

APPENDIX

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Appendix I**Finance Update to Various Committees and Stakeholders****Erik Mathiesen, Executive Minister, Finance****September 5, 2022**

I repeat the opening sentence Harry Li and I plan to use with virtually every church finance communication for the next year: "Church financial management continues to involve managing greater variability and uncertainty in the current results as well as projecting potential future scenarios in support of an emerging strategic plan." This would likely have been true without the pandemic, but has been exacerbated by same.

A surge in short term inflation for the first half of the year adds yet further complexity. Inflation rates have moderated but are still significant. None of our revenues are inflation protected. We

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are wrestling with this issue from a General Council Office (GCO) perspective, but perhaps more importantly, as it impacts both minister living expenses and increased costs for congregations through any minimum salary policy decisions. The GCO practice has been to apply the Statistics Canada COLA factor with a one-year lag which would be 3.2% for 2023 – much less than current month-by-month rates. The Executive has already approved a temporary increase in travel cost reimbursement in recognition of gas prices alone. The General Secretary flagged the inflation challenge in his update to the 44th General Council (GC44).

In June, the 2021 financial statements for national church, pension plan and KAIROS were approved and a decision made to change external auditors from PwC to KPMG effective 2022. These decisions were also ratified at GC44. 2021 results were again very positive buoyed by a third consecutive year of double-digit investment returns. The 2021 audited financial statement shows a further growth in our balance sheet and a surplus largely driven by those investment returns. Of course, 2022 is a different story, with investment losses so far offsetting all of 2021's gains. The year-to-date investment return through July was -8.3% which reflects a significant bounce up in July (was -12% mid year) which may not be sustainable.

GC44 also ratified maintaining the existing assessment rate and sharing formulae for 2023, which is the final year of transition, bringing all pastoral charges up to the target assessment rate contemplated in 2019. Assessment revenue is projected to increase in 2023 from \$10.5 million to almost \$11.5 million based on statistics received to date (90%). This increase arises entirely from bringing folks to target.

GC44 also ratified the establishment of a captive insurance structure and commitment of \$3 million in seed capital to potentially deliver annual premium savings of over \$1 million to congregations and other ministries participating in the plan. Work is underway to launch the program effective December 1, 2022.

For the 2022 approved “placeholder budget”, expenses are on track, revenues are too early to comment on, and the investment picture at the moment bleak. Harry Li is working on ongoing refinement of our accounting processes to support full quarterly reporting. It should be noted that the approved placeholder budget has a structural deficit of \$1 million that must be dealt with (the total deficit budget of \$2.7 million included \$1.1 million for GC44 and over \$0.5 million one-time additional support to regions as a transition measure in eliminating the lay/ordained salary differential).

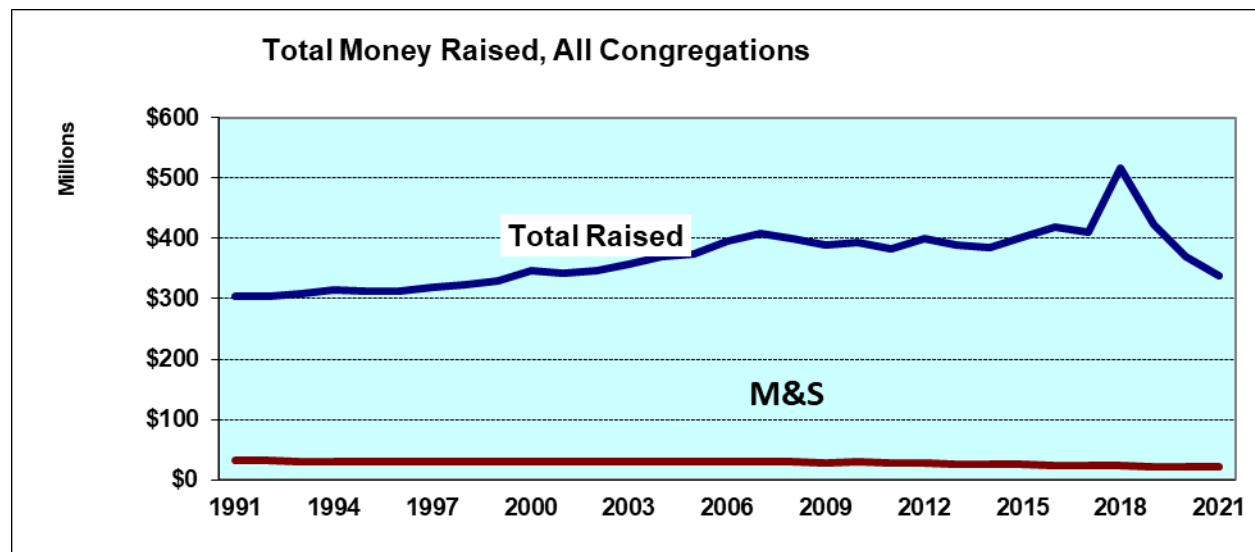
The 2020 and 2021 overall financial results have certainly provided improved capacity to absorb current and future volatility and uncertainty. This allowed us to allocate \$3 million to respond to residential school unmarked graves in 2021, with a first disbursement recently agreed. A \$10 million line of credit was also obtained to provide for adverse contingencies.

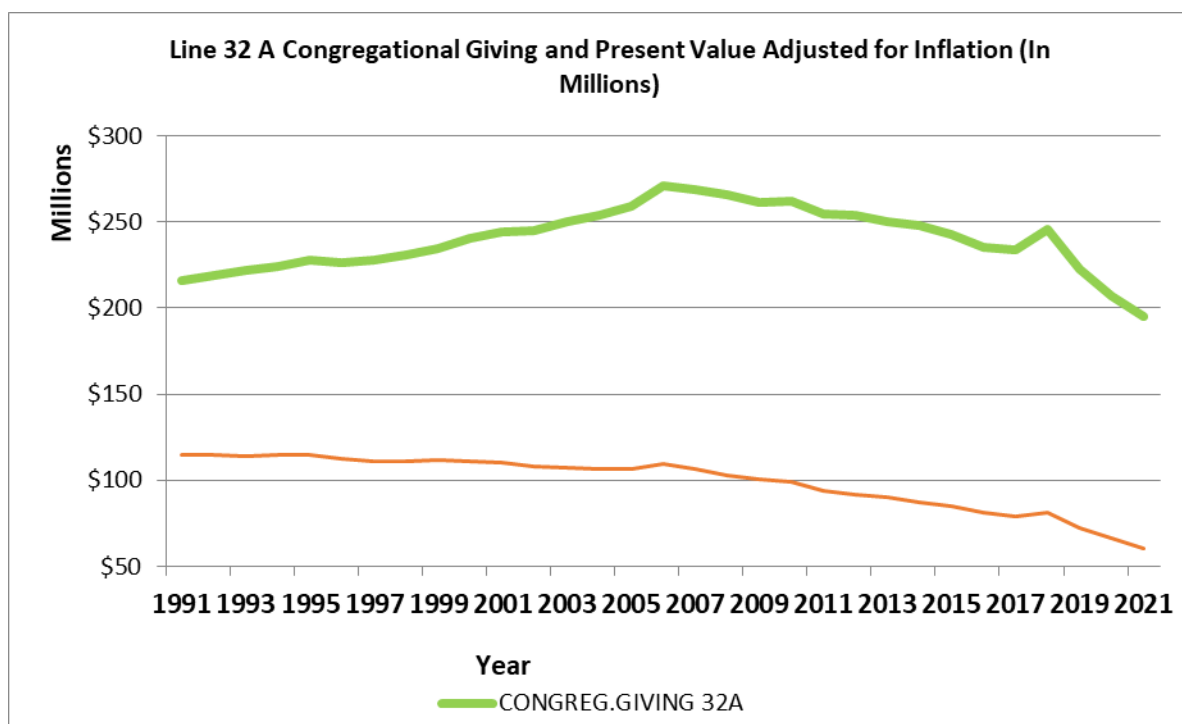
2023 operational planning is underway with the usual pressures one can anticipate from a declining revenue environment. These include:

- COLA increase to be determined (but at 3.2% would cost \$440,000);
- \$300-500,000 for GC44 decision to top up maternity leaves;
- \$1,000,000 structural deficit from 2022 placeholder budget; and
- M&S giving year over year decrease?

We are still in the early days in gauging the lasting impact of the pandemic on the financial sustainability of the church. We know we took a hit in 2020 and 2021 with federal wage subsidies and loan programs providing considerable one-time relief. 2022 is the year most local treasurers are worried about and there has not yet been a full bounce-back in in-person attendance or alternative revenue sources. A few sample numbers:

- Congregational giving fell 7% in 2020 and a further 5.8% in 2021 for overall -12.4% drop
- UCW local fundraising fell 59.7% in 2020 and 16.5% in 2021 for overall -66.4% drop
- Total congregation revenues are down 20% during the pandemic time.
- “normal” decline might be 3-4% per year mirroring membership/attendance patterns





On a more positive note, we have received notice of a very large bequest that may come in this year, with a potential magnitude of \$9+ million, which will create all kinds of options on how to use this money and investment horizon. For many, it could be an argument to defer cost cutting. Finance staff strongly recommend against using such windfalls to fund ongoing structural deficits. Windfall gifts – if retained – could potentially contribute to long term sustainability.

We anticipate a need to invest heavily in the strategic plan and to assure regional funding from assessment for a fifth year (2019–2023). M&S Grant funding cuts however appear inevitable and staffing will need to be adjusted to align with the strategic plan. We will reallocate, or possibly reduce, resources in some areas.

We seek to apply a risk management lens to all we do. In addition to financial balances, we have focused considerable attention to risks related to technology investments—both in protecting our investments through proper data security and in our IT-related choices and execution. Two significant projects are underway to complete the modernization of our philanthropy and marketing systems and make them cloud-based. Both are targeted for completion this year. A major systems upgrade to our enterprise accounting system went live in November 2021. Risk management reporting will be a recurring theme as we roll out the strategic plan.

IT security training and external testing programs have been implemented. October is IT Cybersecurity Awareness Month and will be a focus of user messaging.

The strategic planning process has ramped up and now identified a series of multi year initiatives to be evaluated for impact and cost.

The church has adopted a much more hybrid office occupancy model that will allow many staff to work remotely. A staged re-opening is contemplated with meeting space available in September.

I am happy to field questions before or when we gather.

Blessings,
Erik

Assessments

A key element in reaching financial sustainability lies in completing the transition to the new assessment funding model by 2023. In April 2021, the Executive approved a one-year extension so that all pastoral charges will be assessed at target level by 2023, but with a further one-year transition for those facing larger increases. 325 pastoral charges got an increase of \$500 or less which brought them to target. A further 570 pastoral charges were looking at an increase of more than \$500 and absorbed 50% of their increase in 2022 and are looking at a similar increase in 2023 depending on what happens with revenues. By way of example, my own congregation saw its assessment go up by about 1/3 in 2022 and are looking at a similar increase in 2023. You will recall GC43 approved an assessment of investment balances rather than market gains, which can fluctuate dramatically. This concept had been well received in presentations to several regions and in national treasurer webinars. However we will hear some complaints in 2023 when the assessment calculation uses investment AUM (assets under management, or total investments) values that may have declined. (It is still only 25 basis points or ¼ of one percent).

Strategic Plan

Significant work is underway to support both animation of the mission and vision statement across the church and to transition the General Council Office towards development of its first aligned operational plan (for September 2022–December 2023), using reporting, evaluation, and metrics.

Mission

Deep Spirituality Une spiritualité profonde
Bold Discipleship Une vie de disciple dynamique
Daring Justice Une quête audacieuse de justice

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, courageous community, and daring justice.

Mission and Vision for The United Church of Canada linked to GCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Overview



United Church Property Resource Corporation

As we know, the Property Corporation is fully funded from a United Church investment perspective (\$10 Million) and is working with property proposals from Halifax to Vancouver Island. UPRC is now reflected on an equity basis on the church financial statement showing a \$1.6 Million loss in 2021 which is a cumulative adjustment arising from the change in accounting methodology. Operationally it is evolving to having its own payroll system and a benefits plan needed to recruit the talent they need.

Several regional councils have formalized a working relationship with UPRC. There are currently 22 active projects in pre-development/municipal approval process, representing over 2,300 total rental units. UPRC is anticipating four projects with shovels in the ground in spring 2023. The full \$20M from the CHMC Affordable Housing Innovation Fund was drawn by December 31, 2021, as required under the funding agreement, exceeding the targeted number of affordable units required to draw the funding.

UPRC has intentionally been operating “under the radar” for its first two years. However, in May a more public phase began. Part of this was a re-branding the development arm of UPRC to Kindred Works.

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/kindred-works-sets-out-new-approach-to-solving-canada-s-housing-crisis-834924041.html>

UPRC / Kindred Works continues to refine a focus on building affordable rental housing with community space across Canada through a self-supporting model that leverages real estate to invest and re-invest in building long-term communities for the common good. UPRC’s buildings address the climate crisis through environmentally responsible building practices aimed at net-zero carbon emissions. UPRC’s model will prioritize Indigenous and social enterprises and excellent progress has been made on this front.

From a governance perspective, General Council’s ongoing involvement is that of sole shareholder. UPRC will be a key element in UCC strategic planning with initial return on investment now expected in 2024. In addition, developed projects will return the net income to the respective communities of faith quarterly, based on regional property policies, to support local ministry and mission. UPRC’s model aligns with the polity of property in the United Church.

Investments

Treasury Investments are down over 8.3% year to date with negative returns in all asset classes except cash. This reflects world wide circumstances where the only asset class performing relatively well is energy (which we exclude). We have had quick bounce-backs in recent years from this kind of result, but that was before the war in Ukraine. We likely will not be able to count on investments to again bolster the balance sheet for 2022, and indeed losses would not be a surprise and are perhaps even overdue.

The Investment Committee completed its scheduled, periodic formal manager review of Fiera Capital in May with a report from Mercer consultants. An outcome of this review was a decision to exit the Emerging Markets asset class. The Investment Policy Statement has been updated accordingly for governor approval. (Finance Advisory Committee).

NOM 1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Originating Body: The Nominations Committee

1. What is the issue?

We believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to use our God-given gifts. Our gifts differ, but all are needed. The practices of Christian spiritual formation call on us to practice individual and group discernment in selecting and affirming leaders for the church.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Executive of the General Council needs to appoint and authorize members to serve on committees which conduct work on its behalf and as delegates to represent The United Church of Canada.

3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?

The Nominations Committee proposes that the General Council Executive
Appoint the following members with terms as noted:

Pension Board Specialists (August 2025)

jointly proposed with the Pension Board

- Alison McKay, specialist
- Bill Gilliland, specialist
- Tamara Demos, specialist

Moderator's Advisory Committee (GC45, 2025):

- Graham Brownmiller, *chair*
- Stan McKay, *former Moderator*
- Ingrid Brown, *invited by Moderator*
- Ayana James, *invited by Moderator*
- Marie-Claude Manga, *invited by Moderator*
- M Chorney, *General Council Executive*

General Council Executive Committee Appointments (GC45, 2025)

Sub-Executive of the General Council:

- Richard Bott
- Teresa Burnett Cole
- Catherine Glover
- *Moderator*
- *General Secretary*

Business Planning Committee

- Arlyce Schiebout

- M Chorney
- Kit Loewen

Nominations Committee

- Kathy Brett
- Samuel Dansokho

General Secretary Supervision Committee:

- Mitchell Anderson
- Michael Caveney
- Wilson Gonesse
- Thea Sheridan-Jonah

Finance Advisory Committee:

- Jane McDonald
- Michael Caveney
Additional member needed (preferably 1st term member)

Pension Board:

- Mitchell Anderson
Additional member needed (preferably 1st term member)

Foundation Board:

- Paul Douglas Walfall
- Catherine Glover

Joint Grants Committee

- Kathy Brett
- Jane McDonald
- ~~Marlene Lightning~~¹

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:

The Nominations Committee met on July 20, 2022 by video-conference call to discern the recommendations for appointment.

For the Executive member appointments to the various committees, the Nominations Committee did its best to honour people's preferences, while also matching gifts and skills. Where possible, the Nominations Committee included both first and second term members

¹ With regret, Marlene is stepping away from the Executive to attend to family health matters.

within each committee. It was noted that there are still vacancies that should ideally be filled by an Executive member in their first term on:

Pension Board

Financial Advisory Committee

It was also noted that there may be some shifts or adjustments amongst GCE members as they gain familiarity with the work, as new work emerges and when the remaining vacancy on the Executive is filled.

The Nominations Committee offered gratitude to the specialists willing to serve the United Church as volunteers on the Pension Board, and for the staff who manage the search process to successfully bring forward such high-calibre candidates.

The Nominations Committee: Cathy Hamilton (chair), Lynella Reid-James, YongSeok Baek, Samuel Dansokho, Kathy Brett, Abiel Khalema, Alwin Maben, Pat Tooley, Cathie Cunningham.

WF26: ARW05 & SW08 CARE OF THE CHURCH'S MARGINALIZED

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

While some groups affirmed the proposals, we did not hear sufficient feedback to move forward, and several groups suggested take no action. We suggest that the GC take no further action.

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive take no further action on proposals ARW05 & SW08.

Original Proposal(s):

ARW05 CARE OF THE CHURCH'S MARGINALIZED

Origin: James Evans, Antler River Watershed Regional Council

1. What is the issue

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

improve the Church's policies and procedures regarding those on the Discontinued Service List (DSL).

- There are sections of The Manual that throughout history have undergone significant changes. This includes sections of The Manual referring to the Discontinued Service List (DSL).
- Individuals on the DSL are directly affected by the changes on The Manual – sometimes significantly.

- Currently, the United Church of Canada and its courts do not inform those on the DSL of those changes as they occur.
- Those on the DSL are marginalized and often do not receive this information informally.

2. Why is this issue important?

The impact of current policies and procedures can be considerable.

- Changes to The Manual cause individuals on the DSL to violate the parameters of the DSL regulations unknowingly
- Changes to The Manual have affected the lives and volunteer work of those on the DSL
- Changes to The Manual are applied inequitably to those on the DSL
- Changes to The Manual have affected the readmission process of individuals from the DSL to the Roll of Ministry

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

Individuals on the DSL encompass all aspects of the church's diversity. Ensuring that justice is enacted to those on the DSL will include justice to those of a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, gender identifications, classes, abilities and challenges. People currently on the DSL have been consulted about this proposal. It was developed with them but is submitted on behalf of them as there is no mechanism for them to speak as a collective or participate in the courts of the church.

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

Antler River Watershed Regional Council proposes that:

- The General Council Office (GCO) will contact those individuals currently on the DSL to inform them of changes to The Manual since each individual's original placement on the DSL.
- Following each meeting of the General Council the General Council Office will contact each person on the DSL to inform them of any changes (or absence of changes) to sections in The Manual pertaining to those on the DSL.

MOTION Kenji Marui / Jim Evans

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council agrees with *Proposal #10: Care of the Church's Marginalized* as presented on Page 40 of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall 2021 Meeting Workbook.

CARRIED

MOTION: Kenji Marui / Jim Evans

Antler River Watershed Regional Council adds the following statements to its acceptance of Proposal #10:

1. that those on the DSL take the responsibility to keep their contact information updated with the GCO.

And

2. that a mechanism be developed by GCO to ensure that those on the DSL are able to communicate with the GCO.

CARRIED

SW08 CARE OF THE CHURCH'S MARGINALIZED

Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Improve the Church's policies and procedures regarding those on the Discontinued Service List.
- There are sections of *The Manual* that throughout history have undergone significant changes. This includes sections of *The Manual* referring to the Discontinued Service List. (DSL)
- Individuals on the DSL are directly affected by the changes in *The Manual*, sometimes significantly.
- Currently, the United Church of Canada and its courts do not inform those on the DSL of those changes as they occur.
- Those on the DSL are marginalized and often do not receive this information formally or informally.

2. Why is this issue important?

The impact of current policies and procedures can be considerable.

- Changes to *The Manual* cause individuals on the DSL to violate the parameters of the DSL regulations unknowingly.
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the lives and volunteer work of those on the DSL
- Changes to *The Manual* are applied inequitably to those on the DSL.
- Changes to *The Manual* have affected the readmission process of individuals from the DSL to the Roll of Ministry

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

- Individuals on the DSL encompass all aspects of the church's diversity. Ensuring that justice is enacted to those on the DSL will include justice to those of a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, gender identifications, classes, abilities and challenges.
- People currently on the DSL have been consulted about this proposal. It was developed with them but is submitted on behalf of them as there is no mechanism for them to speak as a collective or participate in the courts of the church.

4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?**The Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that:**

The General Council Office might contact those individuals currently on the DSL to inform them of applicable changes to *The Manual* subsequent to each individual's original placement on the DSL. Following each meeting of the General Council the General Council Office will contact each person on the DSL to inform them of any changes (or absence of changes) to sections in *The Manual* pertaining to those on the DSL.

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

MOTION by Barry Rieder / Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-05 *Care of the Church's Marginalized* to General Council with concurrence.
MOTION CARRIED

WF28: GS05 DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

While a majority of the groups discussed and affirmed the "intention" of the proposal, a significant number did not come to consensus or support; and an equal number of discussion groups did not submit comments. Given the importance of the issue, we suggest to the GC a referral to the General Secretary and GCE for further clarification, carefully considering the discussion notes.

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive, in response to GS05, direct the General Secretary, General Council, in consultation with the Executive of the General Council, to clarify the recommendations, paying careful consideration to the discussion notes.

Original Proposal(s):**GS05 DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS**

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

For many years, the United Church had a mandatory process for conflict resolution and the discipline for both ministry personnel and lay members/adherents. It involved a number of detailed steps and forms, and has not been widely used for lay members/adherents.

When the Office of Vocation was established, there was a new approach adopted for conflict resolution and the discipline of ministry personnel. In short, it is now up to the Board of Vocation Response Committee to decide on the appropriate response to conflict or complaints about ministry personnel.

However, there was no parallel change made for lay members/adherents. The mandatory process still applies.

2. Why is this issue important?

The same approach should be followed for conflict resolution and discipline of lay members/adherents as for ministry personnel: the appropriate response should be determined by the body to which they are accountable. Congregational designated ministers are accountable for matters of discipline to the regional council; other lay members/adherents are accountable to the governing body of their community of faith.

The council [regional council or community of faith governing body] should decide on the best course of action in the circumstances, for example, consultation with the regional council, help from a United Church Conflict Resolution Facilitator, or ordering a formal hearing. More information about these options is already included in *The Manual* and related resources.

This change would not apply to complaints under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures. Complaints that fall under that policy would still be dealt with under that policy.

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

This would give the regional council and community of faith governing body more flexibility to decide on the appropriate response to a complaint about a lay member/adherent rather than having to follow a detailed prescribed process. The response to conflict could be tailored to the context and people involved, including Indigenous Peoples and the intercultural church.

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

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the 44th General Council 2022 revise the process for conflict resolution and the discipline of congregational designated ministers, and other lay members and adherents, as reflected in the following proposed amendments to *The Manual*:

J.8 Conflict Resolution and Discipline—Lay People

J.8.1 Informal Processes

The church has informal processes that people involved in a conflict may use to try to resolve the conflict themselves. They may call on others who are experienced in these processes to help them with resolving the conflict.

The church has people trained as conflict resolution facilitators who can assist with the resolution of conflicts. For more information, contact the Office of Vocation, which maintains the list of conflict resolution facilitators.

**J.8.2 Congregational Designated Ministers**

The regional council is responsible for the discipline of congregational designated ministers. It must take seriously any disciplinary concerns that come to its attention about any congregational designated minister serving within the bounds of the regional council. It must respond in a way that it considers appropriate to the circumstances, within applicable policies set by the General Council or its executive.

The policies and procedures set out in section J.6 and in the Office of Vocation resources for ministry personnel available from the [General Council Office](#) may be adapted by the regional council for use with congregational designated ministers.



For formal complaints under the United Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy, the process under that policy must be followed.

The General Council has approved the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse including complaints made against lay members and adherents (the "Sexual Misconduct Policy"). It is available from the [General Council Office](#).



More information on the Sexual Misconduct Policy is also found in section J.12.1 below.

J.8.3 Lay Members and Adherents

The governing body of a community of faith is responsible for the discipline of lay members and Adherents of the community of faith other than ministry personnel and congregational designated ministers. It must take seriously any disciplinary concerns that come to its attention about such lay members or Adherents. It must respond in a way that it considers appropriate to the circumstances, within applicable policies set by the General Council or its executive.

For formal complaints under the United Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy, the process under that policy must be followed.

The General Council has approved the Sexual Misconduct Prevention



and Response Policy and Procedures to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse including complaints made against lay members and adherents (the “Sexual Misconduct Policy”). It is available from the General Council Office.

More information on the Sexual Misconduct Policy is also found in section J.12.1 below.

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

N/A

WF34: NS02 COMMUNITY OF FAITH MEETING QUORUM

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

From the groups that discussed this proposal, we heard support. One discussion group had a concern around the particular sensitivities related to a community of faith meeting to decide to end the pastoral relationship without called ministry personnel present. The Facilitation Team notes that even in our discussions, in referring to *The Manual* (2022) that the sections related to decision making are not always clear. We suggest that the GC affirm this proposal and suggest that the General Secretary review this section of *The Manual* to ensure that polity is clear.

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive, in response to NS02, affirm this proposal and direct that the General Secretary review this section of *The Manual* to ensure that polity is clear.

Original Proposal(s):

NS02 COMMUNITY OF FAITH MEETING QUORUM

What is the issue?

Section B.5.5 of The Manual mandates the minimum number of Full Members of a Community of Faith who must be present for an Annual Meeting or other meetings of Community of Faith.

In Communities of Faith it is common practice to call meetings only when a Ministry Personnel or Supervisor can be present.

Ministry Personnel can be directly impacted by decisions and discussions that take place during Community of Faith meetings.

The Ministry Personnel, Pastoral Charge Supervisor, or Regional Council representation is required at meetings of the governing body but not at meetings of the Community of Faith. (The Manual, 2021 B.7.7.4.b)

Why is this issue important?

If the Community of Faith meeting is called to consider changes to the Terms of Call or Appointment or to End the Pastoral Relationship, the Ministry Personnel affected must be given the opportunity to be present and respond to the proposed change before a decision is made (The Manual, 2021, Section I.3.1.6.d).

One of the roles of Ministry Personnel at a meeting of the Community of Faith is to offer guidance on United Church policy and practice, ensuring that the meeting is conducted properly. Another role is, being aware of the wellbeing of the Pastoral Charge, to represent the wider church and to offer guidance.

How might the General Council respond?

Since there is no wording similar to section B.7.7.4b in section B.5.5, mandating that a “Ministry Personnel” be present at meetings of the Community of Faith:

It is proposed by the Northern Spirit Regional Council that an addition be made to section B.5.5 of The Manual to read as follows:

A meeting of the Community of Faith may take place only if one of the following people is present:

- i. a member of the order of ministry who has been called or appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- ii. a designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council and appointed to the pastoral charge; or
- iii. the pastoral charge supervisor; or
- iv. another person appointed by the regional council to attend the meeting.

Origin: Northern Spirit Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission. This proposal was recommended to the Northern Spirit Regional Council by the Pastoral Relations Commission at its meeting on June 11, 2020.

Contact Person: for further information, contact the Rev. Blaine Gregg, a member of the Pastoral Relations Commission, 780-951-0219, revtbg@hotmail.com

Regional Council Action: Northern Spirit Regional Council agreed with the Proposal and will pass it on to the 44th General Council for action.

WF38: SW07 REVIEW OF NEW STRUCTURE

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

We heard strong feedback that the proposal is redundant due to the previously scheduled review for GC45. The discussion groups made some important comments that we commend to the General Secretary in planning the review process. We suggest to the GC to take no further action on the proposal.

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive take no further action on proposal SW07.

Original Proposal(s):

SW07 REVIEW OF NEW STRUCTURE

Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council

1. What is the issue?

As a church, we seek always to be faithful to God as revealed in Jesus Christ and guided by the Spirit. In 2018 we were obliged to streamline our structure to respond to a profound change from the context of 1925 or even that of a generation ago. In the new structure we sought to honour the intentions of those who had gone before while designing systems and processes that would enable us to support one another and give leadership in our and subsequent generations. It is common for organizations such as ours to institute a review after a major redesign.

How did we do? Is the new structure working as intended? Have the past five years revealed any gaps or weaknesses?

2. Why is this issue important?

In order to answer those questions and discover whether or not there are any improvements to be made or deficits to correct, we need to study the new structure and ask one another if and how it supporting ministry: local, regional and national. We acknowledge the forward-looking work done to create new systems. Now that we can look back at five years of experience with it we owe it to ourselves and those who come after to examine the new structure with a view to its faithfulness and efficacy. If we can see ways to modify our structures in light of any patterns of effectiveness or ineffectiveness, it is our responsibility to do so.

As Christians and communities of faith we are always reviewing the gap between our stated

and operative theologies and spiritual principles with a view to having them more closely align. A review of our new structure would allow us to do the same for the United Church as a whole.

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

A review will reveal ways we have been more or less faithful to our many commitments to equity, so this proposal concerns all these principles:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and ensuring that Francophone ministries are
- an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision;
- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity; and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

This proposal comes originally from Unifaith Unifor Community Chapter, an association of active and retired ministry personnel and family members from across the whole country with a broad experience of the life of the church and deep commitment to its prophetic presence in the nation and the world. It was developed both “with” people and “on behalf of” people.

The impact of this proposal will be to uphold the people and communities of faith of the United Church as they are consulted on their lived reality in the new structure. It seems to those who drafted it that it would advantage all of us and disadvantage no one.

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

The mover proposes that the General Council could:

Conduct a review/study/discussion of the issue

A review would likely include various kinds of information gathering such as questionnaires, polls, focus groups and perhaps some longer interviews. This would begin by testing parameters for the review itself, such as testing the new structure in light of the equity lens listed above, and also the experience of those involved in the

church's human resources systems and processes.

Information gathered and synthesized would be shared with the whole church to test accuracy and adequacy of the draft results. Review design would follow a participatory research model, in other words.

The review would involve consultation with those close to the design process of the new structure and access to relevant working papers from that process so that the stated intent of the current structure could be compared to its actual operation. Discussion at all levels of the church (community of faith, region, GC commissioners & staff) surrounding the review and study will broaden awareness of our overall mission, and how our structure is intended to facilitate it. This will generate a greater sense of ownership among all members and adherents.

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

MOTION by Brian McIntosh / Robin Wardlaw that Shining Waters Regional Council forward the proposal #GC2021-08 *Review of New Structure* to General Council with concurrence.

MOTION

CARRIED

WF40: NEW02 TO HAVE THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO RECOGNIZE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

There is general affirmation for the importance of recognition of the Armenian Genocide, but there were questions related to the actual implementation in Part B of the proposal. We suggest that GC44 recognize April 24 as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, and that the discussion notes and proposal be referred back to the General Secretary for further review to determine a way forward on the remainder of the proposal.

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive, in response to NEW02, recognize April 24th as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day; and that the discussion notes and proposal be referred back to the General Secretary for further review to determine a way forward on the remainder of the proposal.

Original Proposal(s):

NEW02 TO HAVE THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO RECOGNIZE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915

Origin: Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

1. What is the issue? (describe in broad terms)

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us, as an intercultural church, to recognize and honour all cultures and identities including those eradicated by genocides. We are called to inform and educate ourselves as the church, about the atrocities of the past to ensure a better commitment to God's creation and to prevent the perpetuating of evil.

2. Why is this issue important?

We have witnessed the cyclical repetition of genocides throughout history. History shows that the atrocities committed by under the Nazi regime, and now the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have been informed by the Ottoman Empire's tactics in the Armenian Genocide. These issues of violence and exile are also founded in ecclesiological history as evidence by the involvement of the Russian Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox churches.

What is the history/background of this issue?

100 years after Armenian Genocide, UCC's work lives on - United Church of Christ. As a descendent of an Armenian Genocide Survivor, I have heard first hand the atrocities that my grandparents and my late father, as an infant survived. My personal life has been affected by this genocide and my culture informs me of these atrocities, first hand. My Grandparents arriving to Lebanon as a refugee, through the deserts of Turkey/Syria, displaced from their roots.

There are no ancestry records for my family, and many Armenian Families, as Turkey burned all existing historical records, and destroyed historical landmarks. I, myself have experienced the loss of my own cultural and historical identity, have borne witness to the lasting psychological, social and spiritual effects of trauma and displacement, and am personally informed by my own family's loss of cultural identity and history. I have very few pictures or mementos of my family, and am reliant on an increasingly displaced extended family for things as simple as family stories, recipes or anniversaries.

1.5 Million Armenians were murdered in the Armenian genocide, and the rest were exiled from their country of origin. Many surviving families were then further displaced; leaving countries such as Lebanon and Syria, resulting in a cycle of exile that has meant further loss of culture and identity. Yet, despite this, Armenian exists in the hearts and souls of the people living as diaspora. Armenia itself is the oldest Christian culture; older than Constantine, and has maintained its history and identity since the Genocide.

- **What are the principles informing issue?**

That all people are deserving of identity and respect as God's good creation.

- **What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?**

That an entire culture would be further marginalized.

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

Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. Describe in broad terms the ways in which this proposal engages with some of these principles:

April 24, 1915 - Armenian Genocide Commemoration Date.

The Year 2015, marked the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and the Canadian Parliament passed Motion M-587 and declared the month of April as Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month and mark April 24 of each year as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day.

April is now Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month: Motion M-587 unanimously adopted (newswire.ca)

"In 1984, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal ruled that the Armenian genocide is "an 'international crime' for which the Turkish state must assume responsibility", and that the United Nations and each of its members "have the right to demand this recognition and to assist the Armenian people to that end""².

United Nations reports about the Armenian Genocide - Armenian National Committee of Canada (anccanada.org)

- committing to becoming an intercultural church;
- opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity

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

As our Sisters and Brothers at the United Church of Christ have recognized the Armenian Genocide, the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

Name a possible response that the General Council might consider:

- A. Recognition of April as Genocide Recognition and Prevention month and April 24 specifically as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, and as such, provide educational materials to congregations about Genocide Prevention and worship materials to specifically recognize Armenian Genocide Memorial Day. As part of this strategy, provide Peace education to congregations and Regional Councils, and opportunities to participate in ecumenical peace initiatives. As well, Mission and Service support during April could be directed towards initiatives dedicated to the eradication of genocide.

2

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_genocide_recognition#:~:text=In%201984%2C%20the%20Permanent%20Peoples,Armenian%20people%20to%20that%20end%22 – March 19, 2022.

B. Action on the issue, which could include

- General Council directing that a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters
- General Council adopting a policy position/strategy
- General Council encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue

Note to 4.A: The General Council could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

Note to 4.B: Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome.

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

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to info@generalcouncil44.ca

Appendix II

WF10: PM01 MAKING IT RIGHT: ALBERNI INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (AIRS) BRINGING LOST CHILDREN HOME

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

There was generally very broad support for the proposal. The groups named the importance of responding to the needs and requests of affected Indigenous communities and the wisdom of elders and survivors. We also heard from one group the implication that they felt it would be politically incorrect to oppose the proposal, and they were uncomfortable with the idea that we would take action on a proposal regarding reparations without an understanding of the financial implications. We remember that the Indigenous church has been waiting for tangible acts to embody our denominational apologies - although this group's discomfort seems to be a minority position, we felt it important to name that we heard it, recognizing that despite our commitments to reconciliation and antiracism that we are not all in the same place on that journey. We suggest that the General Council affirm the proposal.

The full notes from the Discussion Groups can be found on the [GCE Committee SharePoint site](#) or on the [Commons](#).

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive, in response to PM01, affirm the proposal.

Original Proposal(s):

PM01 MAKING IT RIGHT: ALBERNI INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (AIRS) BRINGING LOST CHILDREN HOME

Origin: Pacific Mountain Region / Region 1

1. What is the issue? (describe in broad terms)

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to respond directly to the requests being made by Tseshaht First Nation leadership along with survivors of the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS).

2. Why is this issue important?

Road to Reconciliation (RtR) gatherings called ? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap (meaning – make it right) the name gifted to us by Nuuchah Nulth Elder Levi Martin, have been hosted for over 2 ½ years. In these gatherings, settlers, listeners and 5-10 residential school survivors have sat in these ? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap circles. These survivors consistently say that the church and all Canadians need to follow through on all the TRC Calls to Action. They wonder if more United Churches are interested in reconciliation and if they will be invited to share their story and this circle process the RtR has developed.

Church members have sat with residential school survivors for the last 15 years from three nations Gitksan, Carrier-Dene and 2 Nuuchah Nulth. In all three of those nations, survivors have told stories of children, and in some cases babies, dying while at residential school. Those survivors thought the children's bodies had not been sent home. There is honour in carrying those stories, and being trusted by survivors. This proposal is what has been requested over the last 10 years, in response to listening to the Nuuchah Nulth leadership, community, residential school survivors, and intergenerational survivors. This proposal is a call to action not a reaction.

This proposal is honouring the agency of Tseshaht community and leadership as a sovereign nation. The asks in this proposal are an offering which may be accepted, rejected or called out; they are what the community is requesting. Ta7taliya Michelle Nahanee reminds us that "A Decolonizing practice is, stop asking us, Indigenous peoples, to tell you what to do. Listen, listen, listen, hear what we are asking for, educate yourself, and then respond. If you get it wrong, we will call you out. To ask us to tell you what to do is a colonial act." (Decolonizing Practices Training and Decolonize First) As the Tseshaht have reminded us, we must proceed at the pace of trust.

Since the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc discovery at the Kamloops Residential School of 215 children unceremoniously buried in unmarked graves, people have experienced sorrow and renewed grief. Creation weeps. Residential school survivors weep. Second and third generation survivor's weep. God weeps. Settlers weep. Our spirits lament at the inhumanity of it all.

The issue this proposal addresses is that The United Church of Canada has known that children died at United Church of Canada-run Indian Residential Schools. The United Church of Canada has the responsibility of naming and redressing the pain and hurt that has been caused with tangible, expedient action that is more than admiration for resilience and a promise to behave differently.

The seven-year Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings told us that they heard unsettling stories of children dying and cremated babies. In response to unrecorded deaths, the TRC Calls to Action #71-76 outline what the survivors and the TRC Commission calls for. TRC Commissioner Murray Sinclair stated "That the TRC asked the federal government to help fund a series of projects that would identify burial site locations of children at residential schools. The request for funding was denied." TRC Call to Action #74 states: "We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location and to respond to families wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers and reburial in home communities where requested."

In May of 2021, Moderator Richard Bott of The United Church of Canada shared these words in a prayer for students of the Kamloops Residential School: "But, God, if we truly listened, we can't be surprised. The Elders and the Communities had already told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, told the governments and the world, the stories of the children, dead and buried, unnoted by the settler systems, but never ever forgotten by their siblings, their parents, their communities." It is time for the settler church to finally listen. It is time to respond with tangible action. The Church, our church, must respond. It must take action.

At a memorial held at the new Tseshaht Administration Building, on Tseshaht reserve land on May 31, 2021 Brenda West of Courageous Community Center (a Pacific Mountain Region UCC church plant in Port Alberni) connected with a survivor of the Kamloops Residential School. Together they placed empty shoes on the orange bridge that forms the entrance to reserve land, where children crossed on their way to AIRS. They prayed together, listened together, talked together. The United Church communities in Port Alberni have been engaging in this kind of effort for many years: deep listening, admitting wrong-doing, relationship building and walking the road to reconciliation. Tseshaht have already engaged in work and ceremony around bringing the lost children home (for example: AIRS: Healing the Lost Souls Event, in September of 2019.)

Tseshaht community has been clear about what they need from the church, and it is more than one congregation, and one church plant can do alone. It is clearly a call to action.

- On June 8, 2021, the Courageous Community Centre (CCC), which has Indigenous representation, arrived at consensus that these recommendations be made to PMRC and UCC.
- On June 9, 2021, AVUC Council unanimously passed a motion that these recommendations be made to PMRC and UCC.
- On June 10, 2021, Norah Martin, AIRS survivor and co-lead of? aps ciik cha chim hiy ap circles of the Road to Reconciliation project (RtR) received a copy of this proposal.
- On June 10, 2021, Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), Tseshaht First Nation, Elected Chief Councillor received a copy of this proposal.

As members of The United Church of Canada, we have benefitted from the practices of colonialism. We must also take responsibility for our actions, historically and presently. While we should partner, collaborate, and advocate, we should not wait for governments to do what is right. It is up to us. Together we have the capacity to make it right by walking the talk of reconciliation, advocating in the halls of political power, leading by example, keeping before the church, the federal government, and the country the urgent need to step up and address the harm we have perpetrated. We are at a watershed moment of awareness with so many finally asking "What can I do? How can I help? What is my responsibility?" Let's answer those questions. It is going to take every one of us accepting responsibility and contributing actions to make this right and to transform systemic anti-indigenous racism in Canada.

Canada will not thrive until what has been unearthed is made right. Our weeping must lead to action. We cannot stop in the sadness. May we listen to Mother Earth who is calling for healing. She calls because she has held these children in the safety of her arms. She has held them and now the time to make it right is here, to care well for these ones, the ones yet to be unearthed, and their relations.

The United Church of Canada has issued formal apologies, adopted UNDRIP, implemented an Indigenous made plan to create a self-determining Indigenous Church, denounced the Doctrine of Discovery, established the Healing Fund, established the Justice and Reconciliation Fund, and compensated Indian Residential School survivors individually. Now it is time to offer more reconcile-action on the long journey of living into right relationships. The Indigenous community tells us that if we do what is ours to do in our own generation, then seven generations from now we will know what it is to live in right relationship. Delaying action now, will prolong the torment, deepen the divide and, sadly, take more than seven generations to heal.

On June 1, 2021, Courtenay-Alberni MP Gord Johns brought forward a request to the House of Commons from the Tseshaht First Nation. The Nation is asking for resources from the Federal

Government to remove the remaining buildings that belonged to the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS) and replace them with a healing centre for survivors.

“If the government and the churches can build these horrible places, they can build healing places to take their spots,” said Johns. “[The Tseshah] made it very clear that they need action, not more words. They don’t want to be known as the place that had a residential school that caused harm. They want a place where they can reclaim their power.” (Alberni Valley News, June 5th, 2021)

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The General Council might undertake the following action to further address the harm caused by its Alberni Indian Residential School:

- 1) offer to conduct a forensic archeological search of AIRS in order to locate any bodies of children buried on the site in unmarked graves;
- 2) offer to exhume, identify and repatriate, as requested, the bodies of any children buried on the AIRS site to their home, or for appropriate commemoration ceremonies, and markers;
- 3) offer to safely remove and dispose of the remaining AIRS buildings from the territory;
- 4) develop a plan and funding model for a Healing Centre on the former AIRS site;
- 5) develop a plan to engage in deep listening to the Indigenous Elders in the territories of the other UCC residential schools to determine actions to offer in each context.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).

Appendix III

WF06: N:ka02 MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED CHURCH THROUGH NON-CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Origin: General Council 44, unfinished business

Facilitation Team Summary Notes:

There was significant support for this proposal, with some questions raised around definitions of membership and discipleship (including documentation of membership – e.g. historic rolls or no?). At least two groups asked about linking the implementation of the proposal to the study affirmed in

proposal TICIF01 on Membership. We suggest affirming this proposal with implementation to be informed by the study in TICIF01.

The full notes from the Discussion Groups can be found on the [GCE Committee SharePoint site](#) or on the [Commons](#).

Facilitation Team Suggested Action:

That the 44th General Council Executive, in response to N:ka02 affirms this proposal with implementation to be informed by the study in TICIF01 Membership.

Original Proposal(s):

N:ka02 MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED CHURCH THROUGH NON-CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Origin: Nakonha:ka Regional Council

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- be flexible, innovative and inclusive when it comes to welcoming people into the church family.
- live out the intention of enabling diverse expressions of the church beyond the congregational model, as was the intention of GC43 when it created a category of ministry for communities of faith that are not congregations.
- find new ways of reaching people who are seeking to explore and develop their faith, deepen their spirituality.

2. Why is this issue important?

Throughout our gospels, when Pharisees challenge Jesus when he appears to fail at following the strict interpretation of the law, Jesus offers a new way of understanding the issue by highlighting the underlying purpose of the rule rather than the letter of the law.

Membership in the United Church of Canada is an important way in which people express their belonging to Christ's way. In order to become a full member of the United Church of Canada, one must do so through a congregation.

At GC43, we made the decision to broaden our understanding of ministry so that we were not limited to the traditional congregational model. The concept of "Communities of Faith" was introduced in our manual to provide flexibility and innovation. However, full membership in the United Church of Canada can only be conferred by congregations.

Membership in a community of faith that is not a congregation does not provide membership in the broader church. This creates limitations for those who come to the church through new

forms of ministry. They can not be delegates to Regional or General Council, become Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, or discern calls to ministry if they have not become members in a traditional congregational setting. Without the ability to create full members of the United Church, a community of faith will have trouble to call a minister or form a church council.

Growth of the church's reach is vital to our future. That growth will come through innovative and new forms of ministry that may or may not take the shape of a congregation. Where a new ministry initiative expresses an interest in creating and shaping new members of the church, they should be encouraged to do so.

All communities of faith are required to have covenants with their Regional Councils. If a community of faith that is not a congregation wishes to be empowered to recognize new, full members into the denomination, such authorities should be permitted by the manual.

While we are certain that all communities of faith will want to welcome and shape new disciples of Christ, only some will want the authority to create full members of the United Church of Canada. Therefore, since all communities of faith are required to have covenants with their Regional Councils, the delegation of such authorities should be outlined in such covenants for the communities of faith where this is understood to be part of its ministry. Such covenants should also stipulate how the community of faith will meet the needs of a historic roll/membership list.

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

In recent years, a number of new Francophone ministry projects have emerged in Toronto, Montréal, Sherbooke, Québec City, Winnipeg, and online. Half of these new ministries can point to African migrant roots as the source of their growth and development.

As these communities have evolved, their attachment to the United Church has also grown. Many of these cultural communities find the distinction of participant, adherent and full member baffling and feel a sense of exclusion if their community of faith cannot provide them with a full connection to the denomination.

Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed "with" people, or "on behalf of" people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?

This proposal comes out of the direct experience of two new communities of faith who have struggled with this issue: the Ministère protestant francophone de Toronto and Église Sainte-Claire (an online ministry).

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

The Nakonha:ka Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

Amend *The Manual* to provide communities of faith that are not congregations the ability to welcome new full members to the United Church of Canada by baptism, confirmation or profession of faith.

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

2021-11-12-13_019 MOTION (M. Grenon/ S. Dansokho) That the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council forward to the General Council the Membership in United Church Through Non-Congregational Communities of Faith proposal with consensus.

CARRIED

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to info@generalcouncil44.ca.