

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

## Strategic Plan 2023–2025

### 2024 Operational Plan Report

#### Quarter 4

February 1, 2025



# 2024 Operational Plan Report: Quarter 4

## Contents

**Overall Results** .....3

**Strategic Objectives** ..... 5

    Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith.....6

    Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World.....9

    Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship..... 13

    Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources..... 15

    Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments ..... 18

    Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations..... 19

**Origin of the Plan**..... 20

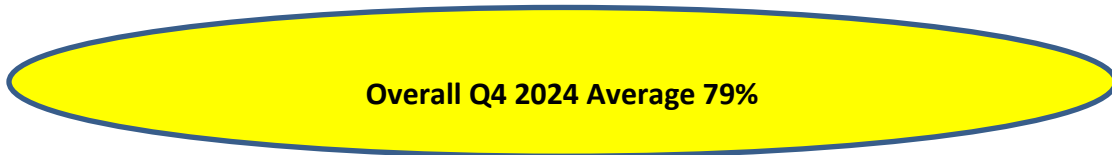
## Legend:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Delayed	Awaiting Activation
Progress on the overall objective or activity is moving along well. Key results per quarter are being met.	Progress on the overall objective or activity continues but not exactly at the rate or in the sequence anticipated.	More significant issues have surfaced related to the overall objective or activity and they are being actively managed towards continued progress.	Something significant has delayed this activity and we are giving attention to discerning the way forward or getting it back on track.	This activity was not planned to begin until a later quarter.
80-100%	60-79%	50-59%	Under 50%	

**Bold is for priority activities**

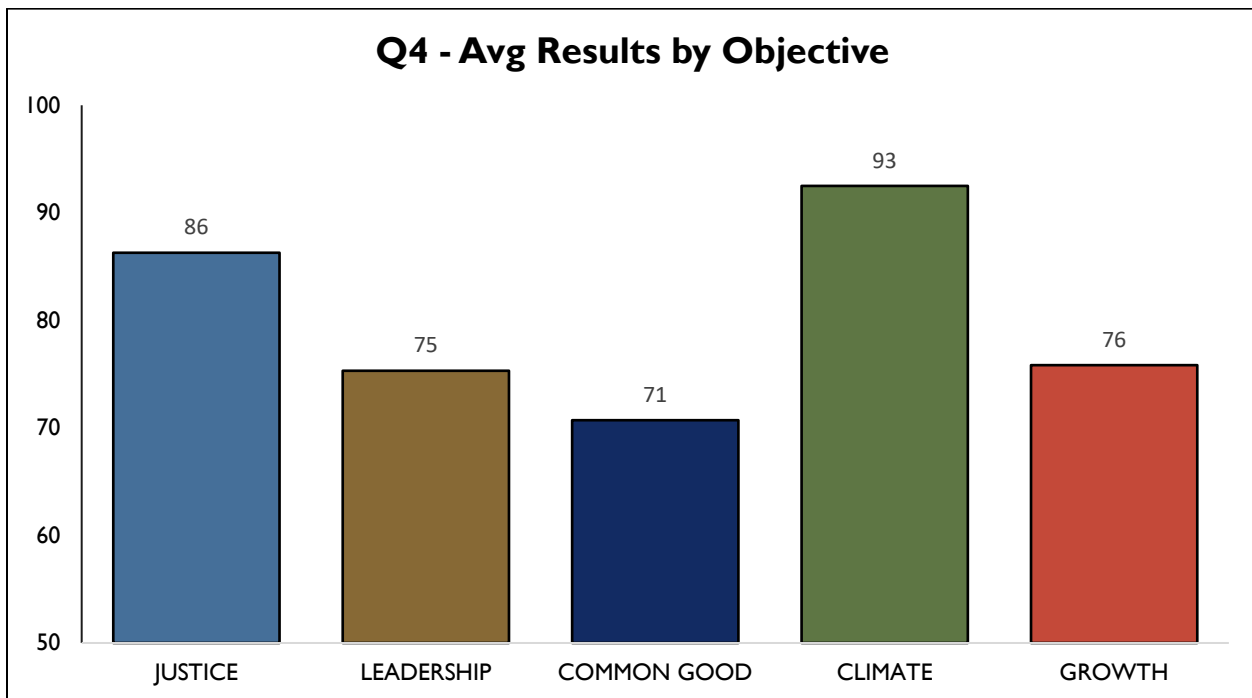
## Overall Results:

### Chart



Strategic Objective	Progress on Key Results
<b>Strengthen Invitation</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Embolden Justice</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Nurture the Common Good</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Invigorate Leadership</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Deepen Climate Integrity</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Journeying Indigenous Pathways</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Graph



## Narrative Summary

Our overall progress on key results is holding strong this quarter (Q4 79%), consistent with progress earlier in the year (Q1 76%; Q2 80%; Q3 77%). One of the additional challenges of this quarter, particularly for management, was that while implementation of Q4 was still unfolding, significant work was being done to revise and approve the annual plan for 2025. In the first situation in recent memory, the full annual plan, including budget, was approved by the General Secretary in December, prior to the year of implementation having begun.

An emerging theme both from the implementation of Strategic Plan activities, and from research commissioned by the General Secretary and engaged with by Staff Leaders from across the denomination in Q4, is the growing need to intensify and increase the impact of Community of Faith supports. This requires deepening coordination across the General Council Office and with regions so that supports are known, highly beneficial, and easily accessible by Communities of Faith. A key element in next year's planning will be a clear assessment of existing services and supports and work to coordinate and streamline for ease of access. Technological solutions, advanced over the past two years under the Common Good banner, are key components in enabling Community of Faith supports.

As the Strengthening Invitation (or Growth) initiative, introduced in this Strategic Plan as a key priority, completes its second year of implementation, we are seeing tangible results such as:

- **Renew:** Congregational invitation plans implemented by existing communities working with Growth animators are resulting in new attendees;
- **Create:** 25 emerging migrant and diaspora communities of faith have begun and are developing with supports;
- **Invite:** Denominational outreach strategies, such as Centennial initiatives, are resulting in new subscribers

The use of data, to observe trends, map context, plan interventions, and assess impact is becoming more consistent particularly in the Growth initiative but also more broadly across the organization. We continue to work to develop effective use of data, and increased capacity to sharpen focus and strategy.

---

### Good News

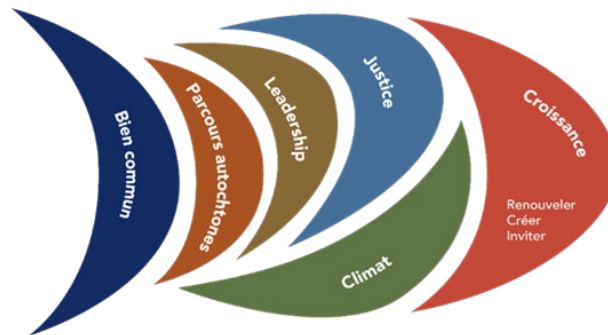
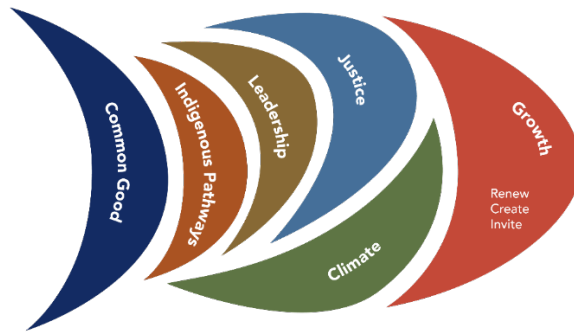
As part of the Growth's renewal work, Tori Mullin, Growth Animator, in collaboration with GIS Specialist Sharon Buttrey, hosted two workshops at regional council gatherings on how to use the Neighbourhood Profile tool developed by the GCO Research and Development Team. 68 profiles were provided to participating congregations. Congregations were invited to connect the data to the church's call and get curious about the neighbours they are not currently in relationship with. These workshops received some good feedback, with many benefits including tangible national support of CoFs and introduction of the Growth Animator to the regions, and developed presentation material that can be continually improved and used in other regions moving forward.

*--Rev Cameron Fraser, Director of Growth and Ministry Development*

---

## Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives—Justice, Leadership, Common Good, Climate, and Indigenous Pathways—show strong intersections among them, and collectively contribute to the overarching strategic priority on Growth. The following section identifies each objective and offers a narrative and numerical summary of overall progress, as well as giving more detailed information as to how each activity in this objective has fared in this quarter. Please note that the numbers reflect progress not to the ultimate three-year goal, but to the planned key results for this quarter. For a further description of an activity, and/or the relevant key results, please contact [planning@united-church.ca](mailto:planning@united-church.ca)



## **Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith** **76%**

**Objective:** Develop and implement effective and connected regional and national strategies that result in growth within existing ministries, and by seeding and sustaining new expressions of communities of faith.

### **Accomplishments**

**Renew:** In October and November, regionally deployed Growth Animators engaged with 185 Ministry Personnel and 422 Communities of Faith. 17 Communities of Faith and 63 individuals were engaged in the *Called to be the Church* Stewardship course. In Northern Spirit, *Delving into Discipleship*, a pilot project in which Stewardship Coach and Growth Animator lead a year-long cohort of Communities of Faith identified by Regional Council Staff around proactive community growth, launched with five congregations. 100 participants joined a national retreat for francophone youth, *La rencontre nationale des jeunes francophones du Canada (Ré-unis)*. The Flourishing Workshop was offered in St. John's and Moncton. An Advent invitation resource was developed and launched via the *Advent Unwrapped* including a downloadable, adjustable invitation card and a video offering examples of person-to-person invitation to Christmas Eve Worship. Growth staff resourced the Rural Ministry Gathering hosted by Leadershift offering keynote speaking, workshop leadership, and anti-racism education.

**Create:** The number of migrant and diasporic communities receiving support from the United Church of Canada rose to 25, with 2 possibilities identified for discernment in early 2025. The Growth Initiative made investments in the Pacific Mountain Regional Council Church Planting Program, Hillhurst United Church (Calgary) satellite site at the Living Spirit Centre, Cowan Heights United Church (St. John's) Home Harbour new ministry initiative, and Francophone new ministry in Moncton with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council. The Fertile Soil mapping project has been completed in its test location Eastern Ottawa Outaouais Regional Council.

**Invite:** There was slightly more than a 10% increase in subscriber base to the Centennial Newsletter. The strategy for the *Place at the Table* Public Outreach Campaign was reconfigured this quarter ready to be implemented in 2025. Also in development is a dynamic photo reinterpretation of the Last Supper, contributing to denominational reflection on a *Place at the Table* at Easter 2025. [MonCredo](#) supported the national francophone youth event and completed the drafting of three sponsored video messages working with a French Speaking online influencer. Worship leaders are planning the June 10, 2025 Centennial Service.

### **Challenges**

The high number of national and regional offerings geared towards Communities of Faith across the denomination is in many ways wonderful. But with so many options available there is also a level of challenge in regards to clarity, alignment, focus and coordination. Given the fatigue experienced at

the Community of Faith level, a more strategic approach to interventions and supports feels necessary. Q1 of 2025 will begin to address this through an initial assessment.

## Looking Forward

Substantive strategy development was done for the *Place at the Table* public outreach campaign, facilitating major pieces that will come to fruition in 2025. The experience of creating a downloadable resource around Strengthen Invitation has provided valuable learnings that will support the creation of a suite of resources in 2025. A new Activity Stream dedicating additional focus and resources to Supporting Renewal in Rural Contexts was developed and will launch at the beginning of 2025.

### Accountable: Rev. Cameron Fraser

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
RENEW: Strengthen the capacities of existing communities of faith Shift: Increased ability to welcome, attract, retain, transform and send people into the world.	<b>Tools and Accompaniment for CoFs</b>	70
	Stewardship for CoFs	100
	<b>Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops</b>	80
	Renewing Francophone Communities	100
CREATE: Gathering learning from our own experience and that of denominations and global partners, create 100 new communities of faith. Shift: Towards vibrant diversity, and intercultural community, transformative in the world.	Online Communities	Ended
	<b>Regional/Identity Communities</b>	50
	<b>Migrant Communities</b>	100
	Intercultural communities	100
	<b>Francophone Communities</b>	100
	Diverse Identity Communities	Ended
INVITE: Galvanize common identity and purpose and communicate effectively to the public about the spiritual home or pathways to home in the church. Shift: Towards greater internal connectedness; stronger external outreach.	Engage with Call and Vision	50
	<b>Outreach: Communication Strategy</b>	30
	Francophone Outreach	50
	Centennial Commemoration Project	80

---

### Good News

A participant in the Stewardship Best Practices course from Harmony United, Saint John, NB, said "I wish I had done this a long time ago! This course has been eye opening and fills me with hope for the future of my community of faith.

--Rev. Dave Jagger, Community of Faith Stewardship Lead

---

## Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World 86%

**Objective:** Make meaningful collective progress on Indigenous justice, racial equity, and Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+ rights both in the church and world, while demonstrably deepening bold effective solidarity on other justice issues, through ecumenical collaboration and denominational networking

### Accomplishments

Over the past quarter, the Justice Team has made significant strides in advancing our advocacy efforts, particularly in the areas of 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, anti-racism, and Indigenous justice. These efforts are part of our broader strategy to collaborate in spaces where just relationships can flourish, fostering abundant life in the church, Canada, and global communities.

**Anti-Racism:** The [40 Days of Engagement of Anti-Racism](#) initiative was a notable success, attracting high participation rates and new attendees. This initiative has played a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting anti-racism within the community. We have also provided support to communities addressing white privilege through workshops, preaching, and follow-up resources, fostering inclusivity and awareness.

Efforts to reinvigorate justice networks have been successful, with the launch of a "Succeed in Advocacy" webinar series aimed at mobilizing United Church members and supporters around national policy priorities, including anti-racism. However, ongoing governance challenges have diverted staff resources, impacting our ability to focus on these initiatives. Limited funding has also restricted progress, underscoring the importance of securing sustainable funding sources.

**LGBTQIA+ Global Commitments:** The past quarter has seen advancement in LGBTQIA+ rights and social justice. We have strengthened global partnerships, particularly in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Africa, and deepened connections with organizations focused on LGBTQIA+ rights. Our commitment to decolonizing partnerships and becoming an anti-racist church has been affirmed, with interest from several organizations for closer collaboration. Despite challenges posed by global crises and restrictions on public messaging, we have continued advocacy efforts, adapted refugee support resources, and planned engagements with organizations to promote LGBTQIA+ rights and support refugees.

**Indigenous Justice:** Progress has been made in the Reparations and Apologies Project, with a researcher hired and an initial report expected in March 2025. Bringing the Children Home transferred \$200,000 to Stó:lō Nation for their work of commemoration and recovery at the Coqualeetza institution. These funds will be used to support the Stó:lō Shxweli Language Program, which operates on the Coqualeetza grounds and focusses on developing teaching resources to promote an immersion language learning program, teaching Halq'eméylem in Halq'eméylem. The Stó:lō Chiefs have said that "promoting and encouraging Halq'eméylem use, and supporting Halq'eméylem teachers and learners as we aim towards reestablishing fluency is an essential element of reconciliation and redress of harms resulting from Residential Schools and colonial institutions."



Archival work has continued, enhancing transparency and preserving historical data. However, challenges persist, including stalled Covenant of Reconciliation work, delays in projects like "Spiritual Violence," and resource allocation issues, highlighting the need for improved project management and prioritization.

**Radical Accompaniment:** Recent initiatives have yielded promising results, strengthening relationships with ecumenical partners through in-person visits, participation in the ACT Alliance General Assembly, and key appointments such as partners serving on the Act Alliance governance. Decolonizing partnerships have been affirmed, with interest from organizations like Finn Church Aid, and regional conversations have emphasized mutual radical accompaniment and meaningful consultation. A \$50,000 funding grant is supported these efforts.

The implementation of global partnership initiatives has yielded several successes, including strengthened relationships with global partners and ecumenical organizations, recognition of decolonizing efforts, and enhanced contextual understanding. However, potential challenges may arise in sustaining momentum, particularly in replicating the success of regional conversations in Asia across other regions. Additionally, navigating power dynamics to ensure effective collaboration and securing sustainable funding sources may require careful consideration. Key lessons learned include the importance of relationship building, contextual understanding, and consultation and adaptation to partner needs, highlighting the value of mutual radical accompaniment and decolonizing partnerships in fostering global partnerships and promoting justice.

## Challenges

The past quarter has underscored several key principles. Internal coordination and clear processes are essential for effective and impactful work, as evidenced by the success of monthly meetings and draft advocacy processes. Flexible communication strategies and contingency plans are crucial for maintaining momentum amidst challenges, such as public messaging restrictions. Securing sustainable funding sources and re-prioritizing projects based on available resources is vital for overcoming funding limitations. Integrated planning and cross-functional collaboration can significantly amplify impact, as seen in the intersection of anti-racism initiatives and community engagement. Thorough vetting and alignment of stakeholders with strategic goals are necessary for meaningful partnerships. Continuous evaluation and feedback, as demonstrated by the *40 Days of Engagement* initiative, are essential for informing and adjusting strategies to ensure they remain effective and responsive to community needs.

## Looking Forward

By addressing these challenges and incorporating these lessons, we can enhance our efforts, achieve greater alignment with our goals, and drive meaningful progress in 2SLGBTQIA+, anti-racism, and Indigenous justice advocacy. Our interconnected efforts have collectively advanced our overarching strategy of justice, reconciliation, and community engagement, with evaluation data and ongoing collaborations indicating a meaningful impact. As we move forward, we remain committed to fostering global partnerships, promoting justice, and supporting decolonizing efforts, ensuring that our advocacy work continues to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

**Accountable: Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu**

<b>Multi-Year Initiative</b>	<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Progress on Key Results</b>
INDIGENOUS JUSTICE: Address anti-Indigenous racism and White supremacy and make the church and Canada safer and more equitable for Indigenous peoples. Shift: Towards decolonization and increased justice.	<b>TRC Calls to Action</b>	70
	Indigenous Strength Learning Opportunities	100
	<b>Reparations</b>	75
	Bringing the Children Home	75
RACIAL EQUITY: Advance racial equity. Shift: Towards transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized people.	Self-defined Healing	100
	<b>Racial Equity in Housing Advocacy</b>	75
	Addressing Antisemitism	100
	Anti-Racism Education	90
	Addressing White Privilege	25
2S-LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS: Enhance 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights including addressing religious-induced homophobia. Shift: Towards integrating and intersecting with other justice issues.	Refugee Sponsorship	90
	LGBTQIA+ Global and Ecumenical Advocacy	90
ECUMENISM: Increase ecumenical collaboration and effectiveness. Shift: Towards stronger impact and reduction in overlap.	Ecumenical Youth Exchange	90
	Stronger Ecumenical Partnership	100
RADICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: Strengthen accompaniment of global partners. Shift: Towards needs development.	Financial Sharing	80
	Crisis Response	97
	People to People	100
	Witness	90
	Visits and Meetings	95
	<b>Roundtables</b>	100
PUBLIC WITNESS: Strengthen presence in the public sphere and effectiveness in advocacy as a denomination. Shift: Towards greater public presence, clearer principles and processes of response.	<b>Moderator's Initiative: Public Events and Book Clubs</b>	90
	Advocacy: Presence and Methodology	80

## **Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship** **75%**

**Objective:** Renew a vision of leadership based on the call of the denomination—deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice—and align discernment, recruitment, training, and support of ordered and lay leadership, to this vision.

### **Accomplishments**

**Youth and Young Adult/First Third Ministry:** The Vision Fund Seed grants were fully subscribed, which is a good indicator that program for, with, and by youth and young adults is being strengthened.

**Ministry Development and Reimagining Theological Education:** The *Statement on Ministry* draft was favourably reviewed by the Task Group with only small editorial changes to make in preparation for presentation to Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) and the Board of Vocation (BOV) in early February 2025. The work is on track to present to General Council Executive (GCE) in March.

The anti-racism faculty network met in-person in December and created action items for 2025. For the overall work on reimagining theological education, the consultant has had initial conversations with the heads of each school and has submitted an interim report outlining early-stage possibilities for collaborative work amongst the schools and the church.

**Cooperative Ministry:** The planned results for Q3 suggest a sort of wrap up of the learnings on co-operative ministry, but this has proven to be ongoing. We have learned a great deal already (thus the 60%) but are poised to learn more as conversation deepens and widens and pilots are implemented these results will become more defined.

**Leadership Counts:** This quarter we met with many equity groups (ethnocultural network leads, Filipino network, Chinese Association, Disabilities Network, Western Intercultural Network) and their responses will help shape part of the 2025 end of triennium report. Both the GCE and the Board of Vocation engaged in conversations on diversity among elected members.

**Equity & Governance:** The Full Participation Audit launched this quarter and received over 200 responses (over 60%). The responses indicate that committees are very successfully integrating the full-participation and equity commitments into their committee life. Further cross-tabulated analysis in 2025 will provide additional direction for any areas to strengthen.

**Onboarding Volunteers:** We have a draft of the content for the one-page document about the online platforms that committee members use regularly. We still need to review it and make adjustments and further develop the templates. The key finding we had with the survey needs to be reviewed with staff that intersect with the work and will move into operational scope for 2025.

**Human Resources Information System (HRIS):** The Performance Management component and its implementation is now complete with a rise in annual reviews submitted to HR. We will continue to

monitor collection of performance data in our HRIS system to enable the development of skills and/or competencies training for employees, while focusing on rolling out other elements in 2025.

## Challenges

**Whole People of God:** While a comprehensive continuing education program has not been developed, as was the original intent, the research and assessment of current offerings has been important to develop a baseline. Programs have been assessed related to the Call, which has helped to identify both potential gaps in program offerings and programs that are of clear interest to the wider church. This is invaluable information. The use of the Call as a framework for assessing proposed continuing education programs will continue in 2025.

**Admissions:** With 50 ministers already onboarded who still need to find an admission appointment, the Admission Board and Board of Vocation maintained the pause on the intake of anyone else, which has postponed the testing of a cohort model at this time.

## Looking Forward

**Equity and Governance:** Plans are set for GC45 equity, including the appointment of the equity support team. Equity Diversity and Anti-Oppression (EDA) training for commissioners will be delivered in 2025 at the decision of the GC45 Planning Committee.

**Cooperative Ministry:** 6 cooperative ministry Supervised Ministry Education sites have been funded and appointments were made through Q3 & Q4, continuing into 2025. As this part of the work is just beginning, we anticipate significant learning from these candidates who are engaged in the practice.

**Whole People of God:** Two key programs are being prepared for 2025: a series of archives educational videos for ministry personnel in partnership with two regional council archivists, and, in partnership with Affirm United, a training for ministry personnel on queer theology and anti-transphobia.

**Reimagining Theological Education:** Consultations with wider groups from each school will happen early in 2025. This will give us a big picture of the entire ecosystem of theological education within the United Church as well as the unique charisms of each school, situating the schools and the church well for next steps. News of a significant grant opportunity (\$10 million US) for collaborative work amongst a group of schools and their denomination came in November and so the Theological Schools Circle, the grant writer, and the consultant are working towards submitting a concept paper for March 2025.

**Recruitment:** There is a plan to launch a program for young people curious about ministry in Q1 2025.

## Accountable: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball

---

### Good News

The (Re)Generate Training program content has been amazing - practical and essential skills for ministry leadership. However, the most powerful blessing has been space created for ministers to support, encourage, strategize and collaborate with each other. The strength of this community knows no bounds.

*--Rev. Laura Fohse, Office of Vocation Minister Northern Spirit Regional Council*

---

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD: Reinvigorate our commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God. Shift: To better coordinated support and resources.	Whole People of God Training	0
	First Third Ministry Leaders	100
	Worship Resources	100
	Statement of Ministry Review	90
MINISTRY PERSONNEL: Work to align policy and systems for recruiting, training, authorizing and overseeing ministry personnel with the new Vision. Shift: Leadership development from a program to a mentorship-model (investing in ministers in first 5 years, ministers interested in developing leadership skills, Indigenous church, First Third).	Reimagine Theological Education	90
	<b>Cooperative Ministry and Mentorship Pilot</b>	60
	<b>Recruitment-Ministry Personnel</b>	85
	<b>Appointments for Admission Ministers</b>	65
	Leadership Counts	90
	<b>Moderator's Initiative: (Re)Generate</b>	100
	Pastoral Relations Equity Animation	50
ELECTED LEADERS: Support the increased diversity and effectiveness of faithful elected leaders. Shift: Towards greater inclusivity and accountability.	Support Equity Groups in Governance	90
	Equity and Anti-Oppression Training	80
	Onboarding Volunteers	35
STAFF: Strengthen equity, accountability and effectiveness in General Council staff system. Shift: Towards learning culture, alignment, and evaluation against work plans.	Performance Management System	100
	Training: Learning Strategy	70
	Equity in Recruitment and Retention	Postponed

---

**Good News**

---

## Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources 71%

**Objective:** Significantly increase denominational capacity and will to make decisions on properties and resources focused on the ministry of the whole church, enhancing equity, sustainability, right relations, and administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

### Accomplishments

**Strengthening Financial Health:** Over the past two years, efforts to build communities of practice and offer support for key roles (e.g., treasurers) in faith communities have begun to show positive results. Participation levels have increased, and new resources have been developed, which will be fully deployed in 2025. Metrics will be in place to assess their relevance and effectiveness, providing data to track progress and impact as well as identifying areas for improvement.

**Collective Decision-Making and Resource Management:** Activities have focused on helping faith communities navigate critical decisions regarding property use and raising Mission and Service gifts for denominational work. New resources to support communities in discerning the best use of their buildings will be available in early 2025. These resources, developed through consultations with regional partners and United Property Resource Corp., are designed to address key challenges.

Despite the postal strike affecting year-end donations, generosity was strong in 2025. Progress on the Centennial Legacy Campaign is on track, with a number of congregations set to implement the program in early 2025, enhancing their capacity to receive bequests and planned gifts.

**Shared Services and Administrative Efficiency:** A significant achievement has been the completion of a project ensuring timely and easy access to the Church Hub. In addition, the solution implemented is more cost effective than the previous system. Further, two major projects—the shared office collaboration with the Presbyterian and Anglican churches and the digitization project—are near completion and will greatly enhance the General Council Office's (GCO) ability to provide services efficiently as well as ensure broad access to archival materials.

**Accountability and Strategic Measurement:** Efforts in accountability have focused on measuring the impact of our work and clearly defining outcomes. We have made notable progress on governance reviews mandated by General Council and its Executive, and we have significantly improved our ability to report on the strategic plan. This includes enhanced capacity for integrated budgeting, which will support more effective long-term planning and resource allocation.

### Challenges and Looking Forward

As in prior quarters, resources continue to be a barrier. Many activities rely on the same staff to complete them and ambitious timelines for projects mean that progress falls behind expectations. A consideration going forward will need to be budgeting for necessary additional staff resources in addition to hard costs related to a project (e.g., software, consultants).

The first half of 2025 will be the deployment of many of the resources created in 2024. A number of activities that have been on-going will wrap up and the staffing resources can be reallocated. An

encouraging sign is that some of these initiatives have addressed long-term issues, particularly related to technology. It is very gratifying to see a number of those pieces of work coming to a close thanks to the focused work of the Strategic Plan.

**Accountable: Sarah Charters**

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
FINANCIAL HEALTH: Remove barriers to congregational financial health. Shift: Towards financial viability and administrative effectiveness.	<b>Support to CoFs: Treasurers Plus</b>	25
	Grant and Donation Portal	Ended
	Technology Best Practices	100
COLLECTIVE DECISIONS: Strengthen decision making and management of property and resources. Shift: Towards decisions that reflect the ministry needs of the whole church.	Optimize Asset Retention	80
	<b>Fundraising: 2025 Anniversary</b>	80
	Major and Planned Giving	85
	Mission and Service Support	50
SHARED SERVICES: Reduce costs and improve capacity through shared service structures. Shift: Towards administrative efficiencies and effectiveness.	Shared Space (300 Bloor Street West)	80
	Information Management: Marketing	20
	Digitization	100
	Licensing Fix	Ended
	Improve PAR	Postponed
ACCOUNTABILITY: Strengthen planning--strategic and operational--and increase accountability. Shift: Towards evidence-based decisions, greater alignment and impact.	Operational Planning	90
	Data Driven Decision Making	100
	Transparency	70
	<b>Role and Structure Review</b>	35
	Legal Capacity	75

---

**Good News**

We held our first Cross-Country Check-In, inviting United Church people from across the country to engage with the General Council Executive. Just over 330 people registered to attend, indicating a desire to connect with leadership, and confirming that transparency efforts are appreciated. We were prepared for a testy, possibly combative session, but it passed with geniality, gratitude and genuine interest. About 170 actually attended, and robust conversation continued after in a forum on CHURCHx. Two more English and a French session are planned for 2025.

*-Lori-Ann Livingston, Press and Public Relations Lead*

## Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments

93%

**Objective: Amplify and integrate current initiatives in a bold, hopeful denominational climate strategy that accelerates reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030.**

### Accomplishments

The rhythm of the climate activities mirrors the rhythm of the growing season with Q4 being primarily a time of review and planning. Videos of the projects undertaken by the young people who were climate motivators during the summer of are now available. Funding applications have been submitted to continue this program in 2025. The framework for the “For the Love of Creation” program for Earth Week was established. One of the exciting initiatives was the Communications team’s offer to assist with the preparation and publication of the 2023-2024 Sustainability Report. Initial planning meetings have been held and material is now being collected. The challenge will be to determine what submissions are included and how those not in the report will still be shared!

### Challenges and Looking Forward

The lead staff on the climate objective, Lori Neale, is currently on sabbatical. In her absence, it has become apparent how much the climate team relies on her as the link between the different elements of the work and as the primary communication channel among team members. Lori laid out matters needing attention in her absence.

However, despite the growing attention to climate across the Strategic Plan, the energy driving this objective still rests largely with one portfolio. This invites us to consider how we integrate the different objectives of the Strategic Plan and ongoing operations to support one another.

The focus for this quarter is preparation for the *Sustainability Report* and *Earth Week* in 2025.

**Accountable: Rev. Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa**

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
INTEGRITY: Put our own house in order through reducing church emissions. Shift: Towards broader engagement across the church; towards system change in sectors.	Faithful Footprints	100
VOICE: Raise our spirited voice. Shift: Towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United church leadership in responding.	Advocacy on Climate	70
	Youth Climate Activists	100
RECONNECT: Reconnect with the Earth Shift: Towards reawakened and strengthened love for all God’s creation	Eco-Spirituality	100



## Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations\*\*

**Objective: Deepen Indigenization and healing in The United Church of Canada towards self-determination and the possibility of reconciliation.**

### Accomplishments and Challenges

In this quarter the focus was on planning and holding a National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. This took place in Winnipeg from November 29 through December 2, 2024 and offered a time of discussion, reflection, and prayer. At the end of the gathering, the Elders present set aside some time for healing and established a path forward for the Indigenous church.

The Elders issued the following statement: “The Elders have set a path forward for the Indigenous Church, saying that we will allow time for healing and we will come back together and do the following:

- Expand the National Indigenous Elders Council to ensure better representation from all regions of the Indigenous church;
- Plan for a dreaming/visioning group that includes multi-generational participation from all communities;
- Refine the roles and responsibilities of the Elders Council;
- Seek a better understanding of the work of Indigenous Ministries and Justice;
- Gather and study documentation from all past iterations of the Indigenous Church, in order to guide the current process;
- Connect with relevant resource people to help bring clarity to the process;
- Involve the Community Capacity Development Coordinators in supporting planning and ongoing healing work.

We honour all that has come before this moment as we move forward into this new beginning.”

### Looking Forward

In the first quarter of 2025, planning will resume related to Indigenous Pathways.

**Accountable:** Springwater Hester-Meawassige and Lori Ransom (Acting)

*\*\*Indigenous pathways is using another process other than key results methodology for reporting.*

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names
SELF GOVERNING: Create and develop a fully self-governing Indigenous Church within the United Church. Shift: Towards greater implementation of the Calls to the Church.	<b>Structure: Indigenous Church</b>
	<b>Funding model: Indigenous Church</b>
	Indigenous Testamur
	Theologies/Spiritualities: Indigenous ways
	Indigenous Youth Leadership
	New Indigenous Ministries

## Origins of the Plan

The General Council Office developed an operational plan that would reflect the Call and Vision adopted by the General Council in October 2021 and implement the strategic objectives confirmed by the General Council Executive in November 2021. This required not just the creation of content, but the development of systems and processes of detailed planning, reporting, and evaluation, and clarification of lines of accountability. The operational plan uses objectives and key results (OKRs) as the organizing framework.

In alignment with six strategic objectives, staff developed 26 initiatives. 2024 began with 78 activity streams. Each 2024 activity stream has an activity lead, with progress tracked monthly, and reports issued quarterly related to key results. The cumulative key results for that strategic objective are a measure of overall objective progress.

## Call



## Vision

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

**For more Information:**

**[Planning@united-church.ca](mailto:Planning@united-church.ca)**