offices.

Work the Archives and History Committee Continued in the 2015–2018 Triennium

Historic Commemorative Programme

The Historic Sites Sub-Committee completed its research into setting up a commemorative programme for The United Church of Canada. During the past triennium, this Sub-Committee

updated and relaunched the website www.ucheritage.ca. At present, there are nine commemorations listed: Old Hay Bay Church; Formation of the United Church; Stella Burry; Peter Jones; Formation of Truro Presbytery; Trinity United Church, Charlottetown; (Annie) May McLachlan; Rev. Daniel Cock; and Rev. David Smith. Please go to the website for complete information on the nominating process.

Artifacts

The Artifacts Sub-Committee will be an ongoing sub-committee.

As the Sub-Committee proceeded with the work that was set out by the AHC, they circulated a survey to the local churches and found that a large number of people are interested in and need help with recording and preserving their artifacts.

Discussions

During the triennium, the AHC discussed the United Church's policy regarding the copying of/access to the Church Registers, and the possibility of space in the General Council Office for displaying and preserving artifacts of national significance to the United Church.

We have also started to study the Archival Network Review that was commissioned by the Archival Network Review Advisory Task Group of The United Church of Canada.

Staffing

A Digital Archives Specialist was hired by the General Council Archives in March 2017. The Digital Archives Specialist assists with the Archive's websites and IT systems, as well as making recommendations for long-term digital preservation. The Digital Archives Specialist also provides some assistance to Conference Archivists.

FULL COMMUNION: ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA AND THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Origin: Executive of the General Council

Executive Summary

In 2016, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada and The United Church of Canada determined that a full communion agreement would provide an opportunity to bear witness to the importance Christian unity in North America, and strengthen the ministry of both of our denominations. This report offers reflections on issues and implications relating to full communion, as background to the proposal that the two denominations undertake a full communion agreement.

The Disciples Canadian Region and the United Church have a long-standing history together. Our relationship spans from local congregational partnerships, to educational and ecumenical endeavours, and includes an unsuccessful union talk that took place between 1969 and 1985. A lasting product of those conversations are joint United-Disciples congregations in Winnipeg and Calgary. Some Disciples clergy serve in United Church congregations and in general church leadership. Theologically, we both have a passion for justice and mission and hold similar “statements of faith.” There are significant differences in governance and the administration of the sacraments, but the Planning Group has discerned that these are not barriers to a full communion relationship. Both denominations are in full communion with the United Church of Christ in the USA; we share global partners through Global Ministries and Church in Mission. An agreement between The United Church of Canada and the Disciples of Christ would “close the triangle” and mark a new era of ecumenical partnership in North America.

Full communion agreements generally rest on five pillars of acceptance and cooperation: common confession of Christ, mutual recognition of members, common celebration of the Lord’s Supper/Holy Communion, mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordered ministers, and common commitment to mission. The two denominations have understood a full communion as a living and growing relationship. We will learn how to live in this covenantal relationship through rich theological conversations, enhanced witness and mission, and diverse spiritual life and worship.

Congregations can embody full communion through shared worship and mission, congregation or clergy exchanges, or shared networks. National, bi-national, and international possibilities include collaboration in global partnership work, response to the challenges of migration, connecting youth and young adult networks, and joint work in the areas of stewardship, human resources, and communications. Along with mutual recognition of ministries, there may be opportunities for partnership in theological education. Many creative possibilities in our relationship will be discovered as we live into our mission and ministry together.

The planning group recognizes challenges as well as opportunities, including institutional capacity, learning to know each other in our present contexts, restrictions on immigration, and the challenges both denominations meet in becoming intercultural, justice-seeking churches.

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls on the followers of Christ to live life in unity for the sake of the world, so “that the world may believe...” (John 17:21). May this journey of full communion be truly transformative and may God lead this journey with divine wisdom and in grace.

Introduction

In 2016, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and The United Church of Canada identified an interest in exploring greater fellowship and potentially a closer relationship between our two denominational bodies. Preliminary conversations suggested there were distinct benefits in greater partnership, not only on the Canadian side of the border, but in our two nations.

In December 2016, a formal meeting of leaders in both denominations took place in Toronto, Canada. Over the course of two days, both sides decided that working towards a full communion relationship is desired. There are, of course, many local, regional, and international implications of such an arrangement, but the leaders determined that this provided an ideal opportunity to bear witness to the importance and power of Christian unity in North America and to strengthen the ministry of both of our denominations. Each denomination named six representatives to explore further the issues involved and prepare a proposal for a full communion agreement. The group met twice in person and in video conferences. This report offers their reflections on issues and implications relating to full communion, as background to the proposal that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, and The United Church of Canada undertake a full communion agreement.

Although many Disciples in the United States may not know The United Church of Canada well, the Canadian Region and the United Church have a long-standing history together. Our relationship spans from local congregational partnerships where United and Disciples have presence together in various towns and cities, to educational (a cooperative agreement with Emmanuel College in Toronto from 1930s–60s), to ecumenical (both founding members of the Canadian Council of Churches), to an unsuccessful union talk which took place between 1969–1985. A lasting and blessed product of those conversations and cooperation are two joint United-Disciples congregations—one in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and one in Calgary, Alberta. In addition, many Canadian Disciples clergy are still educated at United Church seminaries, and some Disciples clergy now serve in United Church congregations and in general church leadership. Theologically, we both have a passion for justice and mission and hold similar “statements of faith.” There are significant differences in governance and the administration of the sacraments, but the Planning Group has discerned that these are not barriers to a full communion relationship.

The United Church of Canada reached a full communion agreement with the United Church of Christ (USA) in October 2015. The relationship between these churches is encouraging a closer

relationship between Global Ministries, including the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and the Church in Mission unit of The United Church of Canada. An agreement between the United Church and the Disciples of Christ would “close the triangle” and mark a new era of ecumenical partnership in North America.

The two denominations have understood a full communion partnership as a living and growing relationship. This partnership doesn’t simply mean that we accept one another. Rather, we embrace each other fully in the witness of Christians, the ministries of the Church, and the mission of God. In this covenantal relationship, we commit to being one Church, not in merger but in God’s gift of unity, that serves the world that God so loves. The two churches will learn how to live in this covenantal relationship through rich theological conversations, enhanced witness and mission, and diverse spiritual life and worship.

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls on the followers of Christ to live life in unity for the sake of the world, so “that the world may believe...” (John 17:21). The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and The United Church of Canada have been committed to the visible unity of the church and one ecumenical movement for decades. As the two denominations enter this closer relationship to participate fully in God’s mission for this world, may God lead this journey with divine wisdom and in grace.

Brief History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada traces its beginnings to the early national period in the United States of America. Disciples point to the work of four founders to describe their origins. All four men had ties to the Presbyterian Church. Barton Stone (1772–1844), the only one born in America, served as the sponsoring pastor for the Cane Ridge revival, drawing 10–30,000 attendees during the Second Great Awakening. The camp meeting revivals brought controversy. Stone withdrew from Presbyterianism and, with others, formed a loose association of congregations resolving “to sink into union with the body of Christ at large.” These congregations took the name *Christian* and gained strength in North Carolina, Southern Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio.

Thomas Campbell (1763–1854) and his son, Alexander (1788–1866), were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who arrived in the United States in 1807 and 1809 respectively. In 1808, Thomas withdrew from the Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania when he was rebuked for serving the Lord’s Supper to Christians not associated with his brand of Presbyterianism. A year later, he formed the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania. Shortly after this event, his family arrived. Alexander, 21 years old, quickly became a leading figure. Members of the Christian Association adopted the name *Disciples*. By 1830, with the help of evangelist Walter Scott (1796–1861), who had arrived from Scotland in 1818, the movement grew rapidly and formed congregations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.

The earliest Disciples congregations included African Americans as members, though Disciples also included members who participated in the enslavement of others. Disciples were able to

hold the church together during the Civil War. Yet, when the Churches of Christ (Non-Instrumental) separated from Disciples in 1906 by arguing that Disciples had become a denomination through the creation of national missionary organizations, the majority of those associated with the schism were located in the South. Black Disciples formed a separate, but cooperating, organizational life in 1917 known as the National Christian Missionary Convention. During 1969, as part of the formal restructuring of the Disciples life, a merger was enacted that brought the National Christian Missionary Convention into the newly established Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The resulting National Convocation continues to meet to discuss special concerns affecting African-American Disciples.

In 1812, Alexander Campbell affirmed believers' baptism by immersion as the proper Christian baptism. This led to a brief (1815–1830) affiliation with Baptists. Disciples disrupted Baptist life by seeking reform and urged Baptists to eschew denominational names in order to unite around the simplicity of the apostolic faith, illustrated by the Disciples commitment to 'no creed but Christ.'

The first signs of these Disciples-like commitments in Canada appeared in the Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) by 1810 in the form of mostly Scotch Baptist connections. Most of these early leaders (John R. Stewart, Alexander Crawford, James Murray, and John Stevenson) had some connection to Scotland. By the 1820s, an American, William W. Ashley, married a Canadian and carried Alexander Campbell's writings to Halifax. During the 1830s, a number of the Scotch Baptist congregations established connections to the Disciples congregation in Halifax. By the 1850s, a more formal association of Disciples congregations emerged in the Maritimes. The first Disciples congregation in Ontario appeared at Cobourg in 1836. By 1943, some twenty-four congregations in Ontario were associated with Disciples. It took a number of decades before Disciples life appeared further west in Canada, in the area of the Prairies.

During the 1820s, Campbell's Disciples and Stone's Christians discovered one another. By 1832, they had worked out a formal union that combined about 22,000 members. This union left a legacy of two names. Present-day congregations are known as "Christian" churches, while their members are called "Disciples." In 1968, the denomination adopted its current name, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In the United States and Canada, Disciples membership stands at around 455,000 (around 274,000 participating members) divided into some 3,300 congregations. Around 10% of Disciples members are African-Americans, with much smaller percentages of Hispanics and various Pacific Asian Disciples. The states of Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Ohio contain about one-third of all North American Disciples. In addition, the church's Common Global Ministries Board (with the United Church of Christ) oversees work among some 2.7 million Indigenous Christians across the world who call themselves Disciples.

Early Disciples hoped to unify the church by restoring the faith and practices of the earliest congregations described in the Bible. For this reason, their worship included the weekly

celebration of the Lord's Supper, open to all who professed Christ. Contemporary Disciples continue this practice. Their early commitment to believers' baptism also continues, though contemporary congregations welcome infant-baptized persons into church membership without rebaptism. Essentially, early Disciples members expressed their commitment to four principles:

- (1) the *Interpretation Principle* represented their commitment to the Bible, primarily for its testimony about Christ, who, as revelation of God, has always represented the ultimate authority for Christian life. Disciples affirmed the role of interpretation in reading the Bible, as public process, informed by the ideas and understanding of the whole of Christianity;
- (2) the *Restoration Principle* emphasized the purity and simplicity of earliest Christianity as guide. Today, Disciples recognize apostolic Christianity possessed far more diversity than earlier Disciples understood, and this principle currently underlines the task of the ecumenical church to understand together the voice of God in the midst of the human voices that surround them;
- (3) the *Ecumenical Principle* stressed their longstanding commitment to church unity; and
- (4) the *Eschatological Principle* pointed to their confidence that God is at work in human history and their belief the church appropriately responds by working toward the realization of the kind of justice that is promised when the reign of God is realized.

Disciples ordained women to ministry as early as the late 1880s. During the late 19th century, leaders among Disciples embraced the scientific spirit that swept American Protestantism after 1870. They fashioned a critical approach to the Bible open to the newest developments in scientific understanding and human knowledge. As Disciples shared this budding "liberal" vision, they began to doubt that any group of Christians, even the ancient Christians, could truly capture the divine message in its entirety. This realization strengthened their historic commitment to ecumenism.

Disciples are perhaps best known for their deep yearning for Christian unity. Disciples often quoted John 17:21, "that they may all be one...so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Both the United States and Canadian Churches are founding members of the World Council of Churches (1948). Canadians were founding members in the Canadian Council of Churches (1944), and the Disciples in the United States were founding members of both the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ (1910) and the National Council of Churches (1950). Disciples have served key leadership roles in all these organizations. In the late 1980s, Disciples and the United Church of Christ formed an ecumenical partnership. Together, they have helped to shape Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), the partnership of nine denominations that grew out of the Consultation of Church Union (COCU).

Today, Disciples sponsor seventeen colleges and universities and four theological seminaries. Each of these schools is diverse, with the vast numbers of students coming from religious affiliations other than Disciples. They also maintain support for three "foundation" houses

located at the University of Chicago, Vanderbilt University, and in Claremont, California. These houses support Disciples masters and doctoral students in non-Disciples institutions.

Brief History of The United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada came into existence as a denomination in 1925, through a union of the Methodist Church, Canada, the Congregationalist Churches, and about two-thirds of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. These three denominations were joined by a number of local union churches or congregations that had formed, particularly in Saskatchewan, in expectation of such a union.

The driving forces for church union were largely practical, not theological. Chief among them was the challenge of finding the resources, both of finances and personnel, to serve a Canadian population growing rapidly in the early twentieth century, especially on the Prairies, as a result of heavy immigration.

Another key motivation was the conviction that a united Christian Church could help produce a “Christian Canada.” The primary supporters of church union in all three denominations would have described themselves as liberal evangelicals; they held a strong attachment to both evangelism and social service. It is not accidental that these three denominations were key players in the Moral and Social Reform Council, founded in 1908, and its successor body, the Social Service Council of Canada (1912). Advocates of church union saw a “united church” as a stronger force to tackle social ills in early twentieth century Canada. These advocates were heavily represented among moderate Social Gospellers, but church union had significant support in both the radical and the conservative wings of that movement.

Practical motivations notwithstanding, these uniting denominations also shared a conviction that the lack of unity in Christianity was a scandal needing to be overcome. They saw church union as a step in that direction. John 17:21, “that they may all be one,” served as a guiding scriptural text and underlying theological rationale for this enterprise.

While most Methodists and Congregationalists entered the new United Church, church union proved sharply divisive among Canada’s Presbyterians. Noticeable opposition in the Presbyterian Church was present from shortly after church union talks began in 1904. It grew in strength and intensity after the completion of a draft Basis of Union in 1908. In 1925 about two-thirds of the Presbyterian membership and about 70 percent of its clergy came into the United Church, those not entering remaining as a continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Two things marked the period from 1925 to 1939. The initial years saw a consolidation of the church union process as the denomination put together new pastoral charges, worked out governance details, and produced both a hymnal and a service book. The Great Depression also dominated these years. The United Church had many congregations in the southern Prairies, an area buffeted doubly by low commodity prices and severe drought.

The two decades after World War II saw immense growth for the United Church by almost every statistical measurement, e.g., candidates for ministry, the formation of new congregations, church membership, Sunday school enrollment. The mid-1960s to the present has seen a gradual but steady moving away from participation in organized religion in Canada; indeed, Canada could now be rightly described as an increasingly secularized society. The United Church has, along with many other mainline denominations, seen a steady decline since the late 1960s in all those statistical measuring points where it had seen growth in the immediate post-World War II era.

The 1970s saw the first wave of what would be a dramatic increase in the number of women being ordained. While the United Church approved the ordination of women in 1936, relatively few women were ordained prior to the early 1970s. In 1988, the United Church declared, after bitter debate across the denomination, that no impediment existed to the ordination or commissioning of self-declared gays and lesbians.

Similar to other Canadian denominations that operated residential schools for Canada's Indigenous population, the United Church has apologized to that Indigenous population for its role in the residential schools and also for its participation in efforts to destroy Indigenous cultures, a goal of both the missionary efforts among Canada's Indigenous population and the residential schools. As part of its commitment to reconciliation, including with its own Indigenous membership, in 2012 the United Church added the words "All My Relations" (in Mohawk) to the United Church crest. This action, and the apologies by the United Church, stand within a broader effort by Canadian governments and Canadian society to engage in a reconciliation process with Canada's Indigenous peoples.

From its beginning, the United Church has committed itself to ecumenism, declaring in the 1930s that it saw itself as a united and a uniting church. The 1960s probably represent the high point of the United Church's lived commitment to ecumenism. In 1968, a significant portion of the Evangelical United Brethren denomination in Canada joined with the United Church at the same time as its American counterpart joined the Methodist Church in the United States. Discussions toward church union with the Anglican Church of Canada began in 1943. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) joined those talks in 1969. The Anglicans withdrew from the conversation in 1975. Conversations between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and The United Church of Canada continued until 1985 but ended without reaching the hoped-for goal. In recent years the United Church entered into a full communion agreement with the United Church of Christ and mutual recognition of ministry agreements with several other denominations.

The report of a "Commission on World Mission" to the 22nd General Council (1966) signalled a significant rethinking of the United Church's approach to world mission and to its understanding of Christianity's relationship to other world religions. Among other things, the Commission recommended that "[t]he church should recognize that God is creatively and redemptively at work in the religious life of all [hu]mankind." That rethinking led to a new

emphasis on interfaith relations and subsequent reports, beginning in 1997, on United Church relationships with Judaism, Islam, Indigenous Spiritualities, and Hinduism.

Context: Why Now?

The context to which we bring this conversation of full communion is one of an increasingly diverse society, rural depopulation, expanding secularism, and in the case of The United Church of Canada, an incredible amount of denominational change. As with a full communion agreement, this is not a backdoor to the union; it is an attempt to find common ground in which to plant seeds for God's mission and ministry.

Because the Disciples of Christ has an existing presence in Canada, it is important that both denominations are clear that this is a partnership not an amalgamation. We must show that together we are stronger and able to continue the work of Christ's church in our varied communities while maintaining our own unique identities.

Specifically, in the Canadian context, our two denominations share a common land and social context. We may even think that we are the only progressive voice in our communities. A full communion agreement can benefit both denominations in supporting one another, possibly sharing resources at all levels of the church, giving congregations permission to reach out to one another on common issues or projects when in the past our differences might have kept us apart.

Although both denominations are distinct entities within the one body of Christ, we recognize a number of commonalities that encourage us to pursue greater collaboration and partnership:

- Our ministries are rooted in the gospel imperative to work for justice, personally but more importantly systemically;
- Mission is at the heart of who we are as Christ's church. We are aware of the centrality of mission to our identity both globally and locally. We are likewise critically cognizant of the damaging impact of colonialism on our shared involvement in the world, and therefore a renewed emphasis and intentionality to live and interact differently with our global partners. We also repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery;
- We are both engaging diverse heritages and changing overall contexts and are challenged by the question "how do we speak and move with integrity in this new landscape?";
- Mission and partnership are part of the important, reconciling interfaith work in which we are both actively engaged. We recognize that we live within a landscape of religious pluralism and that as Christians, we are not the center of the universe. We share a common cause in the desire to live into the equity of all faiths and find ways to partner across the spectrum for the greater good;
- God is working in ways that have humbled both denominations and have called us to seek greater collaboration across the body of Christ, living into the call to be one body, and to seek unity not uniformity;

- In the local context we are already working together: we share two joint United Church-Disciples of Christ pastorates (Campbell-Stone United, Calgary, and Broadway Disciples United, Winnipeg); in many rural and urban settings where the Disciples of Christ and the United Church exist within close proximity our congregations have been working together in public witness and service for decades;
- We face similar challenges and strategies which include but are not limited to: the challenge of generational splits; the challenge/opportunity of new technology and communication patterns; the opportunity of engaging immigrant and marginalized communities, recognizing the diversity of the gifts they bring into the body of Christ;
- We are both in full communion relationships with the United Church of Christ in the USA;
- We share global partners through Global Ministries and Church in Mission;
- We have gifts to share with respect to the justice work we have done independently of one another: the Disciples of Christ with respect to anti-racism/pro-reconciliation in the life of the church, and the United Church with respect to full inclusion and celebration of LGBTQ+ in the life of the church; and
- We recognize that being Christian today is counter-cultural, and that there are abundant blessings and challenges as we engage the rich diversity of belief, worship, theology, and Christology exhibited in different generations and cultures. We are committed to being open to the movement of the Spirit as we work to greater inclusivity, acceptance, and collaboration.

Many of our congregations are in a rural context where they are the only Protestant denomination in the community. Those of other denominations may or may not feel welcome or comfortable. The more we can identify our commonalities, the greater the chance that those who feel isolated in their faith may cross the threshold and find a supportive Disciples or United Church community.

The Bigger Picture: Why “Now” Is Exactly the Right Time for These Talks

The immediate context out of which we have emerged, namely, the “modern” period, worked under a different set of principles and realities than those we are embedded in today. A time of building and reinforcing institutions and ideologies within a technological framework vastly different from today, the recent past celebrated the triumphalism of Christianity in identity silos that provided little opportunity to truly engage in the partnership models we explore today. We mistakenly believed that we were all successful doing our own things in our own denominations and whatever unions we dreamt of and pursued were perceived to be about compromise and competition rather than collaboration, assimilation rather than mutuality and celebration of difference. We, perhaps, were unable to conceive of this kind of partnership in our recent past.

The future for the church in North America is uncertain at best and bleak at worst, as our nations appear to continue on the journey of public secularization. At its bleakest, many denominations will merge with great compromise, hurt, loss, and some measure of humiliation

until there are only a handful with the resources to continue to function. At its best, the continued persistence of denominations is called into question as more and more post-modern thinking Christians question their validity in light of the call to Christian unity. The continued erosion of denominations leads to a weakened universal church in North America with few able to muster the energy and resources to effect significant transformation in the public sphere, focusing instead, on survival or at least how to have dignity in death. To wait until some undecided point in the future to have these courageous conversations may indeed be too late.

The context we must embrace at this point in our shared life together is that the church is not ours but belongs to the Divine who uses as much of it as has heart and openness to be so used. As such, we are stewards of the resources—human, infrastructure, wealth, creativity, compassion—that have been entrusted to our care. In this age of lightning-fast technological change, communications that we could not have dreamed of 20 years ago, and seemingly limitless information at our fingertips 24/7, we have an unprecedented opportunity to be leaders in the restoration of Christian unity to the heart of the church and in the minds and hearts of the children of God under our care. We do so not for our own survival, but so that the gospel of Jesus Christ might be lived out anew, impacting and transforming communities and lives in ways we could not have accomplished in the past. We have always been called to be one body; now is the time to believe it and live it.

To answer the question, “why now?” we ask, “if not now, when?” Our young adults and mature adults are already exploring options to be church differently in this post-modern age. Many of the systems that served us well in the past are in the process of becoming obsolete and something new must take their place. The demands of ministry and mission in the world are infinitely more complex while financial and other resources are reduced. Why would we wait any longer to embrace the call to be partners, joined together more intentionally to accomplish the task of being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world?

Full Communion

What does an ecumenical partnership or “full communion” mean? These terms do not define a merger between different denominations. An ecumenical partnership emphasizes more a style of pragmatic unity in terms of witness, service, fellowship, worship, and the proclamation of a common faith. Both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and The United Church of Canada each currently have a full communion agreement with the United Church of Christ. These ecumenical partnerships or “full communion agreements” generally rest on five pillars of acceptance and cooperation. Each of these pillars is rooted in scripture and based upon theological understandings reached and explored by both *COCU Consensus: In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting* (1984) and the *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* document (1982).

The Five Pillars of Full Communion

- (1) “Common Confession of Christ.” This pillar is built upon the common faith shared by both churches, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world to God’s self, and is the One in whom “we live and move and have our being” (2 Cor. 5:19; Acts 17:28). In an

ecumenical partnership, both churches covenant to be mutually accountable in their witness to Christ in the world today.

- (2) “Mutual Recognition of Members.” Both churches believe that we have much to learn from the expressions of faith found in other Christian communities. In this second affirmation of full communion, both the United Church and the Disciples of Christ recognize and affirm one another’s baptisms, and also affirm the members of one another’s churches. In full communion, both churches would agree to the “transfer of membership” between their local congregations “by letter.” Neither church would give up its own approaches to the practice of baptism or church membership. Instead, their commitment to one another represents a desire to express their commitment to the fact that any differences in practices in this area should not divide them as churches.
- (3) “Common Celebration of the Lord’s Supper/Holy Communion.” Since these churches confess Christ in common, and since they recognize one another’s baptism and accept one another’s members in each other’s congregations, it naturally follows that they should encourage congregations to cross borders where they might be geographically close to one another and to share worship and communion together. Both churches celebrate an open table, open to all who are connected to Christ, and both recognize the table calls us into community and toward a commitment to justice for all God’s children.
- (4) “Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordered Ministers.” In full communion, the two churches would affirm one another’s ordered ministries as belonging to the one ministry of Jesus Christ. Such ministers in one church will be recognized as ministers in the other church. Each may serve, when invited, as minister to the other. Though ministerial credentials are immediately recognized, each minister will need to go through the standard processes established by each denomination to gain official “standing” within the denomination.
- (5) “Common Commitment to Mission.” This fifth pillar of full communion between our two churches recognizes that mission is not an option for the church; rather it, like unity, is part of its very essence. When churches are not engaged in mission, they cease to exist as a church. As our two denominations enter into full communion, we will explore ways of supporting each other in God’s mission in our own countries and around the world.

The Local Congregation as the Incarnation of Full Communion

One of the great gifts of the Christian faith is the knowledge that God became one of us. The incarnation is a demonstration that God cares for us enough to be one of us. Another insight given to the Christian faith is that the church is the Body of Christ, and as such is another manifestation of the incarnation.

Within The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, full communion is an important aspect of our witness to the world about God’s desire for us to “be one, so that the world might believe” (John 17). However, there is a tendency within the ethos of the church to think of full communion as something “out there” or “up there,” rather than being an action with local currency. In other words, one might say that

full communion needs an incarnation of sorts to bring what might seem to be an ethereal concept into a living, breathing reality.

This concept will become real when congregations actually embody full communion. Both communions have within their local worship a faith-filled recitation of the elements of their faith in the proclamation of shared truth. *A New Creed* of The United Church of Canada begins with the words “We are not alone, we live in God’s world.” These words tend to bring the transcendent quality of God’s existence into the physical everyday world in which our people live. However, these same words might also have a reference to our sisters and brothers the planet over, and a particular reference to those denominations with whom we share a close walk of faith through ecumenical bonds. As the Preamble to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) puts it “we enter into newness of life and are made one with the whole people of God.”

In order to help incarnate the oneness of the church, we recommend that congregations be invited to consider the practice of reciting the statement of faith from their own denomination alongside the statement of faith of those other communions with whom they share a formal ecumenical relationship. The worshipping life of Broadway Disciples United Church (a shared ministry in Winnipeg) was enriched by rotating our statements of faith along with the historic Nicene-Chalcedonian Creed and the Apostles’ Creed. This would not be limited to The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, but would include statements of faith from other communions with whom they share this ministry, such as the United Church of Christ (USA), the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. It might also be possible to develop membership/confirmation materials based upon these shared affirmations of faith to learn more about what we share and to value how God has made us unique. Neighbouring congregations could develop studies for Lent or Advent exploring our respective and historic creeds. This would be a major and noticeable move within the life of local congregations to show that something new is happening within the life of the church. As Isaiah 43:19 reports God’s intention, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

It is important to note that both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and The United Church of Canada extend an open invitation to the Lord’s Supper. “All are welcome” is a common ground in which the Disciples of Christ and the United Church endeavor to mirror God’s invitation to a ministry of healing and wholeness to the world. Both denominations affirm an open table where we come together in unity with our Christian brothers and sisters to remember Jesus’ life, death and resurrection and that he will come again. For Disciples, a weekly tradition of sharing the Table is part of their Christian nurture, and it might be commended to sisters and brothers within the United Church. United Church congregations are invited to remember the affirmation made by The United Church of Canada following the adoption of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper no. 111, World Council of Churches, 1982) in the wider church, in which the United Church urged an exploration of the move towards a weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Whether a weekly

part of Christian nurture or “[a] taste [of the] mystery of God’s great love for us” to be enjoyed on special occasions, in the words of *A Song of Faith*, “the open table speaks of the shining promise of barriers broken and creation healed.”

Our two denominations also differ in their usual practice of baptism. To bring these varying perspectives within the life of the local congregations, one might teach the gifts of “infant” baptism and “believer’s” baptism again, as part of membership/confirmation classes—to place these perspectives within the setting of the ecumenical Church and help us come to a deeper understanding of God’s grace and love.

While we share much in common, our differences can offer one another new perspectives. One of the gifts of The United Church of Canada has been its placement within one country with a localized and incarnational sense of mission and ministry. One of the gifts of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is that because it is not rooted in only one country, it has some sense of its allegiance to the whole world.

Our existing shared ministries, Campbell-Stone United Church (Calgary) and Broadway Disciples United Church (Winnipeg), are invited to tell their stories, including the gifts and challenges of worshiping and serving together, to help others imagine ways for our partnership to become a living, breathing reality.

Where congregations of our two denominations are close geographically, we encourage shared worship or pulpit exchanges and shared mission projects such as refugee sponsorship or shared studies. Including one another in correspondence about special events and regular programs and activities will help relationships develop and open possibilities to imagine new ways to be the church together. Where congregations are at a distance geographically or in different countries, a relationship could develop through social media, exchanges between groups from congregations and longer exchanges between clergy. As the United Church moves to clusters and networks, neighboring Disciples congregations could be invited to be a part of clusters and Disciples and the United Church of Christ (USA) congregations could be included in networks where there are shared passions for mission and ministry.

It is our belief that without some local incarnation of full communion with methods such as those outlined above, and others, as discovered within the life of our shared faith, that our ecumenical partnership will be wanting in the crucial life-lived of our local congregations.

During Vatican II there was the talk of *aggiornamento*—a new, refreshing wind of the spirit blowing through the life of the church. This putting a word to the name for renewal helped the church grasp what was being attempted. Perhaps for The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, we might adopt the Western Canadian notion of the Chinook wind as blowing warmth within our lives as people of faith.

National, Bi-national, and International Possibilities for Partnership

Our two churches have long understood engagement in God's mission in the world to be a primary responsibility of our ministries. In its framework document *Mending the World*, the United Church affirms that "the churches are called to make common cause with individuals and institutions of good will who are committed to compassion, peace, and justice in the world.... God, who loves this world, works for its mending, and calls the church to make this work its first priority." Thus, the church has committed itself to a vision of ecumenism that is world-centred, understood as "whole world ecumenism," calling us to work in partnership with all who seek the health and well-being of the whole creation.

Similarly, the Disciples of Christ have stated in *The Church for Disciples of Christ: Seeking to be Truly Church Today* that "[t]he church exists for the sake of praising God and participating in God's mission in and for all the world." The Disciples of Christ also affirm that it is the world that God so loves and in which the church finds its purpose and mission to exist as a faith community. The Disciples clearly understand that God has given unity as God's gift to all followers of Christ, and in unity, Christians must work together to bring just peace to the world.

Both denominations have strong national and international program work and relationships that may be enhanced through full communion. This includes some global partnership work in which both churches are already involved, such as membership in the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of the Reformed Churches (WCRC), and the Global Christian Forum (GFC), and global partners who relate to both the Global Ministries, which belongs to the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ (USA), and the Church in Mission unit of The United Church of Canada. In this area many possibilities exist for further cooperation, and where some joint work is already underway. Staff members of Global Ministries and Church in Mission have met to share their work and review avenues for increased collaboration. These avenues also include particular global issues where we may support each other in our education and advocacy, such as peace and justice in the Middle East, North and South Korea, and Colombia.

Another area where collaboration with both national and international dimensions may be possible is a response to the challenges of migration, immigration, and refugee issues. The Migrant Church Task Group of the United Church is addressing the ways that migration is re-shaping the church. It is endeavoring to develop structures and processes that will enable the church to be more welcoming and supportive of people migrating to Canada. The Church in Mission unit includes staff working in the area of refugee sponsorship, settlement, and support, as well as advocacy on immigration and refugee issues. The Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM) addresses similar concerns, including the particular challenges of immigration in the present United States context. Refugee and Immigration Ministries equips the church to respond to Jesus' call to welcome the stranger through refugee resettlement, ministering to immigrants and advocacy. RIM provides resources for local congregations, legal consultations, and connections to hands-on mission work. In the rapidly changing political current, this office has promptly responded to certain U.S. policy changes. The Disciples have also provided legal services to the church and community members with Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel,

which helps congregations protect their rights, understand their options, and work through the U.S. immigration system.

Significant aspects of refugee and immigration issues in our two countries are impacting each other at this point, and the potential for joint work on this issue is great. In addition to the work that members of both churches in Canada might do in our own context, there may be opportunities for joint advocacy and action that would include the concerns of both countries, as well as for learning from each other about best practices in our work.

A range of program work offers opportunities for cooperation, for learning from each other, and for action together. The youth and young adult networks and ministries of both churches might meet together or attend each other's regional or national gatherings (e.g., the United Church's Rendez-vous event and the joint National Youth Event of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ). Opportunities for learning and collaboration may arise from meetings or other connections of those working in the areas of stewardship, human resources, and communications. These might include ideas for sharing or joint production of some resources or shared planning of educational events. Collaborations in communication could include partnering on social media, a joint website, or an agreement to include newsfeeds from ecumenical partners on each denomination's website.

Possibilities for resource-sharing may be numerous. Many of the justice issues in which both churches are engaged may involve the development of resources (and in some cases campaigns) that could invite collaboration. As well, those developing liturgy and producing worship resources might work together on some projects or share with each other resources created by members of their particular denomination.

One of the most important (and complex) outcomes of a full communion agreement will be the development of a process for implementing mutual recognition of ministries. This will involve national and regional offices in both denominations, as well as local congregations open to the possibilities of being served by a minister from the partner denomination. The bi-national nature of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and the already existing flow of people across our borders suggests that as these processes are put into place new and creative opportunities for ministry together may be opened.

As well, ministry personnel may find ways to meet with and learn from each other, such as through joint continuing education events. Theological colleges related to each denomination could also be encouraged to participate in the development of relationships arising from full communion. A meeting of Deans and Principals could identify possibilities for partnership or exchange that would enhance students' education.

As we journey together in the spirit of full communion, other ways of accompanying each other in the challenges and joys we face could be explored. The appointment of representatives to each other's regional or national governing bodies, meetings, assemblies, and other significant gatherings, would recognize that a full communion relationship implies a new dimension of

accountability to one another as we make decisions about the life and work of each of our churches. Supporting connections among local faith communities and ministries with similar contexts and commitments (e.g., Indigenous ministries, outreach ministries, migrant or ethnic ministries, African-American and Afro-Canadian communities, etc.) would be one way to bring the resources of partnership and accompaniment to local communities.

One of the marks of full communion is mutual recognition of members. What are the practical implications of this commitment? A national implementation team could consider situations where such recognition would have an impact and processes for giving it meaning. Examples include individuals participating in the other denomination for a period of time, or Disciples members in Canada attending the United Church in a community with no Disciples congregation, or United Church members who live part of the year in the United States and choose to participate actively in a Disciples congregation.

Finally, it will be important to be aware of the implications of our partnership for our involvement in wider ecumenical and interfaith networks. Might we encourage the networks of ecumenical officers in both countries to meet together on occasion? How does our involvement in the ecumenical and interfaith councils of Canada and the United States (as well as globally) inform our relationship, and what do we bring to those bodies as full communion partners? How will we share with each other the gifts, resources, and challenges of our ecumenical and interfaith engagement?

The energizing and creative possibilities in our relationship are many, and others will be discovered only as we live into a deeper understanding and vision of our mission and ministry together.

Challenges to Full Communion

Any Full Communion agreement between denominations presents challenges as well as opportunities. That these challenges are shared by the partner churches indicates that both have much to gain through increased collaboration.

Institutional Capacity

Both denominations face a future of declining resources and a decreased ability to carry out the full range of mission and ministry activities, including ecumenical work. Both denominational offices are likely to become smaller, with fewer staff and less funding. In the United Church much institutional time and energy has been and will be devoted to major changes in the church's governance, structure and funding. This may affect not just commitment to full communion at the national level, but enthusiasm in local communities of faith to work alongside their full communion partners in Canada and across the border.

Knowing Each Other

The Disciples of Christ congregations in the United States may know very little about The United Church of Canada. In Canada, United Church and Disciples communities of faith may know each other if they are in proximity. Otherwise, it is doubtful if the more numerous United Church

congregations have much familiarity with the Disciples. As well, some Canadian Disciples may still think of the United Church in terms of the end of talks in the 1980s. An increased knowledge of each denomination's full communion partner, at local and regional as well as national levels, is essential to a rich relationship and affirmation of both churches' ecumenical visions. Presenting the full communion agreement to both partners must include upholding that such an agreement is not a "backdoor" to union. The local contexts of each partner church are not seen as incidental, but rather as central, to their identities, and each denomination has been called to God's mission and ministry in its own distinct location and context.

Immigration

In recent years Canada has tightened visa requirements for foreign clergy being admitted to Canadian churches. In the United States, restrictions on immigration are increasingly common. A full communion agreement, with its mutual recognition of ministries and embrace of mobility between the two partner denominations, may encounter obstacles to the movement of ministry personnel across borders.

Diversity

Both the United Church and the Disciples of Christ are, as North American denominations, predominantly white in their makeup, although both are committed to an intercultural vision. Yet the worldwide church is shifting its center of gravity to the global South; by 2050 white, non-Hispanic Christians will be only one-fifth to one-sixth of the world's Christian believers, while both the United States and Canada will see increases in the non-white proportion of their populations. Although the dynamics of race, ethnicity, language and culture are different in Canada and the United States, both denominations must grapple with how to move from their current base into becoming more intercultural, during a period that will likely see resistance to these shifts in racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural makeup.

Justice

Justice is an essential part of our respective identities. Both the United Church and the Disciples of Christ are known to have a deep passion for justice. Both churches heed the biblical mandate, "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The two denominations may explore means of collaboration and cooperation across borders when called on to denounce injustice and oppression. As both denominations consider justice in society and the world, it is vital not to forget justice in the Church. There are concerns of a "take over" when it comes to numbers, reputation and the size of the respective churches in Canada. It is important to be cognizant of the concern that "mission" has different connotations in both countries, especially for Indigenous persons. The term "mission" for some brings irredeemable memories. Opportunities to make full communion a reality in global missions and ecumenical relations and activities need to be explored.

Conclusion

Movements of faith always involve openness to the Spirit. The Planning Group offers the hope that this full communion agreement might be led by the Spirit. The two denominations should

put in place structures to allow the experience of full communion to grow into deeper relationships. This will mean intentional efforts to develop opportunities to learn, to worship and to engage together at denominational, regional, and local levels. While structures seem contrary to the experience of movements, in fact all movements require organizational attention. Most importantly, structures enable this full communion agreement to keep before the churches the vision of the prayer of Jesus “that all may be one” and through them the world might be blessed.

The Planning Group believes this journey of full communion may be an opening to something truly transformative for us and for others.

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FAITHFUL DECISION-MAKING ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Origin: Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry

The Issue

General Council 42 ANW3 directed the General Secretary, General Council, to “engage the whole church in a process of consultation, review and discernment about the social justice ministries and public witness of The United Church of Canada,” with a focus on the exploration of such topics as the following:

- How the church most faithfully engages questions of social justice
- The importance of social justice to our faithfulness
- The dangers and possible failures in this ministry
- The criteria, guidelines, and principles that might help guide the church to...most effectively witness to God’s kingdom (kin-dom) and build up the body of Christ

The resolution was based on a hypothesis that while social justice work is “seen as one of the defining characteristics of The United Church of Canada...people who fundamentally support the social justice ministry of the Church often have legitimate questions about...[social justice] decisions, how they are made, what the Church is trying to do when it makes them, and whether there were different approaches that could have resulted in more faithful outcomes.”

The resolution was further based on the assertion that “it is important that social justice work be done with care, and that the principles on which the church engages this work be clear, transparent, widely understood and carefully grounded in our theology and ethics.”

The Process

The above resolution, which originated in Alberta and Northwest (ANW) Conference, was referred to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC-PMM) and the Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda (PC-G&A). PC-PMM took the lead on responding to ANW3 with representation on its advocacy working group from PC-G&A. The working group undertook these three tasks in fulfilling its mandate: it established the consultation process; it reviewed the findings from the consultation; and finally, it discerned the meaning of the consultation findings and framed recommendations arising out of these findings. This document reflects the working group’s discernment activity; it highlights and reflects upon the consultation findings that the group considers most significant and makes a series of recommendations.

In establishing and managing the first part of the project—the consultation/research phase—the working group members’ primary objective was to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, so that ultimately when they were in the process of discerning the meaning of the research, they could be confident that their discernment was based on scientifically derived evidence, not anecdote.

In seeking to ensure what researchers call “validity” in the results, the working group aimed to ask, in research parlance, the “right” questions of the “right” people. The “right” questions were deemed to be these:

- What is the importance of social justice to our faithfulness?
- What are the characteristics of social justice decision-making in the church?
- Which criteria, guidelines, and principles might help guide the church as it goes about making faithful social justice decisions?

The “right” people were identified as anyone at all who might be considered a United Church of Canada social justice and public witness stakeholder, including the following:

- United Church of Canada-based stakeholders
 - United Church General Council 42 commissioners, including young adult commissioners/observers
 - General Council Executive members
 - People representing United Church financial interests, such as those related to the United Church Foundation and Treasury Funds, and so on
 - United Church social justice/public witness initiators (i.e., people who have put forth social justice/public witness motions at GC40, 41, 42)
 - Members of United Church advocacy networks, such as the Palestine/Israel network, the Mining Justice network, the Living into Right Relations network
 - Indigenous and migrant church representatives
 - Church people in local congregations
- Non-United Church of Canada-based stakeholders
 - United Church partners—Canadian and global partners
 - United Church of Christ representatives

Further to this, in seeking to ensure what researchers call “reliability” in the results, that is, among other things, accuracy and representativeness, the working group made a number of decisions.

It chose to use an independent, outside research firm (Jane Armstrong Research Associates) to design and implement a methodology for the consultation. For information about Armstrong Research, visit www.armstrongresearch.com.

The group chose to employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, an approach that would help to ensure further reliability of the research, since each methodology produces findings that are like checks and balances to the other.

Finally, the group chose sampling methods for recruiting research participants that were designed to produce results that were as representative as possible. And in the end, even though some Conferences participated more enthusiastically than others in some aspects of the research, the overall response rates were sufficiently high to yield reliable results.

Similarly, although caution must always be exercised when interpreting results based on small sample sizes (such as the sample of 156 noted below), the overall findings taken together produce a meaningful picture from which conclusions may be drawn.

For further information about the consultation design and completion results, as well as comprehensive reports on all of the consultation findings, please see the appendices to this document. To help make sense of the appendices, please take note of the following.

The consultation design called for three phases of research:

- Phase one: qualitative research (telephone interviews) with a small sample of what we have called “Wider Church Participants,” that is, people representing all of the above social justice and public witness stakeholders (except for people in local congregations)
- Phase two: quantitative research (online survey) with a large sample of Wider Church Participants as defined above
- Phase three: quantitative research (hard copy survey) with a large sample of what we have called “People in the Pews,” that is, people from local congregations

This above design resulted in our conducting three separate studies during January through April 2017:

- Two studies—one qualitative (n of 22) and one quantitative (n of 156)—with Wider Church Participants
- One study—quantitative only (n of 532)—with People in the Pews

The appendices contain the results to the three studies in the form of two reports:

- One written report that summarizes the findings of the qualitative research with Wider Church Participants.
- One largely graphic report that combines and compares the results of the quantitative research with both Wider Church Participants and People in the Pews.

Significant Findings

What is the importance of social justice to our faithfulness?

Overall, one finding persists throughout the consultation results, including those from both the qualitative and quantitative research: the high level of importance that all stakeholders assign to the church’s social justice and public witness work.

The qualitative research with Wider Church Participants elicited comments such as these:

- Pursuing social justice is an integral part of our faith
- This is completely what we are about
- As a denomination that follows the gospel, social justice is our very essence
- If we are not doing social justice, then what is the point
- A commitment to social justice (putting faith into action and focusing more on what we do than what we believe) is why I am a member of the United Church

The quantitative research with both Wider Church Participants and People in the Pews validated what was expressed in the qualitative research. Respondents in both samples say that the United Church's denominational involvement in social justice is important to their faith and, indeed, that it is important to them to belong to a church that is actively involved in social justice. In the data, we also find a great deal of enthusiasm: respondents are more likely to say that the church's social justice involvement is "very" rather than just "somewhat" important. This is especially true of Wider Church Participants.

The current findings echo observations gathered in 2011 when The United Church of Canada conducted the Identity Survey among national samples of 7,448 people from United Church congregations and 493 United Church youth. At that time, social justice pursuits were considered by both samples to be among the most important things the denomination could be engaging in; and belonging to a congregation that turned faith into action through social justice was one of people's top-rated priorities as well. Further to this, when people in both samples were asked about renewal of the church in the 21st century, the majority chose a social justice path, agreeing with the statement "God has important work for the United Church, and the United Church is uniquely equipped to do it."

What are the characteristics of social justice decision-making in the church?

In looking to answer this question, both the qualitative and quantitative research began with an exploration of people's familiarity and satisfaction with the United Church's social justice processes and activities. In a more direct attempt to answer the question, the quantitative research also asked Wider Church Participants about their perceptions of the *image* of social justice in the church.

On the matter of familiarity, both the qualitative and quantitative research showed that Wider Church Participants are generally familiar with all aspects of social justice in the church—the decision-making process, the decisions made, and the implementation of decisions—although we do note that the quantitative research reveals Wider Church Participants to be more "somewhat" than "very" familiar with all aspects. As for People in the Pews, they are considerably less familiar with all aspects of social justice in the church—the decision-making process, the decisions made, and the implementation of decisions.

On the topic of satisfaction with social justice in the church, the qualitative research with Wider Church Participants did not yield a strong degree of consensus. However, from the many different perspectives that were expressed vis-à-vis satisfaction, as well as other topics, the qualitative research did provide a flavour for the wide variety of views that are held in the church. And as we expected it would, the quantitative research served to quantify the extent to which these views are held.

The quantitative research, which was designed to produce, as much as possible, an accurate rendering of the views of social justice and public witness stakeholders in general, showed that majorities of people in both samples of Wider Church Participants and People in the Pews are satisfied that the United Church's social justice decision-making process generally results in

appropriate decisions and that, to a slightly lesser degree, these decisions are implemented appropriately. However, the quantitative research results show that satisfaction in both groups is more lukewarm than enthusiastic. Also, it is notable that on the specific question of implementation, a significant minority of Wider Church Participants (one-quarter) are not satisfied; and a significant minority of People in the Pews (three in ten) decline to make an assessment (perhaps because of their lack of familiarity, as described above.)

In the results to an “image” question that was asked of just Wider Church Participants, we find that a majority agree that many positive features characterize the decision-making process, for example, that it is alert to emerging issues, fact-based and research-based, among other things. A majority also *disagree* with the *negative* notion that the process is unsuited to the realities of today’s church. However, on the other hand, a majority agree that the process is bureaucratic. And people are divided on whether the church’s decision-making vests too much power in too few people, oversimplifies complex issues, is radical in its outlook, pays insufficient attention to the opinions of undecided people, and is hard for ordinary people to get their proposals brought forward.

Which criteria, guidelines, and principles might help guide the church as it goes about making faithful social justice decisions?

Although the qualitative research unearthed a number of different perspectives on social justice in the United Church, including the principles on which the church should make decisions, the quantitative research measured the *extent* to which different positions are held, thus suggesting some important trends and themes.

On that note, then, here is what we found in the quantitative research results about people’s preferences regarding the criteria, guidelines, and principles that they believe should be “very important” in guiding the church in social justice decision-making.

Most notably, we see that of the 15 principles offered for assessment, the same three principles emerge as priorities for both Wider Church Participants and People in the Pews. Both samples put these three principles, although in different order, at the top of their list:

- A dedication to making social justice decisions that reflect The United Church of Canada’s core convictions to love God and neighbour, and to respond to the call to be participants in the healing of creation
- A dedication to speaking out, when others are mostly silent, on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized people in our society¹

¹ This wording is changed in the recommendations at the end of this report from the wording the research tested. The research tested the overall principle of “speaking out” using, regrettably, the phrase “on behalf of” instead of “with.” We recognize that speaking “on behalf of” is a more paternalistic and thereby less faithful approach than speaking “with.”

- An openness when making social justice decisions to hear from all the diverse voices that make up our church, including people from different racial, cultural, economic, and age groups, as well as regions, community sizes, and abilities²

Given the disparity we have seen in the views of Wider Church Participants and People in the Pews on some other topics, it is fascinating—and promising—that on this important question about what should guide the church in its social justice decision-making, both groups share the same perspective on priorities. (It is worth noting, though, that Wider Church Participants’ attachment to the top three principles, as well as to the other principles in the list, is considerably greater in intensity than People in the Pews’ attachment.) It is also interesting—and moving—that the top-rated principles for both samples are among those explicitly having to do with the concept of a radically inclusive love, particularly for people on the margins, expressed through prophetic witness, a commitment to the social gospel and the healing of creation.

The observation that the concept of a radically inclusive love seems to be winning the day when it comes to the choice of principles for social justice decision-making is further clarified when one looks at the nature of some of the lower-ranked principles and realizes that these have more to do with process and procedures (for example, the principle of making sure that staff have adequate resources to research all angles of an issue before making a decision).

Admittedly, not all of the lower-ranked priorities are of the “nuts and bolts” variety. We note in particular respondents’ attitudes toward the principle of being committed to “responding to social justice causes that address calls to action from The United Church of Canada’s global partners.” This principle is fundamentally about love of neighbour, and yet both samples rank it as a lower priority. Does this mean that social justice and public witness stakeholders are considerably more interested in the church pursuing domestic causes over global ones? We do not think there is enough data in the current research results to answer this question. But nonetheless, the finding does make us wonder just what people mean by “society” in the second priority principle above. Is the prophetic principle of “speaking out, when others are mostly silent, on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized people in our society” a call to focus on the needs of society within Canada’s borders or society writ large on a global stage?

Looking at some other results related to the question about the importance of the 15 different principles in guiding social justice decision-making, we find another point worth mentioning here. Although the principle of recognizing that “there can often be many different, but still faithful, perspectives on how to address certain social justice issues, and all of these perspectives need to be considered and debated” is not ranked by respondents as one of the top three priorities, it is nevertheless considered important to a majority of both Wider Church

²In asking this question an extensive list of the many diverse voices that make up the church was not included. For example, people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations were not named explicitly. Diverse gender identities and sexual orientations are included in the corresponding recommendation.

Participants and People in the Pews. This is an interesting finding because it does add nuance to the finding above that the concept of a radically inclusive love should drive social decision-making in the church; undoubtedly not everyone agrees on the best tactics or ways to express love. And of course, this does relate to the reason the current consultation was felt to be necessary in the first place, namely, the concern that “people who fundamentally support the social justice ministry of the Church often have legitimate questions about...[social justice] decisions, how they are made, what the Church is trying to do when it makes them, and whether there were different approaches that could have resulted in more faithful outcomes.”

The quantitative research delivers some further insights around the top three guiding principles. In addition to asking respondents to rate the importance of 15 guiding principles to them personally, the quantitative research also asked respondents to assess the extent to which, in their opinion, the United Church actually makes decisions based on these principles, in other words, how well the church is performing vis-à-vis these principles.

Overall, we find that People in the Pews give good marks to the performance of the church on the same principles that they think are very important. Among Wider Church Participants, there is similar alignment, with one notable exception.

This exception has to do with one of the three principles ranked as a top priority for guiding the church, that is, the principle about being open, when making social justice decisions, to “hearing from all the diverse voices that make up our church, including people from different racial, cultural, economic and age groups, as well as regions, community sizes and abilities.”

Many Wider Church Participants say this should be a very important guiding principle, but few strongly agree that the church is performing well in this regard.

It is interesting that issues around diversity make up the one priority principle that gets poorer performance marks from Wider Church Participants. Members of this group, incidentally, are themselves far from diverse, in terms of the education dimension of socio-economic status given that a large majority report a level of educational attainment that is much higher than that which the average Canadian has attained.

Wider Church Participants’ assessment of the church’s performance on listening to diverse voices points to work still needed to live out the church’s intercultural commitments made in 2006. It makes us wonder how much things may—or may not—have changed since 2011, when the Identity Survey of United Church people revealed the following: first, that the church membership as a whole is not remotely as diverse as the Canadian population; second, that the membership displays some exclusionary attitudes toward ministry personnel perceived to be “different”; and third, that marginalized people in the church are neither comfortable nor active in decision-making in the church.

Summary

Overall the people of the United Church, at all levels, attach importance to the church's involvement in social justice. Social justice is also central to the denomination's ethos.

Many people in faith communities, however, lack familiarity with the church's social justice decision-making process, the actual decisions made, and the implementation of decisions. Even people with wider church experience are more "somewhat" than "very" familiar with these things. People in the church could therefore benefit from learning more about the church's approach to social justice, how high-profile decisions are made, and how they are implemented.

People's satisfaction with the church's social justice work (both decisions made and how they are implemented) is more of the lukewarm than enthusiastic variety; further study could be conducted about why this is the case. As noted above, the research shows that some people with wider church experience express concern that the church's decision-making vests too much power in too few people, oversimplifies complex issues, pays insufficient attention to the opinions of undecided people, and is hard for ordinary people to get their proposals brought forward. Are these perceptions justified and, if so, what can be done to address them? Similarly, given the observation above that people rank the principle of responding to global partners' needs as a lower priority than many other principles, further research could help to clarify the meaning of this finding and to investigate ways to deal with the matter, should there truly be a gap in current church practice and what the people of the church support.

There is a clear lack of diversity in social justice decision-making, and the church needs to take steps to address this. In order to continue to live into the church's intercultural commitment, all parts of the church need to be fully engaged in living into ways of being that honour and promote diversity as a priority for the church. Similarly, when the church makes social justice decisions, diverse voices must be part of the decision-making process.

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of General Council, the Audit Committee carried out its assigned duties in the triennium. The audit committee focuses on:

- the quality of the financial information that is presented in the audited financial statements that are published in the *Year Book* and on the church website;
- the selection, remuneration, and the preservation of the independence of the auditor who, in the case of The United Church of Canada for this and several previous reporting periods, has been the firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (“PwC”);
- monitoring any audits of the church conducted by government or third parties.

The committee is chaired by Hugh Johnson CA, and members include Nora Sanders, the General Secretary of General Council and four others appointed by the 42nd General Council. They are: Robin Pilkey, CPA, CA; John Hurst; Leah Weiss, CPA, CMA; and Rev. Lindsay Mohn. 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 and Chief Financial Officer, Erik Mathiesen. The committee meets by electronic means and is grateful for the staff support of Mary Worrall in this regard.

Each year, the Audit Committee:

- approved the audit plans and fees proposed by PwC;
- received the audit reports at completion;
- recommended approval of the audited financial statements of the National Accounts of The United Church of Canada by the General Council Executive or Sub-Executive;
- recommended approval of the audited financial report of the Fund of the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada to the Pension Board;
- Updated workplans and terms of reference documentation as needed.

Over this triennium, a number of changes were implemented to improve disclosure and meet compliance requirements. Most notably, KAIROS operating results are now consolidated in the overall Treasury financial statement and a separate revenue note was developed. For each year, within the context of the auditors’ responsibility, the financial statements received a “clean report.” Each year the committee noted ongoing improvement in internal controls and responding to any suggestions from PwC. The Audit Committee also recommends reappointment of PwC for 2018. The reappointment of auditors must take place annually for a term of only one year.

In recommending reappointment, the committee considered:

- the non profit discount offered from PwC’s regular billing rates;
- the auditors’ understanding of reporting issues affecting the not-for-profit sector;
- the auditors’ knowledge and understanding of the church and its reporting entities;
- the quality, efficiency and economy of the audit plan;

- the auditors' track record in providing the church with continuity of audit staff;
- the auditors' candour and pro-activeness in bringing issues, current events and new ideas to the attention of church staff and the Audit Committee;
- the quality of the auditors' communication and co-operation with church staff;
- the quality of the auditors' communication with the Audit Committee;
- the quality of candour and teamwork among the auditors themselves.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that the existing audit process will need to be refined to reflect changes from remit implementation including the possibility of shared accounting services across courts of the church to achieve economies of scale. There will also be efforts to make church financial information more transparent and accessible.

NATIONAL UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

History

Women have always played an integral role in the life of the church. From as early as the nineteenth century, women worked as teachers, missionaries and nurses, providing care in communities. As time went on, fundraising and social function organizing were added to the women's roles, as well as preaching, administration, and pastoral care as women also moved into ordained and commissioned ministry.

When the United Church officially formed in 1925, the Ladies Aid (LA) (later the Woman's Association (WA)) and the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) were doing work at home and abroad. The WA focused on supporting the local church and community, while the WMS was more involved with education and world mission.

In 1953, a committee was established by the General Council of The United Church of Canada to study women's work in the church with the goal of formally recognizing the work and contribution of United Church women. In 1956, the 17th General Council initiated the Commission on the Work of Women in the Church. The findings and recommendations of the commission were released in 1960 with the following goals:

1. To prepare a constitution for a new women's organization in the congregation and at Presbytery, Conference and National levels, the aim of which would be to enlist all the women of the United Church for the total mission of the Church.
2. To study the issues involved and any other matters relation to the formation of such an organization.
3. To make such recommendations to the Eighteen General Council as after consultation with Boards and Committees concerned may be deemed wise (ROP 1960, p. 301)

The subsequent Commission on the Work of Women in the Church made 14 recommendations, including:

Recommendation 3. That subject to the approval of the executive of General Council, the effective date of the functioning of the Board of Women and the coming into operation of the constitution of The United Church Women be January 1, 1962.

Recommendation 4. That the attention of Conferences, Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges be called to the necessity of taking steps to set up this new pattern of organization so as to be ready to function as of January 1, 1962.

Recommendation 11. That Conferences and Presbyteries be urged to make provision for representation from The United Church Women on Committees in whose work it is directly concerned.

(ROP 1960, p. 317)

As a result, General Council took action to ensure that women could share in a much more meaningful way in all the work of the church allowing them to participate on the boards of The United Church at all levels. Approval was given to this organization, United Church Women (UCW), at the General Council meeting held in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1960.

The UCW officially came into being on January 1, 1962. Its Purpose is:

To unite women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a medium through which we may express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service. (ROP 1960, p. 304)

Across the country, 300,000 women joined as Charter Members. The structure of the new organization was the same as that of the national church: Conference, Presbyterial and local units, with UCW representative participating at all levels of United Church structure. Now, in 2018, we have approximately 25,000 active members across Canada.

Since the inauguration of the UCW, many projects have been initiated and completed from worship and Bible study, to sending barrels of clothing overseas, to supporting the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada with over \$129 million in contributions.

Morogoro Women's Training Centre

A national UCW anniversary celebration occurs every five years. In 2012, the UCW celebrated its 50th Anniversary in Ancaster, Ontario, with 370 women present. To celebrate the occasion a special project was adopted to support the Morogoro Women's Training Centre in Tanzania. Over \$268,000.00 was raised for this project, the goal of which was to professionalize Traditional Birth Attendants, by training 750 Maternal Health Care workers over three years in ten 11-day courses per year for 25 women. Enough money was raised to provide mobile units to visit remote areas. In 2018, more funds were raised to buy special hospital mattresses so women wouldn't have to share a bed.

End Child Poverty Initiative

In September 2013, a five-year Child Well-Being Initiative was begun to end child poverty in Canada. The women began by writing letters to all levels of government urging them to make the eradication of child poverty a greater priority in budget allocations and program emphasis by:

- establishing measurable and attainable goals to reduce child poverty
- raising the National Child Benefit Supplement to a maximum of \$5,400 (indexed to inflation) per child for low-income families.
- increasing child welfare support given to Indigenous people to balance that given to others
- initiating and investing in an affordable, accessible, quality childcare system as a way to support low-income families

An investment in children is a financially, educationally, and socially sound investment by society.

The letter-writing project was followed up with the presentation of handmade rag dolls to Members of Parliament: 114 dolls at Queen's Park in Toronto and 338 dolls at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. As well, local presentations of dolls were made to speakers at UCW meetings, churches, and other organizations. These dolls speak volumes.

A new National project will be chosen in September 2018 at the National United Church Women's annual meeting at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ontario when UCW Conference Presidents and Vice Presidents/Representatives from all across Canada meet to engage in the business of the UCW.

Celebrating Spirit

The 55th anniversary celebration was held July 10–17, 2017 at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver with about 300 women present. The plenary speaker was Ann Mortifee, a recipient of the Order of Canada and the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award for her outstanding contribution to the healing and performing arts. Music Leadership was provided by Linnea Good, a local singer-songwriter whose primary work is to help individuals and churches express their souls through music.

UCW membership is lower and older, but we are still a vital part of The United Church of Canada. We are grateful for the support of General Council as we continue to live out our Purpose to express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service.

Respectfully submitted

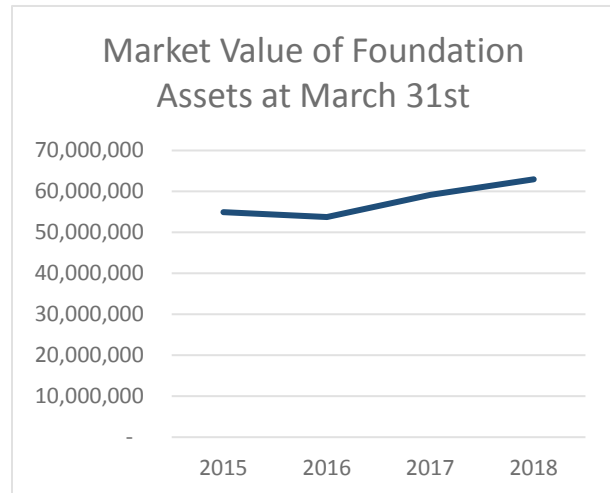
Nancy Sutherland, President
National United Church Women

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA FOUNDATION REPORT

Growth of Assets under Management

Since its creation by the Executive of the General Council in 2002 the Foundation began by growing quietly, slowly, and steadily. At the beginning of the last triennium momentum increased significantly, and we have seen strong growth over the last three years.

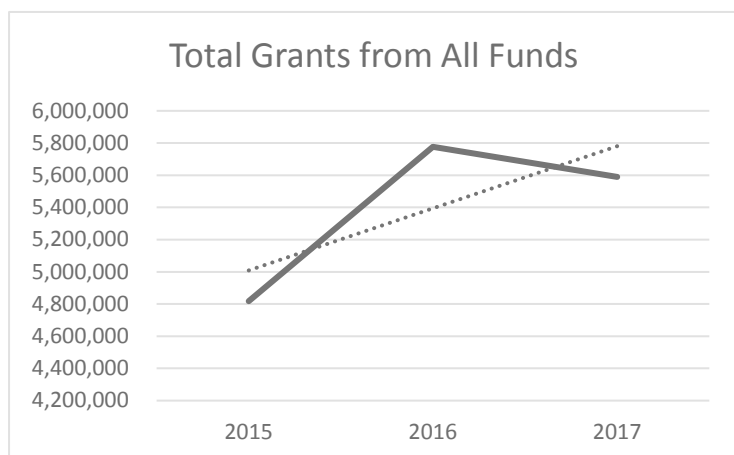
In this triennium, the growth has been driven by a combination of strong groundwork, strong investment returns, and increasing donations. We continue to be grateful for the transfer \$29M in assets from the General Council Treasury in 2013. All these things have resulted in nearly \$63M in assets under management, an increase of \$8M since March 2015.



The Foundation’s board of directors is very appreciative of the enormous support and the provision of operating funds by the church in its initial start-up years. Beginning in January 2015, the Foundation was financially self-sufficient, covering all of its direct and indirect operating costs within the General Council Office. The units that support the work of the Foundation will now be reimbursed for the services that they provide, such as finance and IT. Further, the Foundation established a Mission & Service endowment fund that currently has a balance of \$4M that provides annual grants to the General Council Office.

Growth of Total Grants from All Funds

The Foundation’s mission is to support the work of the church. This means supporting the important work of congregations, presbyteries, Conferences, United Church organizations, and ecumenical partners through grants and long-term fund management. Grants to these diverse areas of work have grown significantly over the triennium.

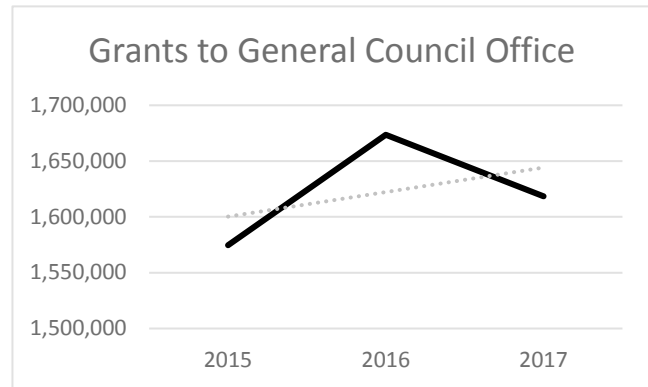


Grants are made through an application process and from short- and long-term funds where donors designate the beneficiaries.

Growth of Grants to The United Church of Canada

The Foundation makes grants that support a broad range of the work of the General Council. These grants to The United Church of Canada have also grown significantly. Total grants to the General Council of the church of \$1.6 million in 2017 included

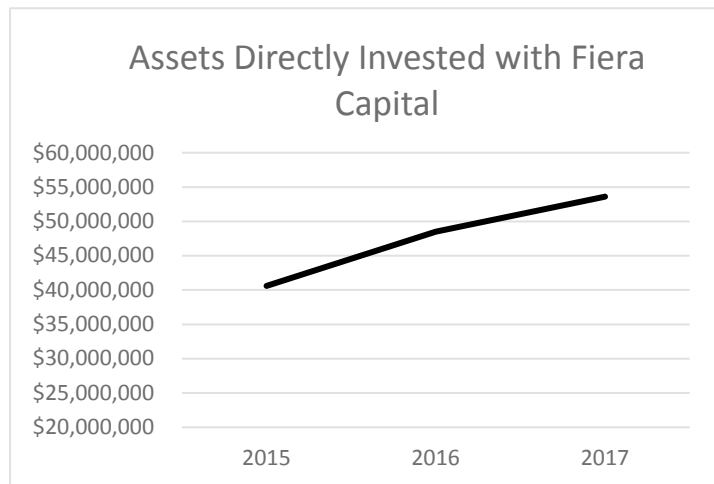
- \$925,111 for Mission & Service,
- \$641,911 for United Church funds and programs, and
- \$51,532 for projects and overseas projects.



The Direct Investment Affinity Program

The Foundation also provides access to its fund manager, Fiera Capital Corp., to interested church organizations.

Congregations, presbyteries, Conferences, and affiliated organizations now have \$63M invested directly with Fiera in a variety of investment vehicles, with accounts ranging from \$10,000 to \$3M.



These organizations get solid customer service and investment management track record as well as fees that are

lower than industry standard. The most popular retail fund that United Church organizations are invested in returned over 8% in 2017 and has an MER (after rebate) of 1.3%.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CONFERENCE 2018

In The United Church Creed we make our theological Conviction:

We are called to be the Church

We have perhaps struggled with what that means for our United Church of Canada, for the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference just as much in these past few years as the church did in the years leading up to union in 1925.

Since our last General Council, we have learned that all except one remit has passed and we now await the potential enactment by General Council 2018. For the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference this has been a busy time and a discerning time.

The View from Here

This has been a time of looking at the world from the mountaintop and seeing the landscape below. It has been a time of standing on the wharf and looking out over the vastness of the ocean and seeing the sky kiss the sea, yet not knowing what was beyond our eyesight. It has also been a time of being in the mud and wading through the mucky details of how we are to be the church in this changing time. It is the conviction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference that our communities of faith are vitally important to the life and work of our church. Therefore all initiatives and actions taken with respect to the statement, “We are called to be the Church,” have been with two things at the forefront: our faith and trust in God, Creator, Christ, and Spirit; and our commitment to the well-being of our pastoral charges. It is the prayer of the leadership that we have been faithful to our call.

Conference Initiatives, Action, and Future Direction

In 2015, the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference moved into a new funding model that based its formula on total raised for all purposes by congregational givings (line 32A) less Mission and Service received from the pastoral charge, exclusive of UCW (line 36) $32A - 36 \times 5\% = \text{Assessment}$. This new formula has served us well for the past three years and has prepared us for the change that the remit on funding will bring. While the General Council formula is slightly different, we are well prepared for a smooth transition with respect to the funding formula.

In 2016, the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference set up a Task Group to look at making changes to the church structure. The Conference discerned that we needed to make changes whether the remits passed or not. There needed to be less duplication of processes and committees, and more support to local ministries. In an attempt to do this, the Task Group presented a report at the annual Conference meeting in May 2017 to dissolve East and West Districts and to move the work of the Districts to Conference. Since 2017 there has been a Dissolution of Districts Task Group, working hard to put in place a new governance model for the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference. Once we realized that the remits had passed, we awaited the results of the Boundaries Commission to ascertain whether we had to stop all activity because we were being placed in a different regional configuration or staying the same. Once we received the commission report on boundaries we were able to pick up our work again.

and move forward. Therefore at the conclusion of the 2018 annual Conference meeting in June, we will say goodbye to our Districts and move into a three-court model. Members of Conference will have received a new model for governance handbook approved by the Conference Executive as our new governance structure. At the meeting of Conference 2018 we will be nominating people for new positions on Divisions and teams, and we will be providing workshops on how this structure will work. We have also had a consultant working on a new way of doing our pastoral relations (Joint Needs Assessment) process. We will now be moving into what is called a Mission Articulation Plan (MAP), mapping our faith story and designing our pastoral charges/congregational mission. It is a way for pastoral charges to map out who we are, to name who is our neighbour, and to decide what our mission is. We will soon be at the stage to have pastoral charges try this new tool and provide feedback for making it as user-friendly as possible.

I feel with the work that we have done over the past two years, we are ready for the changes that are before us with the passing of the remits. If General Council enacts the remits, all of the changes into regional councils will begin January 1, 2019, and we are more than ready to meet the change. If for some reason General Council 43 does not enact the remits before it, we are more than ready to move forward with a new model of governance that will help us live within our means into the future.

Staffing Changes

When I took the position of Executive Secretary, I did not dream for a moment that I would be the last Executive Secretary for the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference. And yet here we are also experiencing staffing changes. At the time of writing this report there is still much unknown about staffing here in our Conference and about the retention of our Conference office. While it is our hope that we are able to keep our staff and our office, those details are still unknown. I ask that you keep our staff in your thoughts and prayers in this uncertain time.

Closing

In closing, what is still true is that “we are called to be the Church.” What is still true is that we are never alone. Thanks be to God.

MARITIME CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Maritime Conference is beautiful and diverse. There is poverty and there is wealth. There are gorgeous pristine areas of natural beauty and there are areas of shocking environmental degradation. There are new immigrants and there are multi-generational European settlers. There are Indigenous communities both on and off reserve. We have thriving churches and we have struggling churches. We have corporate developments and we have citizen activists. The effects of climate change progress as coastlines erode, rivers flood, and wells run dry.

As church we continue to seek the wisdom of the Spirit as we discern the Call of God and our expression of ministry within the communities we love and serve. Demographic shifts and changes occur sometimes faster than we can accommodate and we suffer loss and grief as cherished expressions of ministry come to the end of their viability. In other areas, these same demographic shifts provide fresh opportunities for new expressions of ministry. Sometimes we are able to respond and sometimes we grieve our inability to move fast enough to be effective in changing times. Even so, growth is occurring along with loss, and we faithfully seek to express God's love through our actions, large and small.

Conference Initiatives and Action

Within Maritime Conference, pastoral charges and presbyteries continue to explore a variety of experiments and initiatives for changes that will ensure viability and expression of ministry into the community. These include part-time ministries, cooperative and shared ministries, amalgamations, ecumenical partnerships, and occasionally disbanding and closure. Conference staff are a resource for these conversations and considerations, while the local decision-making body provides formal leadership.

The Maritime Conference Centre, located in the geographic centre of Sackville, NB, is a purpose-built \$3.2 million facility that includes office space, meeting space, and state-of-the-art archival storage space. Fundraising efforts include donations and contributions from the sales of church properties. The result is that the \$1.9 million mortgage is now reduced to just over \$1 million and we are on track to pay off the mortgage well ahead of schedule.

Our four summer residential camps continue to work collaboratively on the shared vision for faith formation ministry with children. "Camp Stuff" is a joint staff training event that occurs each spring.

Youth Forum and Intermediates at Conference programs occur concurrently with the Conference Annual Meeting and routinely bring 300 youth and leaders together with 400 Conference members each spring. Youth Forum now also offers a fall event that shows every sign of continuing to grow.

With the support and blessing of Conference, Janice MacLean has established Prayer Bench as an online ministry for spirituality and faith formation. Conference has also supported Linda Yates in the development of “More Than Friends,” an online resource for marriage preparation.

Maritime Conference justice ministries tend to focus on “the long game” in a number of challenging issues. A few examples of the work that our staff and committees are involved in are:

- **Our relationship with mining and extractive industries in Canada and abroad.** A working group is doing education and advocacy relating to ethical investments, divestment, solidarity with Indigenous peoples, and corporate accountability.
- **Living into right relationship with Indigenous peoples in our area.** Recently focused on bringing settler and Indigenous youth together to explore our responsibilities to care for lands and waters as “Treaty People.” This culminated in a delegation of youth attending the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2018 with Elders.
- **Growing understanding and action regarding Just Peace for Palestine and Israel** by promoting the “No Way to Treat a Child” campaign, hosting study groups, workshops, and speakers.
- **Ongoing support to refugee sponsors** through networking and communications.
- We have started new initiatives regarding **mental health education and advocacy** within the faith community.

We appreciate our ecumenical connections, particularly the Mennonite Central Committee, Anglican Diocese, and recently new connections with Baptist ministries, and also our long-term partnerships with Breaking the Silence – Guatemala-Maritimes Solidarity, Kairos, and the Peace and Friendship Project. Many of our ministries have been sparked and nurtured through the work of the Tatamagouche Centre, which supports us with deep connections, deep leadership, and deep dialogue for change.

Financial Support Ministries: The financial gifts of people of The United Church of Canada are creatively stretched in order to support two campus ministries, and 12 additional ministry sites and projects through Mission Support Grants. We also encourage growth and development of people and pastoral charges by offering learning funds, youth opportunities funding, and a variety of innovative ministry funds.

The MP&E Unit has placed some focus in the past year in expanding the face-to-face boundaries training offered throughout the Conference on invitation as both initial and refresher training. We have included discussion on topics of professional ethics and boundaries as well as the abuse prevention policy. An exploration of compassion fatigue as well as some self-discovery regarding triggers that can challenge us when we allow ourselves to become too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired combined with some open space case studies has proven to deepen the conversation and learning. Now folk leave the engagement glad they have had opportunity to engage rather than feeling as if it was a mandatory waste of time and energy. This training must be done face to face to have any real possibility of consciousness raising on a professional level.

Staffing Changes

Lauren King has joined the Conference staff in 2017 and 2018 in a half-time contract position in support of youth ministry.

Lorraine Horyl retired from the administrative staff of Maritime Conference at the end of 2017, having served for 27 years.

Conference Archivist Sarah Wallace has just returned to the office after a period of maternity leave, and now combines her part-time position as Archivist with part-time administrative responsibilities.

Future Directions

Conference remains committed to supporting the work of justice and faithfulness with communities of faith around the region and looks forward to the clarification of the organizational means by which these ministries will continue.

Respectfully submitted,

David Hewitt
Executive Secretary
Maritime Conference

SYNODE MONTREAL & OTTAWA CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Church closings and amalgamations, with church buildings being repurposed in the communities or sold to other denominations have been on the increase; however there has also been an increased interest in clustering, building working relationships with neighbouring pastoral charges, particularly in rural areas. This has allowed ministry sites to maintain their small structures and to share leadership, often with one ordered person and a team of Lay workers. Genesis and Rural United Ministry (RUM) in Seaway Valley Presbytery were the first, followed by Laurentian Area Ministry north of Montreal, Quebec, and Grace United in the west Quebec area of Ottawa Presbytery who are finding creative ways of using both English and French. Each cluster has developed a different model designed to meeting the local needs.

There has also been an increase in the number of congregations using technology during worship for projection of words and images. While this is more frequently found in urban settings, the interest and demand for technology funding has increased in recent years and is appreciated by all generations who gather. Interest has grown as more meetings are being conducted using technology, and the Conference Annual General Meeting has for two years been a one-day meeting using technology to connect a number of sites. It has allowed for demonstrations of what is possible in keeping connections going, while respecting shrinking financial resources.

After some discussion based highly on shrinking human resources, the Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery and the Montreal Presbytery decided to amalgamate. In a ceremony at the Annual General Meeting of 2016, they were officially joined to become the Consistoire du Quebec Presbytery. Living into the reality has been a challenge as aging populations are not producing new volunteers, and using technology for meetings can be very challenging for those who prefer to gather around a table, sharing not only the business but also meaningful worship and comfort food. The Consistoire Laurentien has one full-time and a number of part-time ministry sites, thus finding appropriate leadership is a challenge but our Spanish congregation continues to inspire us with creative ideas using lay leadership.

Conference Initiatives and Actions

There have been some learning opportunities because of the needs of others. Aside from the many demands for pastoral support to both ministry personnel and ministry sites, the Conference Personnel Ministers have been working with Pastoral Relations and Pastoral Oversight committees, encouraging use of the Effective Leadership tools. Getting the *Living Ministry Profile* reports filed annually with traditional Annual Reports following congregational meetings has been a greater challenge.

Following a year of discussion within presbyteries, The Conference Licensed Lay Worship Leader Policy and Guidelines took effect in November 2015. Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) continue to be trained, accredited, and held accountable each to their own presbytery, however there are times when due to geography or language, it is in the best interest of the

ministry site requiring worship to be able to have leadership from a Licensed Lay Worship Leader of another presbytery. The policy allows for such and there is agreement to circulating the names annually of all accredited Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, and of welcoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader from another presbytery to conduct worship. In 2017, there was a further mutual agreement to share LLWLs with the Bay of Quinte.

With the sale of more church buildings, the Executive, following agreement of the presbyteries approved an Archives Policy that pastoral charges will contribute 2 percent of the assets from the sale proceeds of closing or amalgamating congregations, to a maximum contribution of \$5,000, to assist with the care and maintenance of the archival records of the closing or amalgamating congregation(s) and to assist the Conference Archivists in meeting the demand in processing, arranging, and describing the records so that they are accessible for future generations.

Many of us are engaged in keeping connections with the Philippines following the two Beaconsfield Initiative proposals opposed to mining actions in the Philippines, and my two trips visiting with global partners from which have come many teaching opportunities. The Conference supports United for Mining Justice and will celebrate the Honorary Doctorate being awarded to Padi Rex Reyes, Jr. at the United Theological College, May 2018.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission closure in Ottawa and the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis north of Montreal (Kanesatake/Oka) in which many participated were visible reminders that there is a lot of healing that needs to happen for “right relationships.” Beginning meetings and worship by acknowledging the ancestral lands, and using resources to create learning opportunities are regularly sought out to help with understanding, recognizing accountability and gradually build trust. We are blessed by the teaching Elders from Kanesatake and Kahnawake, Mohawk communities north and south of Montreal, who have been generous with their time.

Staffing Changes

Personal choices and budget challenges meant that the full-time Youth and Young Adult facilitator Rev. Jean-Daniel Williams resigned to begin working for the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Conference reduced the YAYA position to eight hours per week, engaging Georgia Barrett-Lamey to fill the role, much of which is done using social media to build Conference-wide connections. Georgia has also helped provide leadership for presbytery organized events.

Larry Richardson, the Ottawa office administrator, reduced his hours to half-time working from home beginning July 1, 2017, and the rental contract for Ottawa space was reduced to one office for the Conference Personnel Minister (West).

Future Directions

A lot of time and energy was focused on trying to influence the decisions of the Boundaries Commission with special meetings held both within the Conference and with our neighbours to

the west as regional boundaries were discussed. Now, with the information in hand, establishing Transition Commissions is taking shape. There is satisfaction for some that they are “still together” and also a sense of loss as the Conference will become divided into two regions, and long-standing working relations will be no more. There is concern from ministry sites about how the changes will affect them, particularly the assessments proposed in Remit 4. Where the changes will lead us and whether there will be staff support for those who rely heavily on others to guide the processes, are yet to be seen.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Rosemary Lambie, Executive Secretary

BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Located in Eastern/Central Ontario and sandwiched between Montreal and Ottawa Conference to the east and Toronto Conference to the west, our eight presbyteries are predominantly made up of rural and small town/city congregations. As in many rural communities, some of our churches have witnessed a decline in membership leading to closures, amalgamations, and a refocusing of ministries. We are also witnessing some growth in the west end of our Conference as the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) continues to expand. Much positive energy and excitement has gone into the hosting of GC43 along with our partners at the All Native Circle Conference as we invite you all to Oshawa (Oshawow!!) this July. We are also aware that, with the passing of Remit 1, our Conference will be divided into two regions (11 and 12). While we mourn the loss of cherished friends and colleagues, we await with anticipation to see what God has in store for us in the time ahead.

Conference Initiatives and Action

As one of the first Affirming Conferences, we have continually asked ourselves, “*What does it mean to be an open and welcoming church?*” This has led to more presbyteries and congregations and even our UCW going through the affirming process. However, we see the welcoming of the LGBTQ2 community as only being one part of an ongoing process. How do we move beyond a welcome sign on the door to welcoming hearts in the pews? We began with an “Equity Committee” to monitor our own behaviour. Can people see and hear? Are there physical, emotional, spiritual barriers that turn some away? Do scents stop people at the door? What is the difference between equality and equity? We have invested in many congregations through an accessibility fund and have benefited by having equity monitors at all of our meetings to hold the mirror up for us to help us recognize our own bias and exclusions.

We have continued to support ministries in new ventures, such as the *Into the Journey* program with Christine Jarrett, the Transformation Ministry Initiatives, and EDGE.

We have been committed to the “Pathways” program, witnessing many candidates discern their call with the help of a strong Conference Assessment Board and Conference Candidacy Coordinating Committee (4C) and are pleased to see that our hard work has assisted in the formation of national policy.

We have offered many congregation and presbytery training workshops around such topics as boundaries, the role of the M&P committee, pastoral relations, visioning and cooperative ministries, and dealing with conflict.

Our Conference has maintained a close relationship with El Salvador, sending a delegation to a Peace Conference in 2016 and mission awareness trips in 2017 (30 people) and 2018 (37 people).

Staff Changes

We have seen a few staff changes during the past triennium. The Rev. Mary-Jane Hobden, our Conference Personnel Minister (MEPS) returned to the pastorate. Our Children, Youth, and Programs minister, Jackie Harper, retired after many faithful years of service to congregational ministry, General Council, and Conference; and two of our treasurers, Nicole Lupton and Laura Vink, left the Conference for new employment opportunities.

As a result of these changes, we moved the Rev. David Timpson from CPM Pastoral Care to CPM MEPS and hired the Rev. Carolyn Giesbrecht on a half-time contract to do pastoral care and help resource some of our committees. With Jackie's retirement, we hired the Rev. Cathy Russell-Duggan on a part-time contract to be our children's and youth minister and shared Jackie's other responsibilities among the staff.

With the resignation of Nichola Lupton as treasurer/IT in December of 2017, we hired Laura Vink as new treasurer and outsourced our IT needs. Laura resigned in November of 2017 and Linda Wheeler was hired in January of 2018 on a part-time contract until the end of December.

This has meant that we have dropped from 6 FTE to 4.5 FTE with all of our part-time staff in contracts ending December 31, 2018. While this has stretched existing staff to some degree, it has allowed us to live within our means and be ready for the formation of regions in 2019.

Future Directions

Like the rest of the church, we await GC43 and the adoption of the remits. If remits are passed, six of our presbyteries, along with three congregations from Living Waters will make up region 11 and the remaining two will move into region 12 with the churches in Ottawa and Seaway Presbytery. We are led by the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,

(Rev. Dr.) William Smith
Executive Secretary

TORONTO CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Toronto Conference is located in central Ontario. It reaches from the shores of Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay and includes Owen Sound near the western boundary and Huntsville and Uxbridge in the east. The Conference provides leadership and support to four presbyteries: Living Waters, Northern Waters, South West, and Toronto Southeast. It includes 53,000 church members in 230 pastoral charges. Toronto Conference is characterized by significant diversity ranging from urban to rural, and influenced by multicultural and intercultural realities. There is much opportunity for vital and creative ministry within the Conference.

Conference Initiatives and Action

In this triennium, Toronto Conference has focused on several significant initiatives.

We sent a large delegation to the closing ceremonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the end of May 2015, and have spent the past three years learning what it means to live into the Calls to Action. We have hosted a number of educational events and sponsored many more in local communities of faith. Our Living Into Right Relations Circle meets regularly and we seek to walk a path of reconciliation and justice in the Conference, the Province of Ontario, and our nation.

In 2017, Toronto Conference celebrated become an Affirming Ministry. As part of our Action Plan we committed to act as a resource for communities of faith within the Conference and assist them to engage in conversations about being safe spaces for people of any sexual orientation and gender identity within the church and community. We also acknowledge that there are other areas of marginalization that need the same care and attention that is placed on the Affirming process. The Executive of Toronto Conference begins and ends each meeting by reflecting on what voices have been heard and what voices have not been heard. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is a key value we name going forward.

Toronto Conference participated in a continuation of the partnership of The United Church of Canada and The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) by visiting Seoul Presbytery with 16 members of our Conference, and planning for a return visit of a similar PROK group to our community. The Executive of Toronto Conference, in consultation with Seoul Presbytery, approved a Memorandum of Agreement for an ongoing relationship and we name this as a priority in the years ahead. We will continue to work together in the areas of Mutual Recognition of Internship, Exchange Programs for Youth, a Sabbatical Program, and Exchanges of Ministry Personnel.

Toronto Conference is home to a significant number of Ethnic Ministries, Emerging Ministries, Community Ministries, and Missions. We strive to support these communities and to ensure that their voices are heard in all aspects of our communal life. As we seek to create structures that may better serve the church, we lift up the unique needs of these communities and their leaders.

Staff Changes

A significant staff change happened in Toronto Conference when Remits 1–4 passed at the end of June 2017. David Allen left his long-time position as Executive Secretary to become the Remit Implementation Project Leader for the United Church. This is a well-deserved honour for David. His experience and knowledge from his many years as Executive Secretary, and in particular his leadership when the Conference restructured in 2009, have been a real asset to the wider church in this process.

Norm Greene, who has been serving in South West Presbytery as the Minister for Mission, retired at the end of June, and we give thanks for his ministry and in particular for his passion and support for Ethnic and Emerging Ministries. Karen Hilfman Millson was hired in the summer of 2017 to fill the vacancy as Minister for Vision and Mission in Living Waters Presbytery on contract until the end of 2018. Two presbyteries have hired additional contract staff to support programs and communities of faith as they transition into the new regional structure.

Future Directions

If the remits are enacted by the 43rd General Council and a three-council model is adopted, approximately 50 communities of faith from Toronto Conference will join Region 8, a few will be with Regions 9 and 11, and the remainder will be in Region 10. We are excited by the possibility of these new relationships and also by partnering with our neighbours. We see great potential for developing new regional relationships along with strengthening local bonds through clusters and networks.

The theme of our Annual Meeting this year was “Great is Thy Faithfulness” with the tag line “Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.” With a mix of joy and sadness we celebrate the life of Toronto Conference. We express appreciation for the many faithful folks whose vision and commitment have been part of our story for 94 years, including dedicated staff and passionate volunteers. We go with bright hope into the future, thanking God for the many blessings we have shared.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Maltby (Rev.)
Executive Secretary
Toronto Conference

HAMILTON CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

For the communities within Hamilton Conference the past triennium continues as a time of change. At this stage in our Conference history we potentially will be embarking on the biggest change since Union in 1925. For the most part, our Conference is excited about the possibilities.

Within the context of Hamilton Conference, communities such as St. Catharine's, Hamilton, and Welland, continue to experience higher than average rates of unemployment and the social challenges that often accompany such high rates. However, these communities are witnessing positive improvements. Hamilton in particular has significant growth in its downtown core.

Waterloo, Halton, Milton, and Mississauga, which rely more on "high tech" and service industries, continue to experience high levels of growth.

Our rural communities face constant transition. Changes in farming and the agriculture business have also impacted local congregations. Many rural local communities have seen a decrease in population, while communities along the water are experiencing significant growth. This residential development includes both an increasing population of retirees and "bedroom communities" for those working in urban centres.

Conference Initiatives and Actions

We have continued to work with congregations and presbyteries to support them as they seek new incarnations of church. Following is an outline of some of the initiatives undertaken in the past triennium.

- Resource development and workshop facilitation in the areas of accessibility and workplace safety.
- Organized, in partnership with General Council staff, a workshop on Intercultural and Diverse Communities.
- Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships Test Conference Complete: providing Bruce Presbytery with support around searches, collegial support, congregational essence statements and pastoral oversight.
- Pastoral Care and Mental Health Workshop.
- Racial Justice Training.
- Conducted a workshop on Advocacy for Social Justice.
- Ministry and Personnel workshops for presbyteries and congregations.
- Hosted Cross Conference Interim Ministry Retreats.
- Presbytery Learning Events.
- Congregational Visioning workshops.
- Focus on relationship building and partnerships.
- Action to work toward becoming an Affirming Conference in May 2018.
- Right Relations Engagement, TRC engagement, and support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Partnered financially with Halton Presbytery to hold annual Ministry in Motion conference.
- Started Fresh Expressions training the trainers and working with presbyteries.

Staffing Changes

- Staff Equivalent at the Conference Office changed from 7.75 full-time staff to 5.6 full-time staff.
- Part-time Administrative position created.
- Full-time Administrative Position with an emphasis on Human Resources created.
- Minister for Congregational Support moved from a two-year contract to full-time.
- Full-time Minister for Faithful Public Witness position was eliminated.
- Part-time Minister for Social Justice and Youth Created.
- Summer student position was created.

Future Directions

Looking forward Hamilton Conference will continue to provide support to United Church clergy, staff, presbyteries, and congregations including partnerships related to Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships. We will support and promote Fresh Expressions in our Conference. The Conference will partner with General Council around any changes related to the Comprehensive Review, and the proposed movement to regions. In 2015, our Conference office became fully accessible!

Closing: We look forward to the proposed transition and a new chapter in our church and continued ministry we are reminded “We are not alone, we live in God’s world.”

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Hartmans
Executive Secretary
Hamilton Conference

LONDON CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

London Conference includes southwestern Ontario and the District of Algoma. Although there are urban centres in each of its eight presbyteries, the Conference is primarily rural/small town in nature. These eight presbyteries have a long history. The only major change in their boundaries happened over 50 years ago. That stability, coupled with the context of the Conference, has created a sense of community within the presbyteries.

Each of the presbyteries provides generous support to its local camp, with nine in operation across the Conference. Two of these facilities have year-round capability and several of the others have an extended season. This commitment to youth and young adults is also evident through one presbytery's support of a chaplain at the local college and another's employment of a half-time youth minister. Three of the presbyteries have a Resource Centre. One Resource Centre is a storefront, another is in a church on a main thoroughfare, and the third runs out of the Director's home. Half of the presbyteries provide support for ministers, a role that varies from a chaplain who receives an honorarium to a half-time ministry position. Additionally, some presbyteries are engaged with local initiatives. In this past triennium, several of the presbyteries have coordinated refugee sponsorship.

London Conference has been testing Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations, a process that moved the work of pastoral relations to the Conference. That change has helped prepare presbyteries for the move to regions and has been well received. Mostly, the presbyteries do not miss the heavy load of pastoral relations work. However, they remain concerned about the ministries they support and worry for the congregations in their bounds. What will the changes proposed by the remits mean for the support these receive?

Conference Initiatives and Action

The work of London Conference could be divided into two key areas: its ongoing responsibilities and its commitment to equipping the Conference for change.

In terms of the former, the Conference evaluated its four-year experiment with the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations (ELHPR) project in the spring of 2017. The Pastoral Relations networks of presbyteries, the Settlement Committee of Conference, and the Conference Executive participated in this process. The goals the process set out for pastoral relations were deemed largely to have been fulfilled: clarity and consistency, reduced reliance on a large pool of volunteers, growing expertise. But the hope that the removal of pastoral relations work from the presbytery would free the presbytery to focus on ministry and mission were mostly unrealized. Without resources to nurture this shift in focus for presbytery, it did not develop.

Ministry in the local context is the theme of Conference President, Joyce Payne, who is encouraging presbyteries and the Conference to "bloom where they are planted."

In 2017, Conference President, Kenji Marui, engaged the Conference with the theme “To Reconcile and Make New.” This coincided with the release of the video “We Are Still Here.” The production, sponsored by the Right Relations Committee of London Conference, recounts the experience of three residential school survivors for whom southwestern Ontario is home. In 2018, a sequel to that production called “AfterShock” capturing the experience of the children of these survivors was created. The combination of the Conference theme and the availability of these resources has helped broaden the engagement in seeking reconciliation.

The Conference continues to see the preservation of the history of the pre-1812 community of Fairfield as part of its commitment to reconciliation. Fairfield was the site of a remarkable village of Delaware people along with Moravian missionaries. Although the historical account reflects the language of its time, the life of the community was one of mutuality and respect. That is the spirit in which the Conference hopes to forge a partnership with the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown to preserve this history. Is there a way that the past can lead us to a new future together?

In 2016, President Cathy Larmond invited London Conference to turn to the future with the theme “Travelling Along with You.” She set the tone for encouraging the Conference to engage with, respond to, and consider the implications of the remits. London Conference had just shy of 100 percent participation in Remits 1–4 thanks to the commitment of the presbyteries in ensuring pastoral charges voted.

One of the highlights of the triennium was an event London hosted in partnership with Manitou Conference in Sudbury. The eight Conferences with congregations in Ontario were invited to participate to discuss potential boundaries. Although the results of the Boundaries Commission are quite different from the discussion at this event, the experience of being together and dreaming together fostered new relationships and a spirit of cooperation that will serve London well as it moves into regions 6, 7, and 8.

Throughout the past three years, London Conference has been moving through the Affirming process. This has been a powerful experience at both the Annual Meetings of Conference and in gatherings of the Executive. The leadership of the Affirm Task Group, who have challenged the Conference to engage this work with integrity and honesty, is deeply appreciated.

London Conference Executive has also been pleased to authorize draws on its New Ministry Fund in The United Church of Canada Foundation over the past two years. The fund receives 10 percent of the net proceeds from the sale of the real property of a disbanding congregation. A further 10 percent is directed to the Mission and Service Fund and 2 percent is maintained for the Archive Capital Fund. This is another way that the Conference is looking to the future with hope.

Staffing Changes

In 2016, the Conference reluctantly received the resignation of Pastoral Support Minister, Elaine Graham, due to an upcoming move to British Columbia. It was with delight that the

Conference welcomed a Past-President and lifelong student of spirituality, Anne Beattie-Stokes, to this role. Anne has been focusing on gathering ministry personnel together to encourage the building of collegial networks in light of anticipated changes.

The Conference was also dismayed to receive the resignation of Personnel Minister, Michelle Owens, in the spring of 2017. Michelle accepted the position of Principal at the Centre for Christian Studies. She played a key role in the development and implementation of the ELHPR test. In light of the fact that it was waiting for the outcome of the remits, the Executive of London Conference made short-term plans to cover the different elements of the personnel portfolio pending the announcement of the results. These short-term arrangements have now been extended until December 31, 2018. Tanya Cameron, previously .5 Minister, Vocations and Training, moved into the role of Acting Personnel Minister. The administration portion of Tanya's role was covered with an increase in the hours of Financial Administrator, Krista Ford, from .4 to .6. The work of training and vocations is being resourced through a ministry sharing agreement with Manitou Conference that provides .25 of their Personnel Minister, Lillian Roberts', time. Lillian's experience with Candidacy Pathways in Manitou is proving very helpful in preparing London's Education and Students network for the changes proposed by that remit.

Betsy Exley continues to provide leadership as Faith Formation, Youth and Young Adults Minister. In 2016, she enjoyed a sabbatical focused on evangelism with young adults. Pretima Kukadia-Kinting, the longest-serving member of London's staff, covers communications. During the past triennium, she developed a newsletter for the Conference entitled "Latest from LoCo." In an engaging format, she headlines important news, providing links for further detail. Executive Secretary, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, welcomed an extended study time earlier this year to focus on recent writings in the area of congregational vitality and mission.

Future Directions

London Conference becomes part of regions 6, 7, and 8 and looks forward to the new partners with whom it will be seeking reconciliation, being inclusive, promoting ministry with children and youth, supporting congregations, and caring for ministry personnel.

MANITOU CONFERENCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The View from Here

Everything that we would report at this time is offered through a lens of deep gratitude. Manitou has been the recipient of remarkable generosity, which ensured our financial viability until such time as all Conferences undergo likely restructuring changes. Many neighbouring Conferences declined or reduced their General Council operating grants in order to provide us with the funds necessary to maintain an office and staff complement in this time of transition. Thank you!

Conference Initiatives and Actions

Manitou voted to be recognized as an Affirming Conference at our 2017 General Meeting. We celebrated with representatives from Affirm United/S' affirmer Ensemble at a special service on November 5, 2017.

Participation in the Candidacy Pathways and Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relations pilot projects position us well for the changes that will come with the anticipated Office of Vocation.

We were proud to partner with Huntington University in producing *Truly and Humbly: Memories of the First Apology*. The documentary, by filmmaker Hoi Cheu, traces the memories of Canada's first Apology to Indigenous peoples by the United Church made in 1986 in Sudbury at the 31st General Council. This was 22 years ahead of the Canadian government's Apology to former students of the Indian Residential Schools. The film can be found on our website.

Staffing Changes

Our small staff team is unchanged since we reported to the last General Council. Of note, however, is that during this past triennium staff have had opportunity to share their skills and services in new constituencies. Conference Minister for Mission & Stewardship Animation, Melody Duncanson Hales, began to resource the work of the Philanthropy Unit in Algoma Presbytery of London Conference. Conference Personnel Minister, Lillian Roberts, began serving London Conference 0.25 time, in support of their candidacy processes. Our Office Coordinator, Sue Whitehead, provides videoconferencing facilitation in other Conferences and to several General Council and Central Conference committees and offers admin support to the General Council Executive and this 43rd General Council.

Future Directions

In the early 1970s, folks in northern Ontario dreamed of having a Conference, governed by and in support of northern congregations. Conference offices and staff seemed a long way away, in southern Ontario. In 1975, Manitou Conference was born. Excitement was tempered by

disappointment that neighbours in Algoma Presbytery opted out of joining. As we prepare to transition to Region 6 we remember the excitement that came with the creation of a new Conference and anticipate the same as we begin life in Region 6!

Will Kunder
Executive Secretary

CONFERENCE OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO REPORT

The View from Here

The Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario is large in size geographically and has many communities and congregations that are small and isolated. The reality for us is that we often cannot find ministers willing to live in our more remote communities or those communities cannot afford full-time ministry. These congregations rely heavily on lay leadership through Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, Sacraments Elders, and local Marriage Commissioners. As of writing this report we have 28 perpetually vacant congregations, which are served through lay leadership and local volunteers. We as a Conference are very grateful for the many lay leaders who offer their gifts to the church in this way.

Conference Initiatives and Actions

Over the last triennium we studied, prayed, and reflected on the remits coming out of the Comprehensive Review process. We have known for some time due to the above-noted situations that change needed to happen for our rural and isolated ministries in order for mission and ministry to thrive in those congregations. We had a high level of engagement and dialogue on the remit topics and had a good response to voting.

There was also a strong response in our congregations in sponsoring and supporting Syrian refugees as well as those seeking sanctuary. Many of our congregations worked with the wider community to help facilitate sponsoring, especially in some rural communities.

We had three presbyteries engaging in the Affirming process. We now are an Affirming Conference with five of our six presbyteries also being Affirming.

Youth ministry is a strong and important part of the ministry of this Conference; we hold three events annually, two retreats and Youth at Conference. We also worked with Aboriginal Ministries Council to host two Neechi Camps for Youth at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre to help foster right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

Working towards right relations has also been a focus through the work of our presbyteries: Assiniboine Presbytery has created a Brandon Indian Residential School Mobile Learning Centre to help foster dialogue, understanding about the issues of Residential Schools, and to work towards truth and reconciliation; Winnipeg Presbytery has signed onto the Winnipeg Mayor's Indigenous accord working towards right relations. As part of this work they have hosted a Kairos Blanket Exercise, several speakers, and other educational events. The Conference has worked with Indigenous partners and the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in hosting several Feast for Friends, a right relations event.

Staff Changes

Since 2015 our staff team has remained fairly stable. We have added Maggie Zoske as a part-time Administrative Assistant; she also works for Winnipeg Presbytery. Debbie Coss, Youth and Young Adults and Communications, left our staff in 2016 due to budget cuts and we added

Twila McNair in 2017 to work part-time with our Young Adult and Youth Committee. This July will see the departure of Richard Manley-Tannis as he begins his new position as Principal of St. Andrew's College.

Our Conference also saw a one-third reduction in time of our Executive Secretary as we became part of the sharing arrangement with Alberta and Northwest Conference. This arrangement helped to keep our Conference from posting budget deficits and helped us as we look to transitioning to the new staffing model.

Future Directions

As we prepare to be divided into two regions and say goodbye to one another, as the Eastern portion of Cambrian Presbytery moves into Region 6 and the Manitoba and Central Time zone portion of Ontario moves into Region 5, we are reminded that building relationships with diversity and difference are when we are at our best as church. We have learned many things from Cambrian Presbytery throughout the years. They were part of Manitoba Conference since its inception but that portion of the Conference was only formally added to our name in 1981; however, their influence around social justice, becoming the first Affirming presbytery, and their passion for youth ministry cannot be understated.

We move forward into our future as Region 5 and part of Region 6 with hope and optimism knowing it will take hard work to maintain the connection that our presbyteries brought us.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon McCarthy
Executive Secretary

SASKATCHEWAN CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Saskatchewan is a place of beauty. Its beauty is too often overlooked on a drive across its wide expanse or in the weather reports of January and February. The United Church in Saskatchewan is a beautiful place in many ways as well. It is also a place that has had to respond to adversity in the form of rural depopulation, declining membership, reduced finances, fewer volunteers, and a reduction in energy levels. Vacancies are increasing. Ministries are more often less than full-time. The number of ministry personnel continues to decline, which has been exacerbated by the end of the transfer and settlement process and the recent restrictions on the appointment of retired ministry personnel. However, we continue to be blessed by the many diaconal ministers and designated lay ministers who have chosen to call Saskatchewan Conference home and by the ever-increasing number of people who are taking the training to become licensed lay worship leaders and sacraments elders.

Conference Initiatives and Action

There are also many exciting new initiatives happening in the United Church in Saskatchewan Conference. A new Conference structure came into effect with the rise of our 2012 annual meeting. One of the results is that the Conference Executive has become smaller. The norm for decision making is by consensus. It is a place of collegiality and a place where everyone around the table has a voice. It is also a fertile place where exciting ideas come from all of the members around the table.

In particular it should be noted:

- In May of 2014, the decision was made to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to enter into discussions on resource revenue sharing with First Nations. In the fall of 2014, the Conference Executive decided to challenge ourselves in the same way and so a proposal was passed that half of the Moats Land Fund (which is revenue from oil-producing property) and half of the net income that accrues to the Fund be shared with the All Native Circle Conference, or its successor. As a result, to the end of 2017, \$202,415 has been given to the All Native Circle Conference.
- We have been intentional in building upon the relationship with the All Native Circle Conference and Plains Presbytery in other ways. Progress has been slow but it appears as if we may bear the fruit of that relationship as we enter into conversations about how the ministries in Saskatchewan Conference can work with the Indigenous ministries within the province.
- We continue to meet more and more by electronic means and have endorsed the principle proposed by the General Council Executive that face-to-face meetings should be minimized by including meetings by electronic formats to reduce the resulting carbon footprint. That is never easy. Glitches happen all the time. But it has been a great way to practise patience.
- Youth ministry through our Youth and Young Adult Community (YAYAC) Network and our Youth and Young Adult Ministry staff person is flourishing. This will be the third summer when we have operated our Vacation Bible school caravan, which travels for

eight weeks each summer throughout the province offering VBS to communities. It is staffed entirely by university and high school students and in addition to the services that it offers, it seems to be successful at building character and relationships.

- As a response to the decision at the General Council in Corner Brook to restrict ownership in oil-producing properties, the Conference has decided to use some of its assets to purchase shares in a solar power co-op. This is in addition to the grants that it also gives out to ministries within the Conference who perform renovations that are part of a green project of the ministry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, reduce water use, reduce sewage or stormwater, reduce pollutants, improve operations, educate occupants, or install renewable energy.
- Following the closure of Calling Lakes Centre, Saskatchewan Conference has supported a training program for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and the result has been a wealth of new people offering themselves for training.
- While it feels like there has been a levelling in energy for mission work, much positive continues to be happening within Saskatchewan Conference with educational events, social justice ministry, outreach, chaplaincy in its various forms, intercultural ministry, and reconciliation and relationship building between First Nations peoples and settled peoples.

Of course, there is a sense of determination that these initiatives continue within the new structure. At the same time, but with the reduction in finances, there is much fear that they will not.

Staffing Changes

Since 2009, the staffing of Saskatchewan Conference has reduced from 8.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff people to 4.3 FTE staff people plus a contract program staff person for youth and young adult ministry.

In other areas of the United Church staff reductions have been more newsworthy because they have happened in stages. The reduction in Saskatchewan Conference and, I am sure, in many of the other Conferences has been gradual but comparable. This has generally paralleled the gradual reduction in the grant from the General Council to the Conferences.

Since GC42 in the summer of 2015, there have been a few changes in the staffing of Saskatchewan Conference as follows:

- Pam Thomas, who started as the Conference Personnel Minister in 2001, retired effective September 30, 2015. Liz Mackenzie assumed the position effective September 1.
- Hazel Arbon, who started in the employment of Saskatchewan Conference in 2007, retired effective December 31, 2015. She was replaced by Julie Graham, who has assumed the position of Program Staff for Mission and Education on a half-time basis.

- Rose Seifert, who worked as an administrative staff person since December 2009, left for greener pastures in August of 2016. She was not replaced and her responsibilities were divided between the remaining two administrative staff.
- Katie Curtis, who worked as contract program staff person for youth and young adult ministry since the fall of 2012, resigned in January of 2017. Amar Koshy was hired to assume the position later that spring.

Future Directions

Life on the prairies is changing. Life in ministry as Saskatchewan Conference and as Region 4 is changing as well. Congregations are closing. Churches without ministry personnel are on the rise. Many can afford only part-time ministry personnel and that has contributed to the number of vacancies. Many communities include shared ministry with other denominations. Lay ministry is increasing as is how much it is being valued. There are approximately 30 sacraments elders in place at any one time.

The United Church in Saskatchewan Conference is prepared to embrace the change that is imminent. However, as we do so it will be important to those who are the United Church in Saskatchewan to do what we can to ensure that what makes the Conference distinctive lives on in the new structure and staffing models.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Doyle
Executive Secretary
Saskatchewan Conference

ALBERTA AND NORTHWEST CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

Alberta and Northwest Conference encompasses a large geography and four provincial/territorial jurisdictions: Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. We also have three interprovincial pastoral charges with points in Saskatchewan. This increased by one at the end of 2017 with the welcome addition of the United Church congregation in Alsask, Saskatchewan, to the Pioneer Pastoral Charge of Coronation Presbytery. To get an idea of the size of the Conference think about the fact that the distance between Edmonton in Alberta and Northwest Conference and Thunder Bay in the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario is shorter than the distance between Edmonton and Whitehorse, both of which are part of Alberta and Northwest Conference.

Over 400,000 people in the population of Alberta and Northwest Conference identify as United Church. The values of those within the United Church in Alberta and Northwest Conference reflect those of the general population. The average household income of people within the region is higher than the Canadian average. According to Environics, social values within the region and within the Conference are very similar.

However, there are differences in demographics between the United Church in Alberta and Northwest Conference and the general population. The profile of the general population is that of a younger, mobile, employed, affluent population, which tends to be married with families. There are also usually young children in the home.

On the other hand, as we know the profile of the United Church population is that of a more mature demographic even though the median age in Alberta and Northwest Conference is younger than the median age in the United Church as a whole. There is a high concentration of retired people. The United Church population is concentrated in urban and suburban areas and small towns. Those people who are connected with the United Church tend to be folk who were born in Canada; even higher than the national average.

Conference Initiatives and Action

In 2012, the Conference adopted a “Mission in Transition” model for its operations. This model allowed an opportunity to discern the United Church mission and vision in the Conference while remaining flexible in responding to changing levels of funding and places Alberta and Northwest Conference in a positive position to transition into the future structure of the United Church. We have also developed a stewardship program that remains flexible in changing times and allowed us to develop more cost-effective ways to support the mission of the church both in terms of dollars and human resources.

This model reduced the Conference staff to a core staff of Executive Secretary, Personnel Minister, Office Co-ordinator, Administrative Assistant Personnel, Accountant (0.6 FTE), and Archivist (0.6 FTE). In September 2016, Alberta and Northwest Conference started the sharing of Executive Secretaries, Shannon McCarthy and Bill Doyle, with Saskatchewan Conference and

the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. As such the position of Executive Secretary was reduced at that time to .66 FTE.

The Conference meets at a General Meeting every three years with a major gathering of the Conference to take place mid-triennium for the purposes of education and inspiration. In 2017, the Mid-Triennium Event was held in Olds, Alberta, and in 2018, the General Meeting is being held in Sherwood Park.

The people of Alberta and Northwest Conference are ready for change. Should Remit 1 be enacted by General Council, the report of the Boundaries Commission will divide the Conference into two regional councils being numbers 2 and 3 with some individual pastoral charges joining Region 1, which is in the former British Columbia Conference. We have engaged with this change enthusiastically but with caution that what is uniquely part of Alberta and Northwest Conference will not be lost and that the important work that is being done in a number of areas will continue as part of the new regional councils.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Doyle
Shannon McCarthy
Executive Secretaries
Alberta and Northwest Conference

BRITISH COLUMBIA CONFERENCE REPORT

Like the other Conferences and presbyteries throughout the church, BC Conference has been caught up in the whirlwind of change that has resulted from the acceptance of the remits authorized by General Council 42. Change, though, is nothing new to BC Conference and in many areas of our life we were already prepared spiritually and organizationally for even more. Change, when at its most effective, serves the purpose of deepening identity, and that is the approach we have tried to take in BC through the past two decades.

In 2000 BC Conference adopted a more effective governance model than it had previously, allowing it to move more quickly, flexibly, and innovatively in all areas of its life. In 2007 the Conference took on responsibility for having a quality, sustainable camping ministry so invested over \$11 million in capital improvements at two camps, as well as setting up a fund for long-term financial support. BC was one of the trial Conferences for the full Effective Leadership initiative and so has already adopted the structures and practices needed for the new pastoral relations work of the future regions. Significant property work has also been undertaken by the Conference, including the development of a growing affordable housing ministry that will (as presently constituted) build, own, and operate over 400 new rental units. This \$140 million project is in partnership with BC Housing. Joint agreements between presbyteries, congregations, and the Conference have resulted in the establishment of ProVision Funds, which presently distribute approximately \$640,000 annually to congregations and others in the church for new, imaginative, mission-oriented work.

The core work of the Conference is supported by significant bequest and investment income. Presently this income, along with presbytery allocations, supports 20 staff people, as well as several contractors. New funding has recently allowed the establishment of a program that can provide significant funding, guidance, and other support to new communities of faith, particularly ones committed to alternative ways of organizing and gathering as the church.

BC Conference is well-positioned to transition to become a new region. Conversations with the presbyteries have been taking place over the past three years about transitioning some present presbytery responsibilities to the Conference. They also worked to define the purpose for local clusters and started planning for how they might function. With the coming loss of presbyteries (and allocations from congregations) we are currently trying to determine how important local work might continue to be governed, funded, and managed. We welcome the addition of Whitehorse United and Rundle United congregations into our midst and look forward to discovering how these new relationships might enhance our life together.

Like the rest of the church, there is a wide variety in the vitality and sustainability of the congregations in the Conference. It has become clear that the brief postwar period of the 1950s was an anomaly in the life of the church in North America, where membership expectations were high, building programs extensive, and labour and property relatively cheap. The changed reality of the late 20th and early 21st century has meant that this model of the church is no longer sustainable. Our urban areas have dwindling and aging membership with too many congregations and buildings; our rural areas do not have the financial resources to support

properties and fully employed leadership. While many congregations in both urban and rural areas are able to overcome these trends, we continue to see the closure of congregations.

Closure, however, also brings the possibility of the redistribution of assets, both human and financial. By not having to focus all energy on “keeping the doors open,” many individuals can focus on more direct mission and ministry. By selling some properties, money is freed up to fund new initiatives and financially ground ones that need sustainable funding. By redeveloping and maintaining ownership of major properties, the church can leave a significant asset legacy for the generations yet to come.

The secularity of the west coast has been, and continues to be, a challenge to the church in BC Conference. But it has also meant that the Conference, and the congregations within it, have had to adapt and be more responsive to the world in which we find ourselves. The call of God to “be in the world but not of the world” continues...and if called, then we have nothing to fear, and everything in which to hope.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Cari Copeman-Haynes
President, BC Conference

ALL NATIVE CIRCLE CONFERENCE REPORT

The View from Here

All Native Circle Conference is 30 years old in 2018 and continues to span five provinces with 40 ministries, including 10 remote fly-in communities. The four presbyteries within our bounds continue to support ministry in their geographic areas, while looking ahead to the inevitable new and renewed relationship with neighbouring non-Indigenous communities of faith. As ANCC presbyteries examine their past, they look to their future anticipate both affirmative work and aspire to the challenges with any new relationship. (Keewatin Presbytery's final full meeting—Apasapowin Wekoskowin Looking Back, Moving Forward—was held in February of 2018.)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been adopted by the United Church in this triennium. The Indigenous church has used it as the framework to move forward in our new structures and relationships.

Conference Initiatives and Actions

In this past triennium we recognized one Designated Lay Minister and accompanied several candidates and students who are still in progress. There are currently 20 Aboriginal personnel in paid accountable ministry positions in the Conference, which is two less than our last report to GC due to one retirement and one long-term illness. Four Sacraments Elders were renewed this past year to continue support in community. There are other ministries in ANCC that are supported by non-Indigenous clergy who have transitioned well into community.

The Council of Sharing helped to transition the work of repair and oversight of nationally owned properties that are used by Aboriginal communities to the Aboriginal Ministries Council in March of 2016. Three Council of Sharing representatives were named to the new Property Committee. The Councils of Sharing and Learning also worked very hard to transition all ministry personnel salaries into the new compensation model. The new cost-of-living groups raised salaries (in most cases) across the country. We have come to the point where the Mission Support that pays clergy salaries in Indigenous communities of faith can no longer stretch far enough to provide all ministries with a clergy with a living wage. Our model of ministry relies on Indigenous clergy remaining and serving in their home communities, but this is changing. We currently have two graduates and candidates who we were unable to ordain because they did not have congregations to serve. One candidate is providing ministry through one of the social services programs in their home community. The *Calls to the Church* address this kind of issue and may mean recognizing ministry in community-based service organization.

The ANCC supported the work of the Aboriginal Ministries Council as they put caucus groups into place for our presbyteries and other Indigenous communities of faith close to us. The caucus groups reviewed the Caretakers' document *Calls to the Church* and gave them opportunity for conversation with the document and with each other. The people asked many questions, many of which stretch our imagination to answer.

We are grateful to Saskatchewan Conference, which shared with us a monetary gift and the promise of ongoing annual royalties. This generosity of spirit has lifted many holds on our decisions and programs. The Conference has enjoyed more freedom and ability to say “yes” to initiatives we otherwise would have had to reject or have staff search for other alternatives and to provide support to ministries by undergirding their budgets. We have made it a priority to gather Indigenous youth annually. We seek to build community among our young and the young at heart who accompany them, all the while utilizing Indigenous spiritualities and teachings. It has been amazing to experience what a financial safety net can do for confidence decision makes in planning and budgeting.

Staffing Changes

ANCC office experienced a few staff transitions in this triennium—a retirement and a long-term illness moved us to braiding together an administrative support staff team to oversee the workings during these two transitions. A new term contract was created with the focus of Travel, Communications and Technical Support.

Our CPM team changed with a retirement in 2017 and a personal leave in 2018. As a result, we braided together a new team to carry out the CPM portfolio, which is support to students and ministry personnel, administration, pastoral care to clergy, and pastoral relations. We have several part-time staff to support each of the areas of work. This is an interesting time, as we continue to provide support and work toward the transition of our work to another model.

Future Directions

After GC42, ANCC named a transition team from the Executive to the working group that came to be known as the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle. ANCC helped the Caretakers develop a strategy that provides a just and equitable relationship with Indigenous peoples for the whole church. We hosted the Caretakers in our Conference office over the past two years, thrilled to have the diverse Indigenous leadership from across Canada among us and with us. Most of the Caretakers’ work took place around the large boardroom table that ANCC inherited from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Winnipeg office. We were grateful for the wisdom it inspired in us and for us.

With so many changes in our structure ahead and new relationships to forge, we are stretched to our limits as the entire church groans under the weight of moving from an old way of being into the new and renewed. We put our trust in Spirit to guide, strengthen, and give us all hope. Meegwetch. Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Jourdain
Speaker
All Native Circle Conference

NEW PROPOSALS

GC43 02 PROVIDING SUPPORT AND CONVERSATION ON THE TOPIC OF CONTEMPORARY AND EVOLVING WORSHIP

Origin: Navan Forsythe (emergent business)

1. What is the issue?

We believe that our Creator is calling us to find new ways of engaging with our congregants as well as those outside of our denomination; in order to deepen our own spiritual lives as well as introduce more people to the work of The United Church of Canada and the teachings of Christ. This is an issue that many Moderator candidates are speaking about, however this is not an issue that need be beholden to any one particular Moderator and therefore must come from outside of a candidate speech.

2. Why is this issue important?

Church attendance is on the decline. This is for a myriad of reasons, some of which are out of our control, however some of the reasons such as: the inaccessibility of traditional methods of worship to some people, and a lack of positive experience with Christianity or a lack of knowledge about the work of the United Church are things that we can affect and we must effect if we wish to continue on as a Church into the Future.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a) **By establishing a denominational task group of individuals who have experience with United Church evangelism as well as alternative ways of worshiping (ex: Youth ministry, Campus Bible Study, Contemporary worship programs such as Maritime Conference's BE, as well as inter-faith and inter-denominational ministry) in order to establish resources, plans of action and support for those looking to revitalize worship in their region or area.**
- b) **To perform studies and surveys that seek to understand why people are leaving the United Church, The dissatisfactions or hopes people have with and for the traditional model worship, Why programs such as BE or the inter-denominational and inter-collegial Bible Study in Montreal function, and to look to other regions, religions, denominations and organizations that have done or are currently doing work to create new ways of worship and learning from them.**
- c) **Creating a task group that works to implement and translate contemporary ministries from one region to another based on the findings of the studies from point B.**
- d) **Creating a position that would work underneath the Executive Minister of a region to provide funds and support to organizations within the church looking to create contemporary ministries.**
- e) **If many aren't willing to make large scale change: Utilizing the current connections of Presbytery and Conference positions in order to create Clusters and Networks that would work towards this goal even without the support of the denominational council come January 1 2019.**

- f) **Having conversations and discussions around this incredibly important topic at General Council in order to seek out new ways of being Church and to acknowledge that the old ways are not always the right ways even if this work is not supported by the denominational council through finances, personal and connections it must still happen.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Understand that this proposal acts in no way as a condemnation of traditional services or worship merely as an acknowledgment that the church must grow as well as hold on to its roots.

Bear in mind that the reason for expanding and changing as a church must never be for the sole purpose of increasing the size of our congregation. We must do this also to meet the spiritual needs of those who are not having their needs met and providing a space for people to explore and deepen their faith that would not otherwise exist.

GC43 03 ENSURING OUR DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES REFLECT OUR COMMITMENT TO BEING AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH

Origin: Debra Schneider, Toronto Conference (emergent business)

1. What is the issue?

As a church committed to intercultural ministry, we want to ensure that our overall approaches to decision-making and implementation are inclusive of the many and diverse perspectives of our church.

2. Why is it important?

We believe God is calling us to find concrete ways to live more deeply into our denominational commitment to live as an intercultural church which is intentionally reflective of the diverse perspectives within it. One way to live out this commitment is to adopt criteria for all decision-making and implementation measures that ensure we take into consideration the many and diverse voices that make up our United Church.

The Report of the ANWE: Faithful Decision-making on Social Justice Issues in the UCC & the recommendations of proposal GCE12 contain principles and guidelines designed to access the diverse voices within the church. Many of these would be useful in all of our decision-making and implementation measures, enabling us to make all our decisions using an intercultural lens and reminding us to question biases, challenge assumptions, notice who's missing, value all voices, aim for equity, and live out our commitments to being a radically inclusive intercultural church.

3. How might the General Council respond to this issue?

The 43rd General Council might recommend that the General Secretary seek to capture wisdom found in the report of ANW3 Faithful Decision-making on Social Justice Issues in the UCC, and in the recommendations of proposal GCE12, by applying the relevant criteria, guidelines, principles suggested there to decision-making and implementation processes in other areas of the church.

GC43 04 NATIONAL YOUNG ADULT BOARD

Origin: From a concerned group of young adult commissioners under 30 from General Council 43

1. What is the issue?

Currently there is no youth representative working with the General Council of The United Church of Canada. While there are two under 30 members on the General Council Executive, there is no individual with the specific calling of representing the youth of The United Church of Canada. The United Church of Canada is all about representation and inclusion of all ages, and diverse groups. The fact that there is no official youth representation at the national level is troubling.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important as some under-30 commissioners feel that their demographic is underrepresented within The United Church of Canada at the national level. We acknowledge that there are passionate under-30 youths across the nation involved in The United Church of Canada, however there is no singular representative that works with the General Council Executive to communicate youth perspectives and assist in the development of youth and young adult ministries. Throughout General Council 43, we have heard support and callings from our ancestors encouraging the youth to have a more prominent voice. We, as under-30 commissioners, are tired of the continuous repetition of words followed by no action. We are now taking our own actions in hopes of enhancing our faith community across the country. We are not the future of the church, we are the church. We wish to make a place for the youth to come.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

We propose to create a National Youth Board. This National Youth Board will work together to discover existing and encourage new youth driven ministries throughout The United Church of Canada. The National Youth Board will include one under-30 commissioner from each region to sit on the board for a three-year term. The position of a National Youth Commissioner is to be a voice enhancing the youth-driven ministries in their own regions. We would strongly encourage all regions to reach out and include their youth commissioner in their executive dialogues. Once the National Youth Board is formed, a Chair Person will be elected by the commissioners to sit

as a corresponding member to the General Council Executive. The purpose of having this corresponding member would be to communicate the needs of the regions from a youth perspective to the General Council Executive and to act as a bridge, bringing support from the Executive to the nation's youth.

In this time of transition the issue of funds is a viable concern. The National Youth Board hopes to receive funding by applying to numerous grants (such as the United Church Foundation and New Ministries Grant) and is happy to receive gifts of faith from congregations that feel called to support this cause.

The under-30 youth commissioners encourage General Council 43 to:

- **Endorse the creation and development of the National Youth Board**
- **Encourage the General Council Executive to create a corresponding member position specifically for the Chair Person of the National Youth Board.**
- **Provide a support person who would give wisdom, and spiritual guidance during the creation period.**

GC43 05 YOUTH INTERN ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Origin: Youth Forum

1. What is the issue?

We believe that God is calling the United Church to recognize that youth hold valuable and unique insights and should be given the opportunity to share these insights at the highest levels of the United Church. We also believe that engaged youth should be given the opportunity to experience the decision-making bodies of the church in order to better understand the church's work.

2. Why is this issue important?

"Taking young people seriously is essential to the journey toward wholeness in the church. Each person, at whatever age, will have gifts and needs within the community. The integration of children and youth into the church is an important part in the journey toward the wholeness God intends for the church." —Quote from the United Church's official website.

The United Church speaks often and at length about the importance of youth ministry. After all, youth are both the present and the future of the church! Youth bring unique wisdom to all aspects of the church. As GC43 can attest, many youths are among the most engaged and active members of the church.

We see an opportunity to continue to educate and engage the youth in the processes of the United Church while also giving an opportunity for youth's perspectives to be heard through

the executive council. By establishing a work-learning position, i.e. an internship, we allow youth voices to be heard while further engaging the youth in the church and nurturing wise leaders to lead the church. This position would also allow for some work of the executive to be off-loaded to this youth intern, allowing for the voting members to focus on the issues at hand, which should offset any concerns over loss of council efficiency.

There is clearly a concern of whether youth could handle such an important responsibility. This is a valid concern; modern youth live busy lives that progress and change much more rapidly than that of adults and elders. However, while we understand the many stresses in a youth's life, one must also remember that the executive is not a full-time position. Many, if not most, members of the executive council hold full-time jobs on top of the many responsibilities of adulthood. There is no reason to assume that this position would be any more difficult on a dedicated and engaged youth. To the second point, that modern youths live rapidly changing lives, this is completely true; three years is a completely unpredictable length of time in a youth's life and few would be able to accept a mandate over such an unpredictable timeline. This is why this position would have a shorter, around one-year term. This would give more youth the opportunity to experience this position and would allow for a greater variety of youth voices.

This is not an issue of representation, but one of nurturing the future of the church, both by growing youth leaders and by hearing the unique wisdom of the youth.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The 43rd General Council could direct the General Secretary to create a Youth Internship Program, with the candidate to have the duties of a corresponding member to the executive council. This person, between the ages of 15–24,¹ would serve for up to one year and would act as support to the council while learning of the issues facing the church and how the church is responding to them.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

Mover: Jason O'Hearn, Maritime Conference

Seconder: Isabella Barbeiro, Manitou Conference

¹ Age range chosen to reflect the United Nations Universal Definition of youth

GC43 06 AMENDMENT TO THE BASIS OF UNION'S ARTICLE 10.0 ON MINISTRY PERSONNEL
Origin: Selina Mullin, Montreal & Ottawa Conference (emergent business)

1. What is the issue?

Currently, The Basis of Union article 10.0 reads as “The Order of Ministry shall be open to both men and women.”

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to adjust the language of The Basis of Union to reflect the gender diversity of our membership and ministry personnel.

2. Why is this issue important?

On the 30th anniversary of the 1988 decision to extend membership to all individuals in our church, and thus ordination; it has been noted that there is a need to extend the language of *The Manual* to include the transgender, intersex, non-binary and two-spirit siblings of our church. We cannot ignore the diversity within the LGBTQ2IA community, which extends beyond sexuality to gender expression.

We remember that in 2009 the church approved its *Commitment to Inclusion*, which states that, in matters respecting worship, doctrine, membership, and governance, the United Church is opposed to discrimination against any person on any basis, such as race, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, socioeconomic status, age, language, or any other basis on which a person is devalued. The church further commits to becoming an anti-discriminatory and welcoming denomination.

We would also would like to name that trans-men are men, and trans-women are women but that within the trans community there are those who do not ascribe to binary labels.

We recognize that persons of all sex traits and gender expressions can receive a vocational call to ministry, be gifted with the competencies and abilities required to serve, and be called by a community to serve.

We also recognize the many ministers, both ordained, diaconal, and lay, who are already serving in our communities; though they are not included in the the present language of *The Manual*.

We also honour the history of the article, which speaks to the historic movement to include women in the call to ministry in our United church in the 1930's.

However, we see this change as an evolution in our understanding as a church of the nature and role of gender in our society.

2. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council could change the language of The Basis of Union article 10.0 to be inclusive of peoples of all genders, such as to read “The Order of Ministry shall be open to persons of all genders.”

GC43 07 THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IN GLOBAL ECUMENICAL CONVERSATION

Origin: Bob Fillier (Discussion Group L) (emergent business)

1. What is the issue?

We believe that one of the strengths of The United Church of Canada is to invite its ecumenical partners into deep theological discourse. While the TOR 4 proposal to GC43 speaks to the need for this denomination to have a conversation about its social gospel theology, we believe this conversation is larger than any one denomination, tradition, of ecumenical partner.

2. Why is this issue important?

During GC43 we have repeatedly heard from our ecumenical partners of their deep appreciation for The United Church of Canada and the role it plays in supporting ecumenical ministry beyond the boundaries of this particular denomination.

At the same time, we have also been reminded that the decisions we make about theology (what we believe) and ecclesiology (how we are church) has implications for how we are in partnership with our sisters and brothers within the Christian tradition.

We have also been reminded that we need to invite all our relations (including our ecumenical partners) into these conversations, especially ones that transcend denominational boundaries and that are important to the whole body of Christ.

While it is important for The United Church of Canada to have a deep theological conversation about the social gospel, it is also important for that conversation to happen within the Christian tradition and amongst our various ecumenical partners.

Issues that fit under the social gospel umbrella have become increasingly complex, trans-national, and fluid. What isn't an issue one day can be a humanitarian crisis the next. Whether it's migrant people, civil unrest, the development of artificial intelligence, indigenous rights, health care, or human rights these issues often evolve faster than our denominational structures and theologies can respond. It is our belief that there is a role for The United Church of Canada by being on the leading edge of calling communities together to engage these types of complex theological issues.

We believe that Jesus called his disciples to constantly move away from the centre in order to be in solidarity with those on the margins. That the grace of Jesus' ministry is found in the belief that everyone is a child of God. That his ministry was to reconcile and heal a hurting world both to the Creator and amongst the created.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

- a) **Invite our ecumenical partners to join with us in a conversation about how the social gospel has evolved and what it looks like in the 21st century, particularly in light of the rise in complex social issues that transcend national boundaries.**
- b) **The General Secretary could allocate staff time and resources towards facilitating such a conversation.**
- c) **Consider incorporating work from this global lens into that of GC43 TOR 04.**

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council

This proposal is not meant to replace TOR 04, rather it is meant to build upon and provide a larger ecumenical lens through which to engage a conversation about how we understand the social gospel in the 21st century.

It is hoped that this level of conversation will added additional depth and richness to our internal conversation.

GC43 08 FACILITATING DIALOGUE ON THE LIFE OF SMALL MINISTRIES

Origin: Andrew Hecker, Saskatchewan Conference (emergent business)

1. The Issue

We believe that the Spirit is calling us to engage our siblings in Christ and the whole body of the Church in honest dialogue about the life cycle of our Communities of Faith.

2. The Importance

The width and breadth of proposals regarding Communities of Faith, arising from across the disparate geography of the church, and common sentiments gleaned from listening and discussion groups throughout the course of this General Council, and from chance or providential conversations with members of the church here and elsewhere, has brought into focus the perspective that we are trying to respond to circumstances without adequately ascertaining what those circumstances actually are, and that we have become so focused on treating symptoms that we have taken our attention away from the causes of those symptoms.

The challenges faced by small and rural ministry have commonalities all across the church, and the time for stop-gap measures is past. The United Church is a family of countless members, running the gamut from boisterous to reflective, nascent to ancient, joyful to sombre, builder to reliquary. Just as any other family, we sometimes need to have hard conversations with each other, in this case about the life cycle of our being, from birth to activity and work, to our age of wisdom, to palliative care, to death, to resurrection.

As our Communities of Faith are called to provide pastoral care to our individual members so they are not alone when they pass from this world and so they are assured that they are loved, so, too, do we as a church owe a debt of care to those who went before, who built this church that we have inherited, to comfort them in their decline, and to give them permission to let go when it is their time, that they might pass peacefully and gracefully into their resurrection, whatever form that resurrection might take.

As this issue is relevant in all areas of the church, and as it is an opportunity for the General Council to demonstrate its love and care for the Communities of Faith that support it and enable its work, it is fitting that this task be undertaken by the General Council and its Executive, rather than another court or body of the Church.

3. The Response

The General Council Executive could commit itself to discerning how the entire church could engage in a faithful, compassionate, and honest conversation about the life cycle, resurrection, and end-of-life matters of communities of faith, and bring the entire church into that conversation at the earliest practical opportunity.

Moved by Andrew Hecker, Saskatchewan Conference.

Seconded by Paula Gale, Newfoundland & Labrador Conference.

GC43 09 SEEKING FORGIVENESS

That the 43rd General Council seek forgiveness from our racialized siblings in Christ and furthermore commit to transforming our business practice and procedures for the remainder of this meeting, and from this point forward.

Mover: D. MacDonald

Seconder: P. Nelson

NOT COMPLETED.

GC43 10 ADDRESSING THE RACISM IN THE CHURCH THROUGH DIALOGUE**Origin: General Council 43****1. What is the issue?**

The church is flawed in a many ways and has hurt people and we need a space for that hurt to be spoken about openly and truthfully instead of where it can be squeezed in during our meetings.

2. Why is this issue important?

This issue is important because as we currently stand people feel invisible, alone, on the sidelines within our church. They feel that we are not doing enough, and we aren't. There are people at the table we have not heard from and others who still do not have a seat, and this is wrong. We must make a change; if we are ever to truly live into the world God wants us to live in we must change, and we must do it now.

3. How might the church respond?

- a) **The General Secretary and General Council Executive could conduct studies to assess where the church is lacking in its mission to be inclusive and intercultural;**
- b) **events that are explicitly created to share stories such as tones shared in the final hours of GC43 could be created and made accessible to those who need them;**
- c) **following the model of Iridesce, a story sharing program could be created that confronts the racism in the past and present of the church and the experiences of racialized ministers;**
- d) **this same model could create a story sharing program for those with disabilities also marginalized by the church;**
- e) **the church could provide the resources for sharing circles to be conducted in order for the stories of a given area to be heard by those in that area;**
- f) **a board could be created that looks into acts of racism perpetrated by communities of faith against their congregants or ministers and would aid those facing the racism to be supported accordingly;**
- g) **if such a board currently exists it should be supported further and implemented in all regions as it is evident that racism still exists within the church and goes unchallenged;**
- h) **such a board could work closely or be combined with the Equity Monitor of a region;**
- i) **that anything implemented be worked on by not only those of dominant cultures but also by those who are being marginalized still by the church.**

**Rulings and Opinions of the General Secretary, General Council,
August 2015–July 2018**

16-001-O	June 29, 2016	Ministry Personnel Serving as Chair of Governing Body
16-001-R	March 11, 2016	Functions Performed By Persons on Discontinued Service List
18-001-R	May 14, 2018	Congregational Governing Body and Board of Trustees

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