

**APPENDIX**

|                               |   |                     |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <a href="#">Appendix I</a>    | Governance Modes Overview   | 88ii-88iii          |
| <a href="#">Appendix II</a>   | <p>Consent Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator’s Accountability Report</li> <li>• General Secretary’s Accountability Report</li> <li>• Pension Board Report</li> <li>• Partner Council Message</li> <li>• Operational Plan Report – Third Quarter 2023<br/>(found in a separate document - see Appendix Operational Plan Quarterly Report)</li> </ul> <p>Consent Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BP 04 Recommendations for Appointment - GCE Cascading</li> <li>• GS 61 Partner Council Message</li> <li>• GS 71 Changes to The Manual re A.4 and D.3.1 (2023-11)</li> <li>• GS 72 Changes to The Manual re D.1.1 g) (2023-11)</li> <li>• GS 73 Changes to The Manual re I.1.2.1 and I.1.7.1 (2023-11)</li> </ul> | 88iii-88xxxviii     |
| <a href="#">Appendix III</a>  | GS 62 2024 Operating Budget   | 88xxxix-88xlv       |
| <a href="#">Appendix IV</a>   | Pension Plan Presentation   | 88xlv-88xliv        |
| <a href="#">Appendix V</a>    | NIC / GCE Conversation Feedback   | 88lv                |
| <a href="#">Appendix VI</a>   | GS 63 Recommendations on the Use of the Word “Mission”  | 88lvi-88lviii       |
| <a href="#">Appendix VII</a>  | GS 64 Behavioural Covenant for Members of National Committees (proposal and presentation)   | 88lviii-88lxxi      |
| <a href="#">Appendix VIII</a> | Group Benefits Presentation   | 88lxxii-88lxxvii    |
| <a href="#">Appendix IX</a>   | GS 65 Group Benefits Plans Addressing Age Discrimination  | 88lxxvii-88lxxix    |
| <a href="#">Appendix X</a>    | GS 66 Group Benefits Plans Administrative Expenses Funding  | 88lxxix-88lxxx      |
| <a href="#">Appendix XI</a>   | GS 67 Group Benefits Plans Termination of Lifespeak Contract  | 88lxxx-88lxxxi      |
| <a href="#">Appendix XII</a>  | Pastoral Relationships Thriving with Equity Research Project Presentation   | 88lxxxi-88lxxxiv    |
| <a href="#">Appendix XIII</a> | GS 68 Public Registry of Ministers  | 88lxxxv-88lxxxvi    |
| <a href="#">Appendix XIV</a>  | GS 74 Retired DLM Membership  | 88lxxxvi-88lxxxviii |
| <a href="#">Appendix XV</a>   | GS 69 Global Partnership Program  | 88lxxxviii-88xcii   |

|                                |  |                |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------|
| <a href="#">Appendix XVI</a>   | Prioritizing the Governance Renewal Action Plan Presentation | 88xcii-88xciii |
| <a href="#">Appendix XVII</a>  | Centennial Celebration Suggestions                           | 88xciv         |
| <a href="#">Appendix XVIII</a> | GS 70 Recognition of The United Church of Canada Centennial  | 88xciv-88xcvi  |
| <a href="#">Appendix XIX</a>   | General Council 45 Suggestions                               | 88xcvi         |

## Appendix I

### Governance as Leadership: An Introduction

This framework offers governors and executive staff practical and energizing approaches to enrich non-profit leadership. The central construct in the framework is described in three distinctive yet interdependent “modes” of governance that allow leaders to anticipate and set effective mindsets or mental models to support decision-making, strategizing and imagining possible futures for their organizations. The three mindsets, mental models, or **modes** are:

#### Fiduciary (Type I)

When working in this mode, governors seek to ensure that the organization’s assets are conserved and optimized to advance the mission and vision and that all regulatory and compliance issues are addressed. The focus of Type I/Fiduciary governance is on oversight/monitoring of audits, budgets, assets, investments, funding, facilities; lawful and ethical conduct (compliance with regulations/policies/bylaws/codes), and on CEO/GS performance.

When attending to Type I/Fiduciary issues, governors tend to *look at issues from the inside out*, they focus on **oversight** and act like **sentinels**.

Disposition: Oversight  
Key Questions: “What...?”

#### Strategic (Type II)

When working in this mode, governors seek to ensure that the organization is actively seeking to align its internal strengths and opportunities with external strengths and opportunities to maximize its impact; governors intend to construct consensus about what the strategy should look like while avoiding the operational. In an effective Type II/Strategic mode, board structures, meetings, and information are all designed to facilitate strategic work; form follows function/purpose.

In Type II/Strategic work, governors' *attention shifts to outside in* (from "conformance towards performance"); they focus on **foresight** and act as **strategists**.

Disposition: Foresight

Key Questions: "How...?"

### **Generative (Type III)**

Working in the generative mode encourages cognitive processes for deciding what to pay attention to, what it means and what is possible in response. Generative thinking produces a sense of what knowledge, information and data mean; it is a subjective process that illuminates multiple perspectives and dominant frames and allows thinkers to deliberately shift frames to take perspective and see opportunities. In the generative mode, *problem framing* precedes *problem solving*.

As governors work in this mode, they focus on **insight**, they are **sense makers**, interrogating their current reality by acknowledging their preferred frames, *re-framing*, and *anticipating* future challenges facing the organization.

Disposition: Insight

Key Questions: "Why...?"

## **Appendix II**

### **Consent Reports / Information**

#### **MODERATOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2023**

The past six months since my last report have been a whirlwind of visits and speaking and preaching, but also planning and implementation for the Flourishing project. In our promotional materials for "Flourishing: Bold Ideas, Daring Connections" we say that: "Harvard University is talking about it. The Vatican is talking about it. UNESCO, Delta Airlines and MetLife are talking about it. And we want Canada to talk about it, too: Flourishing."

Well, since the launch of the idea, even without a lot of engagement across the church (just the Winnipeg event and some other conversations and sermons), the idea of "Flourishing" has captured the imagination of the church. I hear it in worship, and I the aspirations of a church that has been struggling since before, but especially since the beginning of, the Covid-19 pandemic.

While it's been a bit of a "soft" launch, with some trial and error design that has caused a few small pivots. But overall, it's resonating well with the church.

#### **The Mod's Book Squad**

Started with a lot of enthusiasm. The [Rev. Dr. John Thatamanil](#) from [Union Theological Seminary](#) joined me for a discussion of Cheri Dimaline's indigenous dystopian young adult novel *The Marrow Thieves* in September. [John C. Havens](#), author and ethicist and Director of Sustainability at [iEEE](#) joined me to talk about Kate Raworth's book *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economist*. Not surprisingly, about 1/3 of the folks showed up to talk economics than the novel. For our last book club of the session, I'll be joined by the authors of *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other*, Raja Khouri and Jeffrey Wilkinson. Their book was released on October 1, 2023, and it promises to be a fruitful and nuanced conversation about why the conflict is so hard for people to talk about, and their hopes for a peaceful solution. The book club will continue through May of 2025.

## (Re)Generate

The leadership program received nearly 70 applications and a small group read through excellent submissions from all across the church. 33 participants have been selected from across diverse backgrounds. We have started to work at planning context for the 6 weeks of study time together. While there will be intense sprints of time in learning cohorts in person and online, the majority of the learning will be action-reflection style learning where participants will work on integrating their learning in their paid accountable ministry roles.

The program design will also take a "just in time" design approach – where the content and work is determined based on the needs of the participants.

Here are the types of work we will engage in through the program:



**Change Leadership**  
Implementing & sustaining change



**Facilitating and guiding as a Leader**  
Feedback + coaching + effective meetings & 1:1s



**The Entrepreneurial Leader**  
Teamwork + entrepreneurship at every level of the organization



**Leading for Results**  
Strategy, vision, team goal-setting and prioritization



**Modeling Leadership**  
Situational Leadership + emotional intelligence + decision making



**Leading with the Brain in Mind**  
Psychological safety + SCARF model



**Inclusive Leadership**  
Leading with belonging, inclusion & equity every day



**Futuring**  
Holding long term perspectives over multiple horizons and possible scenarios



**Creative Deviance**  
Being generative, creating, and imagining over receiving and implementing.



**Critical Judgement**  
Teamwork + entrepreneurship at every level of the organization



**Decisions + Adaptability**  
The art of strong perspectives held lightly in a VUCA world



**System Diagnosis**  
Seeing the system and working within interdependencies



**Strategy Articulation**  
Articulating strategy and ability to work strategically out of the weeds

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### Proposed Modalities to support diverse learning styles and adult learning Principles

#### Learning Events (10%)

- Workshops
- Webinars
- Online learning portal

#### Learning from Others (20%)

- Communities of practice / Triads
- Subject matter networks
- Learner generated content
- Collaboration & Feedback
- Coaching & Mentoring

#### Workplace and real-life Integration of Learning (70%)

- Action learning and problem solving
- Placements and projects
- Shadowing, self-directed and incidental learning
- Special assignments

What I am hearing across the church, in many of the contexts where I've been invited to visit, to engage with the church, to listen and to preach, is that there is general acknowledgment of the

fact that something needs to change. But there is resistance to change (which is normal), but more importantly there is uncertainty about *how* to change. This program will invest in leaders who feel clearer and more equipped to lead the church through the change that is widely acknowledged that we need.

### **Flourishing: Bold ideas, Daring connections – the workshop/keynotes**

Originally, as you know, I envisioned a series of events that included three parts:

- A keynote address by an engaging speaker
- A public workshop to help engage Canadians in discussions about a future where we could imagine and create more flourishing for all
- The same workshop offered for the church where discussions focused on the future of a flourishing church.

Initially, the intention was that ticket sales and registrations, along with sponsorships, would significantly subsidize the cost of this part of my work. They were also the most expensive parts of the events because we planned to have them outside church venues, largely in hotels or public venues with catered food. Also I had envisioned co-facilitating the public pieces with Bloom Leadership, the consultants that had co-created the workshop with me; that meant more travel & accommodation expense. In the first week of September I made the hard choice to postpone the public events – we hadn't gotten enough engagement to warrant proceeding with the expense of the keynote with Shaun Loney, and the very few registrations we had for the public workshop were all folks we knew to be members of the United Church.

Terry Beaumont and I, along with the Communications team, doubled down on trying to promote the Kingston event. We reached out to the chamber of commerce who said they would promote it (they didn't). I wrote hand-written notes of invitation to over 50 leaders in Kingston and surrounding area – they didn't register. We had the same phenomenon where not enough folks registered for the public events, so we postponed Andrew Winston's keynote and cancelled the public workshop (again where only known church members had registered).

I think there are a number of different factors, but the end result was that it is also expensive to keep pivoting and I didn't want to lose or keep losing deposits on peoples' time and on venues and food. So, after some deliberation over the past weeks, we've made the following decision:

- Not to offer public workshops
- To scale way back on the keynote addresses to markets, venues, and times where we know sponsorships are coming and/or where we are confident that we can sell tickets

The great news is, that over the course of summer planning, the church workshop planning had shifted as well. When Cam Fraser started as Director of Growth working with Jennifer Henry in the Organizational Development and Strategy Unit, we also made some decisions about the church workshop:

1. Cam will come with me and play a role in facilitating the church workshop to introduce him to the church across the country (he also stays in town and preaches at a local congregation – so Regional Council Executive Ministers can choose two congregations where a visit from the Moderator/GCO staff would be encouraging); when the growth animators start in the new year, they will also come and help at the workshops to be introduced and to follow up with folks in the regions where they work.
2. The end of the workshop has been directly tied to the strategic plan and the growth and leadership pieces of the work we have said is important in the church.

We had over 75 participants in Winnipeg in September. As of the date of me submitting this report we have over 85 registered in Kingston, and we're hoping to get 100 registrations. The responses have been great, and I will have a more comprehensive report on the feedback in my May report.

While the programs look radically different than I imagined in February, they have been shaped by trying new things, keeping what worked and letting go of the rest. I have tried to model being both nimble and determined which are both important in managing change and designing new things. The teams that support me have been great, and I am excited to engage in this work primarily with the church. There are still other opportunities to engage with the public, and the GCO staff will continue to look for those opportunities.

#### **Other reflections:**

*Gibimishkaadimin* – I talked about this program verbally in September, but I continue to reflect on the importance of this program and want to write more about it so that it's documented for the wider church. This program is one of the best I've seen for inviting young people from diverse backgrounds together to learn about reconciliation. I'm not sure if it's the combination of being physically active, being on the land and disconnected from technology, eating and working together on trail, and cultural teaching, but it is deeply meaningful. It is meaningful for the participants, and it was deeply meaningful to me as a leader. I told the participants at the closing fire that if that program was all that was left of the church, it would be important and it would be enough.

The planning board, made up of leaders from across Shining Waters Regional Council and indigenous leadership, have expressed a desire to shift the planning of the program to a bigger entity. I support the General Secretary's preference that we find a way to keep this program in the church. I have agreed to be part of church/Gibi conversations about how we might start that transition. We have a great group of engaged Indigenous leaders and leaders in training to are willing to take up the lion's share of the volunteer planning work, and they are waiting to be asked.

*The church feels unmoored* – I continue to hear consistently that the church feels unmoored, or set adrift. This is particularly true in the former Keewatin presbytery, but also in other parts of

the church where presbyteries were more functional than others. I continue to discern what can be a word of encouragement and care to the church across the country. Many of you know I started the Mod's Book Squad book club, but I also belong to two other book clubs – one of them is a Bonhoeffer reading group with Dr. Roberto Espinoza in the US. Roberto is a trans man and public theologian, and we've made a pledge along with several others to work through Fortress Press' 3 book Reader's Edition of Bonhoeffer. We started this fall with *Life Together*. This little volume was Bonhoeffer's attempt to sketch out what life in Christian community looks like.

The other thing that has come up about this in my travels around the church is an implication – and I'm not sure if it's at all conscious or intentional (in fact I'm guessing it's usually not) – that the national church is somehow impeding and/or failing to support communities of faith at the local level. There are definitely communication issues that have been exacerbated by the restructuring and the downsizing of the church. And... we are also a very congregationalist church; and truly the health of our regions and the health of the national church depends on the health of the congregations. This is one of the reasons why, when a group of ministry personnel said to me "we need support in developing leadership skills," we listened and started (Re)Generate. The leadership that we need for the future depends on ministry personnel and lay leadership at the local level, now more than ever. And I see the national church also investing in the right ways to try and enable and empower that. We are all in this together.

I wanted to share with you these two quotes from Bonhoeffer from the Preface and Chapter 1 of *Life Together*. The first from the Preface because I find it gives me both encouragement and direction:

*We are not dealing with a concern of some private circles but with a mission entrusted to the church. Because of this, we are not searching for more or less haphazard individual solutions to a problem. This is, rather, a responsibility to be undertaken by the church as a whole. There is a hesitation evident in the way this task has been handled. Only recently has it been understood at all. But this hesitation must give way to the willingness of the church to assist in the work. The variety of new ecclesial forms of community makes it necessary to enlist the vigilant cooperation of every responsible party.*

The second quote is from Chapter 1 and reminds me to practice gratitude:

*We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the small (and yet really not so small) gifts we receive daily. ...If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian community in which we have been placed, even when there are no great experiences, no noticeable riches, but much weakness, difficulty, and little faith – and if, on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so miserable and so insignificant and does not at all live up to our expectations – then we hinder God from letting our community grow according to the measure and riches that are there for us all in Jesus Christ. ...Only God knows the real condition of either our community or our sanctification. What may appear weak and insignificant to us may be great and glorious to God. ... Christian community is not an ideal*

*we have to realize, but rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate. The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our community is in Jesus Christ alone, the more calmly we will learn to think about our community and pray and hope for it.*

I have preached a lot of this dynamic this fall – although usually from a more affirming stance that comes from Andrew Root’s work: *Alive is beautiful*. I truly believe, with every fibre of my being, that we need to be crystal clear on what is unique and special and god-given in each of our communities of faith. It is the work of each community of faith to look around them and say: how does God show up here? What does it mean *specifically* for *this* community of faith to live into our call and vision to be a church of deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice? Because when we know that, we can invite folks to participate in that – both with their time and their money. But if we keep doing what we’ve done based on some self-understanding of what the church was for the last century because we don’t want to change, then it becomes easy to focus on how much money there isn’t or who isn’t in the pews.

My good friend (and successor at First United in Vancouver’s DTES) Amanda Burrows always says: It’s not about the money – it’s about what the money does. I think our folks are strong on deep spirituality and daring justice. I think because discipleship is tied intimately to the traditions of “mission and evangelism” which were so problematic, we don’t know how to preach what we’re practicing in a way that is invitational and inspiring (both literally and metaphorically). So I’m hopeful that our conversations as a church over the remaining two years of this triennium – through the review of the structural change, the Total Compensation Task Group, and the Review of the Role of the Moderator and General Secretary Task Group – will elicit visioning from the church about who are we *really* are, and why folks should want to be part of our church to the glory of God.

#### **Travel/Meetings since May 2023 GCE Meeting:**

- Attended the [Festival of Homiletics](#) in Minneapolis, MN on study leave, May 15-19
- May 23-26, in Toronto recording videos for later in the year
- May 29, Annual Golf Tournament for First United Church Community Ministry Society – Vancouver
- May 31-June 4 – Fisher River Cree Nation to visit with The Very Rev. Stan McKay and Winnipeg for Prairie to Pine Regional Council meeting: Theme Speaker & Preacher at the Celebration of Ministry Service
- June 11-18 – Toronto & Orillia – Shining Waters Regional Council Visit (Pride event at St. Luke’s, Youth reconciliation art activity in Orillia, Day apart with ministry personnel at Jubilee United, and guest preaching at worship with 5 north Toronto churches at Rosedale United)
- June 19-20 – Ottawa – attended Government of Canada ceremony to unveil the space for the National Monument for Truth & Reconciliation



- June 29-July 5 – Indianapolis, IN – Corresponding member (in full communion) and Guest Preacher at the General Synod of The United Church of Christ (video of worship available online here (my sermon starts at 1hr 2 mins): <https://www.ucc.org/gs34-community-worship/>)
- July 27-30 – Edmonton – Keynote at National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering
- August 10-13 – Whitehorse – Attended Pride Concert (Danah Lee music) at Whitehorse United, engaged with local affirming churches (United, Anglican and Lutheran) re: the future of the church, guest preacher at Whitehorse United.
- August 20-29 – Attended as part of leadership for [Gibimishkaadimin](#), on-trail reconciliation canoe trip on Lake Temagami
- September 4-5 – Winnipeg – Day of action to support Camp Morgana and raise awareness with other churches about MMIWG (see press coverage in “Newsworthy” section of my report)
- September 6-10 – Calgary – GC45 Planning meeting (in-person)
- September 15-26 – Toronto – working from GCO, preaching at Grace United 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Niagara on the Lake
- September 28-Oct 1 – Winnipeg – Flourishing event with the church, preaching at Prairie Spirit UC
- Oct 2-5 – (Re)Generate Planning at GCO with Andrew Richardson & Laura Fohse (Office of Vocation)
- October 12-15 – Minneapolis – Speaker at [Evolving Faith 2023](#)
- October 18-30 – Toronto: meetings with Global Partners Council, quick trip to Cleveland OH for installation of General Minister & President of the United Church of Christ, GCE Meeting (virtual), [Preaching at Westminster United](#) (Whitby ON), Participation in East Central Ontario Regional Council Meeting (Odessa) and Celebration of Ministry service, Preaching at St James United 115<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Peterborough
- October 25 – Virtual participation in a panel: [“Christian Responsibility In Relation to the Gaza-Israel War”](#) with Bishop Younan (retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land & former president, Lutheran World Federation) and the Rev. Dr. Robert O. Smith (University of North Texas & Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- October 30 – time with Rural Ministries Network (Virtual)
- November 2 – time with Women’s Retreat @ Five Oaks (Virtual)
- November 3-5 – Cranbrook & Kimberly, BC: Attending Kootenays Festival of Faith – Theme speaker and guest preacher
- November 8-18 – Toronto: Recording videos at GCO, Nov 9-10 Flourishing workshop with the church in Kingston; Nov 12 preaching at Trinity St. Andrews in Brighton, ON, Staff Leaders Retreat & In-person GCE meeting

### **Newsworthy (news/other coverage of Moderator work):**

- [“Pragmatic Love”](#) in Freelance Christianity by Vance Morgan, October 22, 2023.
- [United Church of Canada Moderator criticizes Israel’s ‘apartheid’ policies](#) in the Western Standard – October 12, 2023 (based on the brief the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United churches submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee and a [right-wing clickbait article](#) that circulated on Twitter – they did not interview me for this article).
- Conversation about Flourishing in a panel on [Axiom News](#) – October 5, 2023.
- [Congregation comes together to welcome Moderator at Grace United](#) – Niagara Now, September 28, 2023.
- [Church leaders join calls for search of Winnipeg landfills](#) – CBC, September 5, 2023.
- [Des dirigeants religieux expriment leur soutien aux militants du camp Morgan à Winnipeg](#) – CBC Radio Canada, September 5, 2023.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY’S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

### **Origin: General Secretary**

**2 Corinthians 3:12** “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech—”  
(21st Century King James Version KJ21)

“Hope is a dangerous thing” is one of the intriguing lines for the movie Shawshank Redemption. It is something I think about often especially as I see the statistics on our membership and the challenges of our declining economic environment; it has been acute as I watch the war in Gaza. The loss of life and destruction rooted in decades of entrenched rhetoric and the dehumanizing of the other. My heart breaks as I sit in the theatre of life watching the real destruction of a people, and feeling powerless to make a difference.

Is it naive to hope for a vibrant future for our beloved church, and for peace with justice in the Middle-East? I must confess that I am feeling hopeless as I watch the destruction of a people. At the same time, I am reminded of the words of the prayer attributed to Oscar Romero:

“Nothing we do is complete,  
Which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us  
No statement says all that could be said  
No prayer fully expresses our faith  
No confession brings perfection...  
No program accomplishes the church’s mission  
No set of goals and objectives included everything  
This is what we are about:  
We plant seeds that one day will grow  
We water seeds already planted,  
Knowing that they hold future promise...

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in that  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.”

And so, we make statements, we write letters to governments, we pray and lament and we give. All of which are seeds of hope, for a just peace. For life in its fullness for both Palestinians and Israelis. We dare to hope! Because it is who we are, a people of hope rooted in the knowledge of the God who walked in our neighbourhood on wounded feet.

And so, we make hard and courageous decisions about our church, we lean into the strategic plan, *and* its objectives as we speak of a people longing to be bold brave and daring.

### **PRIORITY WORK**

**Remit Vote Update:** To date, votes have been received from about 10% of pastoral charges. This number is lower than expected for this stage in the voting process. All regional councils have strategies in place to get the vote out: including educational sessions, town-halls, and calling individual pastoral charges. As members of the Executive, you are also encouraged to continue to animate the remit process in your regional councils in cooperation with the regional council staff who are engaged in the process.

**Strategic Plan:** Two years ago, the Call and Vision were affirmed by the General Council, and you ratified the Strategic Objectives for the work of the General Council Office. Since then, we have seen significant engagement with the Call and Vision across the church and have developed and completed 75% of our first annual General Council Office Operational Plan (2023). While at a slower pace than hoped, we are beginning to see the fruits of setting a collective priority on Growth with over forty possibilities related to the development of new communities of faith. While we are seeing sustained improvement both in the development of operational planning processes and in progress towards the objectives, there are also significant challenges in managing this nature of change. The third quarter report on the operational plan shows some of those challenges including delay in hiring and transitioning staff, over-estimating capacity to complete key results, the need for further focus and results orientation, and capacity development in planning, strategy and change management. Having completed the planned hiring (except one which is in process), capacity to make progress on objectives, particularly related to Growth, will significantly increase. Turning the corner between the 2023 operational plan and that of 2024 offers the opportunity for evaluation and streamlining, enabling a sharper focus on results. In addition, we are moving forward a further level of change in 2024 by aligning budget, particularly program spending, and performance management strategies to the operational plan. You will have an opportunity at this meeting to engage with the results of the plan to date.

### **ONGOING WORK**

**Countering Antisemitism:** This group has five members: three from the Anti-Racism Common Table and two from the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, with staff support from Adele Halliday and Jennifer Janzen-Ball. This group has been meeting monthly since early

February to determine the outline and scope of the work, to gather resources, and to have conversations with various individuals and groups in relation to the work of countering antisemitism. The Countering Antisemitism Working Group is taking up the work that was begun with the important study, “Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today,” which was authorized for study in 1997 by the 36th General Council and approved in 2003. The working group will draw heavily on “Bearing Faithful Witness” as it develops education and animation plans to engage the church in consideration of our own scripture, history, theology, and worship, which too often have defined Christianity over and against Judaism. Newer resources will be added, as appropriate. The intent to include education and advocacy in this work: bible study, hymns, liturgies, speaking up against overt and implicit acts of antisemitism in communities.

Some United Church theological schools have accepted the invitation to participate in animating these conversations and learnings. The working group plans to have conversations with other groups and organizations who educate about antisemitism.

The work of countering antisemitism is part of the United Church’s anti-racism action plan. As part of the church’s aspiration to become an anti-racist denomination, we are called to continue to learn about how antisemitism is both implicit and explicit in our Christian faith, how antisemitism is experienced, and to act against antisemitism as part of our commitment to resist all sins of racism in the Canadian context. We focus on this work as Christians so that we can better relate to our Jewish siblings and act in solidarity against antisemitism. We also do this work so that we continue to have informed conversations within the church and in wider society about justice and peace.

As more resources are gathered and events are planned, the information will be posted on the Interfaith Relations webpage.

**Policy update:** since the Sub-Executive approval of the updated Sexual Misconduct Policy, the investigators, reviewers, and consultants have suggested some administrative changes. These changes will be reflected in the published policy which will be found at: <https://united-church.ca/handbooks-and-guidelines> once editing is complete.

## **NURTURING COMMON GOOD**

### **a. Connected and Emerging**

***Pastoral Relations Equity Research Project Update*** (later re-named as the Pastoral Relationships Thriving with Equity Research Project) is one of three different but interrelated research and statistical projects exploring equity for ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada . The other two projects are: [Leadership Counts](#), which is a voluntary identity survey of United Church ministry personnel, staff of General Council and Regional Council Offices, and General Council committee members to gather demographics; and the Total Compensation Task Group which will engage arms-length experts in statistical analysis of compensation policies and

practices paid to ministry personnel in communities of faith and in the General Council and Regional Council Offices, in order to examine the impact of these policies on ministers who are Indigenous, racialized, women, Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and persons with disabilities. The equity research project is now complete, and a draft of the report is part of resources for this meeting. You will have an opportunity to discuss this draft report and provide feedback for a final report which will be shared with the Office of Vocation, the Total Compensation Task Group, and the church as a whole. I will also arrange a learning session in January for a more thorough engagement with the report.

**Behavioural Covenant for National Committee Members:** In September you approved a Code of Conduct policy for staff in the General and regional council offices. Following a request from you, at this meeting you are being asked to approve a *Code of Conduct* for members of national committees. A working group staffed by the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff, along with members of the Anti-Racism Common Table and some members of the Executive worked on developing this Code of Conduct. They have offered more of a theological understanding of relationship to ground the code, and so created a Behavioural Covenant for members of all National Committees.

**Anti-Racism and Equity Updates:** A comprehensive report on the church's work on anti-racism and equity was provided to the Annual Meeting of General Council 44 in October 2023. That report details work over the past year, and serves as an accountability, as well as an update, on the church's national Anti-Racism Action Plan. In case you have not yet had a chance to review that full report, I would commend it for your attention.

**National Youth Event:** RENDEZ-VOUS 2024 will be held July 3-6, 2024, at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. The theme will be "Audacious Hope". This will be a collaborative event with the youth and young adults' program of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

**Gathering Worship:** the online worship planning tool and companion to the periodical Gathering is working on celebrations for our 50th Anniversary of the print magazine and the second anniversary of being online. We have recently surveyed the Gathering Community and continue to make improvements to both the print and online resources.

*Then Let Us Sing! (TLUS!)* is currently in the sampler stage. 350 United Church communities of faith have committed to being tester communities. The development committee has been working with animators across the church to teach new songs, gather feedback and learn more about how to better support the singing life of our faith communities. TLUS! is also actively working on providing hymns in both American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ) in time for the launch of TLUS! in June of 2024.

*Act/Fast* is the upcoming Lenten book and spiritual formation tool, this exciting devotional book has a diversity of voices from the Climate Motivators to full communion partners. Advent

Unwrapped continues to work in partnership with the United Church of Christ. It will be releasing new music and resources, including a shareable newsletter in November.

**Partner Council:** From October 19-26, 2023 The United Church of Canada Partner Council gathered in Canada for the first in-person session since 2018. The thematic focus of the 2023 Partner Council Gathering was “Partner Accompaniment of The Call and Vision.” In addition to attending the General Council 44 annual meeting, partner council members were hosted by two regions, First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council and Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council. In the regions, partner council members experienced first-hand how the United Church of Canada is living into its Call to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. You have as part of your resources for this meeting a Message from the Council.

**Theological Schools Circle (TSC):** The principals and presidents of United Church theological schools gather annually, with the Executive Minister of Theology and Ministry Leadership and the Program Coordinator for Ministry Vocations. The meeting is an opportunity to share together what is happening in each of our schools and in the national church. The time serves to build and strengthen relationships amongst the schools and the church, to discuss possibilities around collaboration, and to lift up joys and concerns about theological education and formation for ministry. This October, the TSC gathered at the Vancouver School of Theology.

A week prior to the meeting, the TSC was informed of the 25% reduction to their grants from the General Council Office, for the 2024 budget year. The TSC had been informed earlier in the year that there would be a reduction in the grants for 2024, but the amount was not known. The amount of the reduction was a shock to the schools, particularly as finding out this late in the year makes it much harder for the schools to adjust their own budgets and opportunities for additional fundraising for 2024. While this was difficult news to receive, the schools also understand the financial and membership challenges facing the church, as they also experience those same challenges.

The TSC is committed to working together with the church, to meet the theological education and ministry formation needs of the church. Looking ahead to 2024, the TSC and GCO staff will be seeking and applying for grants that can help advance work on collaborative projects, particularly looking at anti-racism, collaborative ministry training, and lifelong learning for both clergy and lay people. The TSC also wants to participate in the Centennial celebrations of the church, with a focus on “100 Years of Theological Education” and looking ahead to the next 100 years.

## **b. Sharing of resources**

**Finance:** “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.

*Captive Insurance:* The insurance premium increase for 2023-2024 for UCC Protect Direct – our captive insurance arrangement – has been finalized with reinsurers. Claims experience has been good and the average increase will be 7.7% with individual increases ranging from 2-12% depending on coverage details. This increase compares favourably to the market and participants will be paying less in 2024 than they were in 2021. The one-time savings target of \$1.0-1.5 million for congregations has been met and, if you factor in the outside market, continues on. This great economic news is offset by the service challenges we experienced in year one, which were considerable. So far participants seem to have tolerated the poor service as a trade-off against a rushed implementation. On a positive note, renewals for the coming year were issued on October 31 – on schedule and well ahead of last year. As a reminder, if we happen to have a particularly bad claims year in year one, we would need to inject more capital (via loan).

*300 Bloor Street:* Relocation planning is ramping up with detailed space planning underway and leases and capital cost contributions to be finalized by the end of the year. A key milestone is to have construction bid ready drawings in place for early 2024 to be bid out concurrent with Bloor Street's own construction plan.

*The Faithful Footprints* program has evolved to be a key element of our strategic plan and support for congregations. Program participation has ramped up to the extent that we may need to consider capping the amount of available grants each year. The program will exceed its original target of working with 500 congregations by 2025. The bi-annual sustainability report can be accessed at <https://www.faithfulfootprints.org/>.

*United Church Property Resource Corporation (UPRC)* is fully funded from a United Church investment perspective since 2021 (\$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 further \$1.3 million loss in 2022. UPRC targets a breakeven year in 2023 after a \$500,000 payment to the church. This is expected to grow to a \$2 million annual distribution to the shareholder by 2027 (in addition to generating more than this to congregations and regions participating in projects). Several regional councils have formalized a working relationship with UPRC. The first project “broke ground” this Fall and more will follow soon. The company is expecting to beginning financial contributions back to the church in 2024 – as hoped.

UPRC had intentionally been operating “under the radar” for its first two years. However, in May 2022 a more public phase began. Part of this was a re-branding of the development arm of UPRC to Kindred Works. <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/kindred-works-sets-out-new-approach-to-solvingcanada-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, the General Council's ongoing involvement is that of the sole shareholder. After an extensive, professionally administered search process, UPRC recommended, and you approved the appointment of Tim Laronde, David Constable and Tim Blair to the UPRC board. Tim Laronde is an indigenous business leader. David and Tim are the senior leadership team at UPRC. UPRC will be a key element in UCC strategic planning. Final approvals were obtained in May for the "land bank" concept where regional councils and the General Council can transfer properties for future development and at same time provide UPRC with a vehicle to support funding agreements and capital raises. It will also provide a return on investment to the denomination which is a new revenue stream. 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.

***Mission and Service*** giving continues strongly across the church for which we are grateful. Autumn, particularly November through to January, is a peak giving period and we are working to keep the good and important work of Mission and Service in front of folks during this time through offering a variety of ways to give. The Thanksgiving Campaign, which focused on anti-racism, was well received, and has returned a total of \$49,234.25 to October 26th, the final total will be available in early November. You may remember that at the end of the General Council meeting in mid-October I encouraged people to participate in the campaign related to the conflict in the Middle East. So far, donations in support of people affected by the conflict total just over \$5,000. Later in November, the Giving Tuesday campaign will launch and is focusing on emergencies such as the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Middle East as well as natural disasters. Our last major campaign of the year, the Advent-Christmas Mission and Service campaign begins on the 29th of November, the first Sunday of advent, and will go out under the Moderator's signature. We have also created a Mission and Service focused worship service for Sunday, December 31st to support clergy and worship leaders who may need a little respite after the pressures of Advent and Christmas.

The feasibility study on the Centennial Campaign is proceeding well. Interviews and focus groups are underway and we will share results and further plans early in 2024.

In other good news, participants in the *Called to Be the Church: The Journey* program continue to have improved financial outcomes and are better able to express their ministry and the impact of that ministry. The program offers several modules in CHURCHx including an entry-level "Getting Started in Stewardship" module, the in-depth "Stewardship Best Practices" module, and two modules specific to setting up a Congregational Giving Program and a Planned



Giving Program to invite bequest and estate giving. The modules are open to all Communities of Faith.

**Emergency Response:** Our response through prayer, emergency appeal, and advocacy to escalating war between Hamas and the Israeli government continues. The conflict has resulted in thousands of people dead, tens of thousands injured and displaced, and a deepening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.. In addition to several direct statements ([United Church of Canada Calls for Immediate Ceasefire in Israel and Palestine](#); [Ecumenical Statement on Violence between Hamas and Israel](#); [The United Church of Canada Joins Day of Prayer and Fasting on October 17](#)) and [joint ecumenical and civil society sign-ons](#), we have initially contributed \$50,000CAD to the rapid response of Mission and Service partners ACT Alliance and Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), with a further contribution to the ACT Alliance Appeal to follow with donations in response to the [United Church Humanitarian Appeal](#). A further contribution of \$20,000 will support the humanitarian response of the East Jerusalem YMCA to meet the needs of communities in the West Bank. As a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we are also working with the Humanitarian Coalition to provide tangible support for the people of the Middle East. The Canadian government is matching donations for up to a maximum of \$10 million made to members of the Humanitarian Coalition. Our new advocacy tool, integrated into this appeal, has provided a mechanism for United Church members to send an advocacy letter to their Member of Parliament and the Minister of Finance. The appeal, including prayer and advocacy, is fully available in both French and English.

**Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB):** We have been working with several partners to respond to food security issues. In Kenya, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) currently implementing year two of a five-year Conservation Agriculture (CA) program in Tharaka Nithi, Kenya working with more than 4,800 farmers. The current project budget is \$2.7 million funded by United Church equity and CFGB. We are also accompanying NCCCK on a three-year innovative climate programming funded by the Canadian Government's "Partnering for Climate" Initiative, launching in November 2023.

In Zimbabwe, The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is implementing the Humanitarian, Early Recovery and Development Program (HERD) in response to complex crises related to drought, hyperinflation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. This project is reaching over 5,000 people in Gutu, Bikita and Chimanimani districts. The Church is working with ZCC to develop a five-year post-HERD project in Gutu and Bikita to strengthen food security in the region by upscaling climate smart conservation agriculture, water conservation, improving market access, gender equality and internal savings and lending groups. The project is planned to start in January 2024. The HERD budget is \$1.4 million largely funded by Global Affairs Canada. The new project's estimated budget is \$2.5 million and is funded by United Church equity and CFGB.

**Risk Management** Risk management reporting will be a recurring theme as we roll out the strategic plan. One area of risk management is the hybrid workplace. There is some concern

that hybridity can lead to potential barriers to staff collaboration and effective decision making. As we are planning for the new office we are continuing to assume a hybrid work environment.

## PENSION BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: Pension Board

### Report

Under the current governance structure, the Executive of the General Council is the legal Administrator of the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada and has oversight responsibilities for its operation. To facilitate the conduct of those responsibilities, the Pension Board submits a comprehensive accountability report to the Executive of the General Council at its fall meeting and provides an update at other meetings if substantive events have transpired. The Board trusts that this information will be useful and would be pleased to provide supplemental information at any time.

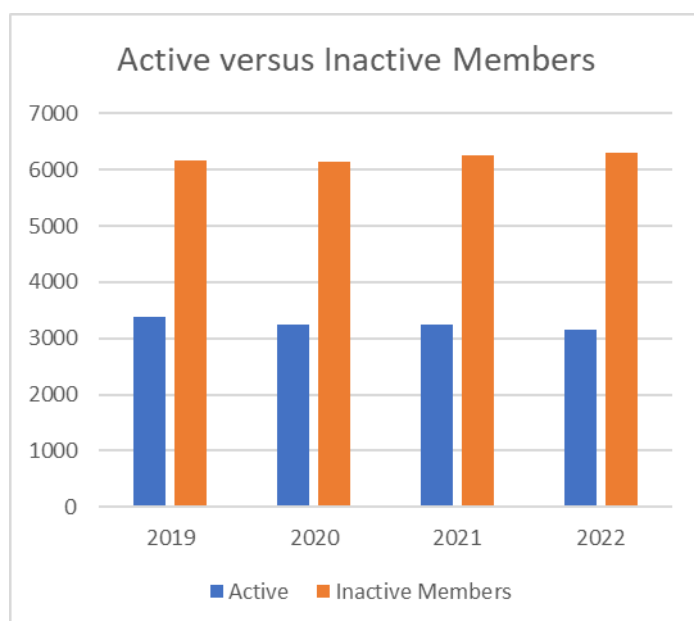
This report outlines key activities of the Board and its committees since November 2022 and concludes with a list of motions passed since the last report.

### 2022 Pension Annual Report and some Fast Facts about the plan

[The 2022 Pension Annual Report](#) was published in August 2023. In Appendix B, you'll see "Fast Facts" about the plan, which were excerpted from that report.

### What do the Fast Facts tell us?

The Plan is quite mature, as we have fewer **active members** (3,162) in 2022 than **inactive members**\*. This makes us more dependent on investment earnings than a less mature plan, because we don't have as many younger, active members making contributions.



Although the relative number of members to active members is edging up slightly each year, the change is very gradual.

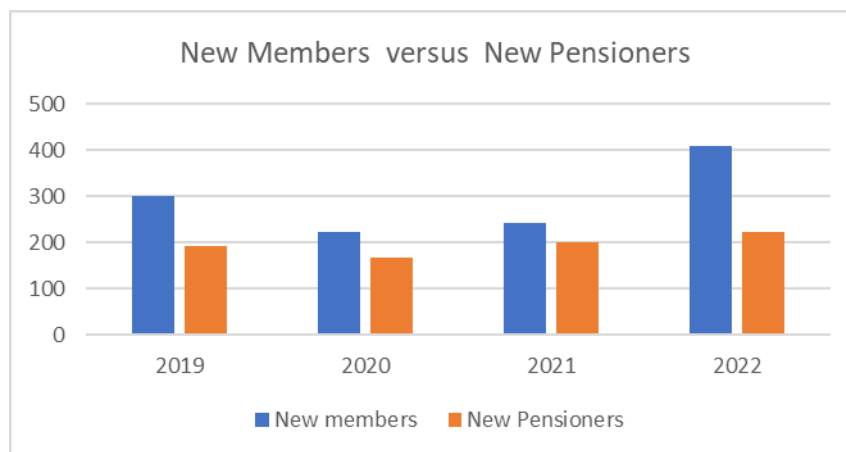
It is notable that, on average, most members receive pension payments for longer than they contribute to the Plan (24.5 years versus 19 years).

*\*An inactive member is someone who is receiving a pension from the plan (i.e. a retired member or pensioner) or has terminated employment but left their*

*earned pension in the Plan (i.e., a deferred member).*

### Here's the good news:

- Although the plan is mature, from 2019 to 2022, more new members joined the Plan than retired! In fact, the number of new members joining the Plan was markedly higher in 2022 at 409, up from 243 in 2021. This may serve to slow the pace of increasing plan maturity. We note, however, that 66% of those new hires were part-time.



- Despite volatile markets and poor returns in 2022, the Plan's financial position remains strong, with both the going concern and solvency funded ratios at 128% at June 30, 2023.
- The Board and its committees use a prudent and conservative approach, which helps the Plan withstand challenges such as equity market volatility, international conflicts, inflation and fluctuating interest rates.
- Based on results of the strong financial position of the Plan the Pension Board implemented a benefit improvement effective January 1, 2023. This is the fourth improvement in four years.

## Membership and Appointments

### Pension Board

The Board is pleased to welcome Sharon Aylsworth as a member-at-large. Sharon recently completed her term as representative of the Executive of the General Council to the Board.

### Pension Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC)

There have been three changes to the Pension Plan Advisory Committee's membership since our last report. Caroline Helbronner completed her third and final term in July 2023. The committee welcomed Peggy McCallum and James Fera at its September 2023 meeting.

### Investment Committee

There have been four changes to membership of the Investment Committee since the last report. Andy Greene was appointed Chair of the Investment Committee in May 2023, replacing

Deborah Leckman who completed her third and final term. Lori Hall-Kimm and Cathy Carlin were appointed to the Investment Committee effective September 2023 and Samantha Cleyn was approved for appointment effective February 2024.

Members of the Board and its committees are appointed by the Executive in your role as Administrator. Members-at-large are recruited through the regular nominations process. Pension professionals on the Board and Committee are recruited with the use of an external recruiter, interviewed by the Board chair, committee chair, and the Executive Officer for the Plan, and upon recommendation of the Board, considered by the Nominations Committee before coming before you.

***Key activities of the Board and its committees since November 2022:***

**The Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada, Strategy – 2023 to 2027**

The Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Pension Board on December 8, 2022, is the first such plan for our pension plan and provides guidance for 2023 through 2027. It will help to position the Plan to face potential obstacles and challenges such as plan maturity, reduced number of participating employers, increased member life expectancy, and other risks identified in future studies.

The Strategic Plan contains five key objectives:

1. Continue to actively prioritize plan stability and sustainability
2. Enhance Risk Mitigation
3. Strengthen approaches to active and responsible investment
4. Elevate Plan members' and employers' appreciation for the value of the Plan
5. Enhance and modernize administration to better serve members and employers

Staff report quarterly to the Board on key results and progress under each strategic objective.

**Pension and Benefits Administration Stabilization – PABAS Project**

**Supports Objective # 5, Enhance and modernize administration to better serve members and employers**

Implementation of the Pension and Benefits administration system is progressing well, but with some delays. The software purchased from Telus Health (formerly Lifeworks and Morneau Shepell) continues being customized to reflect the Plan's provisions, administrative practices and data-management needs. The implementation is overseen by a steering committee comprised of the chair of the Pension Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC), the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Officer Shared Services. It meets monthly and reports quarterly to PPAC and the Board.

During 2023 concern arose over adequate resourcing at Telus Health and gaps in Telus Health's understanding of the scope of the engagement, namely,

- Degree of integration required between Pension and Benefit administration;

- Model of payroll reporting required for The United Church of Canada; and
- Financial Reporting from the solution to support pension and benefit financial record keeping.

Following further documentation of requirements and negotiation with Telus Health, the project duration was extended from 40 to 47 months. The additional cost of addressing these requirements was met from the 20% contingency provision in the project budget approved by the Pension Board at outset. It is anticipated that the new system will “go live” May 2024.

### **Valuation of the plan’s funded position;**

#### **Supports Objective #1, to actively prioritize plan stability and sustainability**

Actuarial valuations are required by regulation every three years unless the Plan has solvency concerns. An actuarial valuation is an appraisal of a fund's assets versus liabilities, using investment, economic and demographic assumptions to determine the funded status of a plan. The usual practice for this Plan has been to perform actuarial valuations every two years rather than at the required three-year intervals.

The last filed valuation was conducted effective December 31, 2021. Therefore, the plan will not be required to file another valuation until December 31, 2024. However, in keeping with the plan’s usual pattern of filing every two years and in view of the plan’s strong funded position at June 30, 2023, the Pension Plan Advisory Committee has authorized our actuarial consultants, Mercer, to conduct a valuation at December 31, 2023. If the results are favourable as expected, the Board may approve the valuation for filing with the regulatory authorities. This would provide contribution and benefit stability until December 31, 2026.

The following table gives a brief summary of the funded position of the plan at the end of 2019, 2020 and 2021, accounting for benefit improvements up to at January 1, 2023, with estimates to the end of Q2 2023.

|  | Dec. 31, 2019<br>(filed valuation) | Dec. 31, 2021<br>(last filed valuation) | Dec. 31, 2022<br>(estimate) | June 30, 2023<br>(estimate) |
|--|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Going Concern<br>Funded Ratio  | 122%                               | 119%                                    | 130%                        | 128%                        |
| Solvency Funded<br>Ratio<br>(Percentage funded<br>on Solvency basis) | 116%                               | 122%                                    | 124%                        | 128%                        |

### **Benefit Improvement effective January 1, 2023**

In late 2022, analysis indicated that a benefit improvement could be granted and the solvency and going concern ratios would remain at or above the 100% solvency/115% going concern thresholds required by the Funding Policy. The Pension Board, on the recommendation of the Pension Plan Advisory Committee, implemented a benefit improvement effective January 1, 2023. Retired and Deferred Plan Members received a 4% increase to their annual pension

benefit, subject to provisions of the Income Tax Act and regulations. Active Plan Members received a .45% increase to the accrual rate from 1.4% to 1.85% for the calendar year 2023, with the proviso that the accrual rate would return to 1.4% in 2024 and subsequent years.

### Consideration of a Benefit Improvement effective January 1, 2024

At June 30, 2023, the plan was well-funded on both going concern and solvency bases. Investment returns were poor in 2022, with both equities and fixed income losing ground in tandem. However, rising interest rates reduced the current value of future liabilities, which resulted in strong going-concern and solvency funded ratios at December 31, 2022. Investment returns improved in the first half of 2023, allowing funded ratios to remain strong. The Board will continue to monitor the plan's funded status and ongoing geo-political turmoil and will consider whether a benefit improvement can be provided at January 1, 2024.

### Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures

The Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) is reviewed by the Investment Committee annually. During 2022 the Investment Committee added Infrastructure as a new asset class with a 3% target allocation. To accommodate this change, the target allocation to global equities was reduced from 24% to 21%. The SIPP was updated to reflect this change. The Investment Committee made this change as infrastructure provides benefits of diversification, inflation protection and sustainability.

### Investment performance of the Pension Fund

In 2022 both fixed income and public equity asset classes provided negative returns. Steep increases in interest rates by the Bank of Canada to combat inflation upset both fixed income and public equity markets. As a result, our pension fund rate of return on investment was -9.7% in 2022, slightly worse than the benchmark goal of -9.5%. Offsetting that was positive performance in real estate and private equity investments. However, the impact of higher interest rates on real estate and private equity will be felt in future years from lower realizations on asset sales.

At June 30, 2023, annualized returns for the Pension Fund were as follows for one to five-year periods as compared to policy, which represents the return on the assets as if they had been passively invested in the policy asset mix.

|             | Fund | Policy |
|-------------|------|--------|
| One Year    | 8.8% | 8.2%   |
| Two Years   | 0.1% | -0.9%  |
| Three Years | 3.5% | 2.0%   |
| Four Years  | 3.8% | 3.1%   |
| Five Years  | 4.1% | 3.9%   |

On a relative basis, the Fund exceeded its policy return from one to five years. The source of this outperformance can be traced to the Fund's real estate and private equity investments

which generated five-year returns of 12% and 19% respectively. However, their performance impact is muted as these private market investments currently represent only 15% of assets. What also helped was the 2020 decision to replace the foreign equity investment managers with two new global equity managers that were more balanced from an investment-style perspective. To improve performance, the Committee replaced its Canadian equity manager in late 2022.

Year-to-date to June 30th, the Fund return was 5.0%, 0.2% above the policy return. The market value of the Pension Fund at June 30, 2023 was \$1.47 billion, a \$39 million increase from the market value as at December 31, 2022. Over the first half of the year, investment gains of \$68 million and contributions of \$10 million were offset by pension payments of \$39 million. At June 30, the Pension Fund was 48% (vs target of 45%) invested in Equity, Private Equity and Real Estate and 52% (vs target of 55%) invested in Fixed Income and Cash. This is within the current bounds of the SIPP but differs from the target allocation by three percent.

To meet the new infrastructure allocation the Investment Committee approved two US \$10 million infrastructure commitments, which will be deployed as the managers invest in new projects. The Committee will continue to review and approve infrastructure investments over time to meet the 3% target allocation.

### **Responsible Investment (RI);**

#### **Supports Objective #3, Strengthen approaches to active and responsible investment** Sustainable Investing Working Group

The Sustainable Investing Working Group (SIWG) was formed in mid-2023. The SIWG is an ad hoc working group of the Pension Board and is comprised of Pension Board directors and members of the Investment Committee and the Pension Plan Advisory Committee. The SIWG, in consultation with and subject to the oversight and approval of the Pension Board (including on matters of timing), will be responsible for executing on the strategic plan objective #3 “Strengthen approaches to active and responsible investment”. This will include the strengthening of the incorporation of ESG factors into the Plan’s investment and investment-related decisions, our active stewardship, our governance framework, and our risk management and in our investment-making practices, all in alignment with the Pension Plan’s strategic plan.

The Investment Committee and staff have primary oversight of the Fund’s responsible investment activities. Below is a description of activities with respect to engagement, proxy voting and commitment to net zero by 2050.

#### Engagement

The cornerstone of the Plan’s RI activities is around engagement. The Plan engages directly with invested companies on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. The Plan engages its investment managers, not only on the investments they make on behalf of the Plan,

but also on their own diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Lastly, the Plan engages policy makers by publicly supporting ESG initiatives.

The Plan uses the services of SHARE to drive its engagements with companies. During 2022 the Plan engaged with 28 companies on 37 issues. About half of the engagements were related to climate change issues of reducing greenhouse gases, sustainable finance and a just transition. The other half were on social issues related to decent work, racial justice and Truth and Reconciliation. Success is measured by a company making significant progress against a desired outcome, or even engaging in positive dialogue. Roughly half of the engagements in 2022 were successful on this measure.

One of the successes for the Plan in 2022 was a shareholder proposal with Constellation Software urging the company to improve their DEI practices. The proposal requested the preparation of a report on the company's plans to identify, address, mitigate, and dismantle racial disparities within its workforce. Despite the Board of Constellation Software recommending that shareholders vote against the resolution at their annual general meeting, shareholders voted 62% in favour.

Another successful engagement that the Plan supported was a shareholder proposal with Toromont Industries Inc. to undertake steps to invest in the Indigenous economy, including achieving certification under the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Management and investors overwhelmingly supported the shareholder proposal at Toromont's annual general meeting, with the proposal receiving 99% support.

The Plan also engages with its investment managers. This is very important as they are the ones making the investments on behalf of the Plan. All of the Plan's investment managers integrate ESG into their investment decisions and are either signatories to the UN Principles of Responsible Investment or file reports with GRESB, an independent organization that validates ESG performance data. Choosing ESG integration is a top consideration when hiring investment managers. The Investment Committee spends a lot of time ensuring that our investment managers can help the Plan on its RI journey over the long term. In 2022, the Plan continued to probe its investment managers about their DEI policies, with most managers providing measurement or plans to improve diversity within their firm. The Plan's managers were also asked about their commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, largely to raise awareness. However, several Canadian based investment managers had initiatives in place.

The Plan supports public policy outreach largely through its relationship with organizations such as SHARE, Canadian Coalition for Good Governance (CCGG), and Responsible Investment Association (RIA). Of note, the Plan participates in the Climate Engagement Canada (CEC) through its relationship with SHARE. Climate Engagement Canada is a finance-led initiative that



drives dialogue between finance and industry to promote a just transition to a net zero economy.

### Proxy voting

The Plan uses external investment managers to manage its assets. For equity accounts, the Plan will directly hold company shares in its accounts, where feasible. The investment manager has discretion to buy and sell shares but the Plan controls how proxy votes are cast at a company's annual general or special meeting. The Plan uses a proxy voting agency, Groupe Investissement Responsable (GIR), to vote our shares. The Investment Committee works with GIR to agree to a set of guidelines on how the Plan should vote on particular issues. Most of the votes relate to the election of company directors, but others touch on executive pay, diversity and climate issues. Shareholders have the right to file resolutions at meetings to force companies to act on particular issues. The Plan has filed a number of shareholder proposals over the years as is discussed in our engagement activities. For 2022, the Plan voted on 1,288 proposals at 88 meetings, disagreeing with company management 53% of the time. The Plan takes its proxy voting responsibilities seriously.

### Commitment to Net Zero by 2050

In 2022, the pension plan signed on to the Canadian Investor Statement on Climate Change. With that commitment the pension plan has a responsibility to establish long-term and interim greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that are based on climate science and are aligned with the ambition of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 or sooner.

So far, the journey to net zero has focused on education on climate change metrics and the changing regulatory environment. Another priority is obtaining data on the Plan's green house gas emissions so the Plan can start to establish reduction targets.

### **Cyber Security;**

#### **Supports Objective #2, Enhance Risk Mitigation**

Cyber risks were considered in the building of the Exodus bridging solution (transitional system) and the Elysium target operating model (ongoing administration system being implemented). Working with both internal United Church IT professionals, Linea Solutions and MBS, and specialized legal counsel the requirements were written to state that data must be:

- hosted offsite in a data centre with commercially reasonable security certification
- held in Canada
- encrypted in transit and at rest.

For the transitional administration solution "Exodus", Microsoft Azure was selected as Microsoft was an existing vendor who had demonstrated its ability to meet these requirements. Our security provisions continue to evolve with input from United Church IT and external vendors (e.g., Linea Secure) as appropriate, to ensure that our data remains secure and access is limited to authorized users. For the ongoing administration solution "Elysium", the Lifeworks Ariel

system is subject to the same requirements, and these are set out in detail in the Master Service Agreement.

Staff is preparing a comprehensive inventory of security provisions for the plan and the PABAS Steering Committee will consider the need for a Third-Party Risk Management (TPRM) program in the context of the ongoing implementation project with Telus Health.

***There have been no changes to the pension plan's service providers since the last report.***

#### **Amendments to the Pension Plan since the previous report**

Amendment 2023-1 implements the ad hoc pension increase and temporary accrual rate increase effective January 1, 2023, which was approved by Pension Board at its December 8, 2022 meeting.

#### **Compliance**

All administration practices comply with regulatory requirements and the Pension Plan Text as noted above. All regulatory filings since the last report were made within the mandated filing periods.

#### **Other information that the GCE requested**

None at this time.

#### **Other information that the Pension Board feels is appropriate**

Since the last report to the Executive of the General Council, the Pension Board met five times and the Pension Plan Advisory Committee met five times, and Investment Committee met four times. All the work at the Committee and Working Group levels is reported to the Pension Board for oversight or approval.

#### **Pension Board Members: ([biographies available on the Benefits Centre site](#))**

Anne Soh FSA, FCIA ICD.D (Chair)

The Reverend Mitchell Anderson, BA(Hons), MBA, MDiv(Hons)

Sharon Aylsworth, BA (Hons)

Darwin Bozek, FCPA, FCGA

Tamara DeMos FSA, FCIA

William Gilliland BA (Hons), LLB, ICD.D

The Reverend Hae-Bin Jung B.Th., MDiv, MTS

Alison McKay BA, BAdmin, CPA, ICD.D

Katharine Preston MBA, B.Eng

Joanne Wilson, BSc, MBA

#### **Staff Support:**

The Reverend Alan Hall, Executive Officer, General Council Shared Services

Erik Mathiesen, Executive Officer, Finance

## Appendix A

At Pension Board meetings subsequent to the last report, staff and Committee work was reviewed and the following items were approved:

| Meeting Date            | Items Approved by the Board   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>December 8, 2022</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board appoint Andrew Greene as chair of the Investment Committee effective March 2023.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve the pension plan budget for 2023.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve the initial Pension Board Strategic Plan, as amended.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Board approve the updated Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures effective December 8, 2022.</li> <li>▪ THAT effective January 1, 2023, the Pension Board approve an increase for both active and inactive members, in the same amount as was given in 2020 and 2022:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accrual rate of 1.85% (increase of 0.45%) for active members for one year only, and</li> <li>• 4% increase to pensions of inactive and retired members, subject to Income Tax Act limits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <i>March 22, 2023</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board recommend to the Nominations Committee, the reappointment of Katharine Preston to the Pension Board to June 2026 and the reappointment of Laura Newman to the Pension Plan Advisory Committee to June 2026.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Board approve the pursuit of a contract with MSCI for ESG data to allow for the measurement of the carbon emissions associated with the Plan's assets. The contract will be subject to additional due diligence to ensure that it meets the Plan's needs.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve Amendment 2023-1, along with the restated plan text effective January 1, 2023, for filing with the Financial Services Regulatory Authority and Canada Revenue Agency.</li> </ul>  |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <p><i>June 14, 2023</i></p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board recommend to the Nominations Committee that Peggy McCallum and James Fera be appointed to the Pension Plan Advisory Committee.</li> <li>and</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board join with the Nominations Committee in recommending the following individuals for appointment to the Investment Committee: Cathy Carlin and Lori Hall-Kimm effective Sept 2023 and Samantha Cleyn effective May 2024.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve the 2022 audited financial statements of the Plan, for filing with the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA).</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board authorize an additional spend of \$400K, to cover costs for contract employees and consulting help, working to clear existing calculation backlogs.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>August 8, 2023</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) approve release of \$1.63M from contingency funds, and</li> <li>(ii) authorize a total budget variance of 1.61 to augment operational resources, \$400K of which was approved by the Board at its June 14, 2023 meeting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>October 11, 2023</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board recommend to the Nominations Committee that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Sean McCauley's appointment be extended for two years to February 2026, to facilitate his participation in the upcoming Asset/Liability study expected to begin in Q2 2024; and</li> <li>(ii) Andy Greene be appointed to the Investment Committee for a fourth three-year term to February 2027.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve the Privacy Statement for The Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada and The United Church of Canada's Group Benefit Plans.</li> <li>▪ THAT the Pension Board approve the Sustainable Investment Working Group Mandate and Work Plan.</li> </ul>   |

The Pension Board's final meeting of 2023 is scheduled for December 6, 2023.

## Appendix B

# FAST FACTS about your Pension Plan

As at December 31, 2022

## Plan Demographics

Average length of time people contribute to the plan **19 years**Average length of time people receive a pension **24.5 years****76**

Average age of pensioners

**64**

Average age of plan members at retirement

Average age of active members

**54**

## Total pension benefits paid per year

2022: \$74,875,000  
 2021: \$73,140,000  
 2020: \$71,255,000  
 2019: \$66,778,000  
 2018: \$67,608,000

Includes refunds and death benefits**409**  
Members  
joined  
in 2022**223**  
Members  
retired in 2022

## Number of Participating Employers



**Message of the Partner Council<sup>1</sup>  
of The United Church of Canada  
to the Executive of the General Council  
November 2023**

Dear Partners in Christ,

Greetings from members of the Partner Council of The United Church of Canada.

From October 18 to 27, the Council had the opportunity (in person and virtually) to meet with staff and leadership at the General Council Office, to participate in the General Council 44, and to visit several ministries and communities of faith in Nakonha:ka and First Dawn-Eastern Edge Regions of The United Church. While two members of the five-member Council could only participate virtually due to challenges with visas, three of us are grateful for the opportunity to experience in person the hospitality and fellowship of communities which hosted us. It affirms that the church believes it is not alone but is part of the Body of Christ. Truly, the Spirit is present and at work in places all over the world, including Canada. We thank The United Church of Canada for the opportunity to collaborate in a joint mission to proclaim hope, human dignity, and care for Creation. We also appreciate the chance to participate in the shaping of the new strategy, as well as in the General Council.

We are witness to a world with rising conflicts within and war between countries; increasing poverty and inequalities; profit and greed are capturing personal and corporate life; and life on Earth is poised precariously by climate changes. People and communities are pushed to the margins, working harder than ever to make ends meet. They are sacrificing family and community life, seeking life and livelihood through migration and asylum. Many are trying to numb the pain and purposelessness with drugs and other addictions.

Communities of faith shared with us these concerns and their efforts to respond to them. The United Church has played a critical role in raising the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers, encouraging Canada to open its borders. The vision of an inclusive society is reflected in the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and LGBTQI+ communities in its fold. This support is evident across communities of faith in various ways – from inclusion in worship and meeting daily needs to providing legal and documentation support and more. We were moved by the experience of the family that found sanctuary in Plymouth-Trinity United Church for 400 days, during which time, they were supported to legalize their status. We say in this how communities

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Partner Council is to connect The United Church of Canada with a global perspective, to share wisdom, and to draw upon the experiences of worldwide partners. This Council is presently composed of members of partner organizations from around the world:

- Samer Laham, Director of Emergency Response Services, Middle East Council of Churches
- Marcelo Leites\*, General Secretary, World Christian Student Fellowship
- Annie Namala, Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation (India)
- Kangwa Mabuluki\*, General Secretary, All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association
- Horacio Mesones, Centro Regional Ecueménico de Asesoría y Servicio (Argentina)

\*Participating remotely due to visa issues.

of faith eagerly seek new ways to live out the vision and mission of the church, reaching out to meet the contextual needs of the community around them. A different migration challenge is Canadian individuals and families migrating from their far-away homes to urban centers, and in need of support.

However, even as communities of faith and national church are reaching out to migrant communities in multiple ways, we learned that the leadership has limited understandings of the cultural reality and aspirations that the migrant communities bring with them.

**Partner Council recommends that integrating short/longer-term internships in migrant source-countries as part of theological training would better ground the Vision into their contextual realities.**

Our interactions with the 'emerging churches' in the Francophone and the Latino communities visited in Montreal, brought to us how they embody the everyday struggles of homelessness, inflation, migration, alienation and isolation among their members. These churches create spaces in their sanctuaries and extended friendships for comfort, companionship and support to newcomers and people in need. While the established churches hold generational memories of the congregation, the emerging churches are the spaces where the new stories of The United Church are being written. Together, the two reflect the challenges of the 'present and the future' of The United Church.

**Partner Council encourages the church to strengthen the bonds between the two spaces to help further 'deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice' into the community life.**

We saw large, beautiful sanctuaries and congregational spaces which hold generational memories of worship and life of the congregations. Unable to maintain them, a key concern of many 'established churches' is the desire to repurpose these sanctuaries. We are encouraged by the United Church initiating United Church Property Resource Corporation to evolve new ways in which these spaces can be repurposed while incorporating possible ways for these congregations to continue to access them.

Initiated by the church, institutions like the Montreal City Mission have been able to pursue work with the homeless, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as their core mission. These institutions are able to carry forward the work initiated by the church in new ways.

**Partner Council encourages new areas of collaboration between the church and these institutions to be explored.**

Migrant and refugee communities bring many skills and knowledge that can contribute to Canadian society. However, they face discrimination in employment unlike others who come with regular documentation.

**Partner Council urges The United Church to advocate with the state to build systems that can evaluate the knowledge and skills among migrant and refugee**

**communities to help them to be gainfully integrated into the economic and employment framework of the country.**

Even as congregational membership is declining in established churches, some continue as the *leaven in the bread*, becoming a place for support and fellowship to the community around them. Beulah United Church has just such an impact. Congregations are embodiments of their historical memories and stories, are able to look back at the journey of their congregations, discern the changing times, and walk the path of the faith. Fellowship across communities is the blood-flow that sustains their faith.

We also found that the Call and Vision of the church is owned by communities of faith, which is a positive sign. This became visible in the different meetings we held, as well as in the worship in which we participated. In First Dawn-Eastern Edge Region, the theme of Deep Spirituality was the focus of reflection and sharing of experiences among the clergy gathered for a retreat. Acknowledging that this is indeed an issue being reflected on and experienced in The United Church, Partner Council sees a need to work on connecting this dimension of the Call with the other two: Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice. It is important also to build a narrative that connects these three dimensions, that enables the development of personal and communal experiences, that weaves the connection between the United Church's history, stories and traditions together with its projection into the future, and the nurturing of faith in the Church with an intention to witness and give impulse to transformation of society in a time when it is most needed.

**Finally, the Partner Council makes the following recommendations as well:**

We continue to encourage solidarity in prayer and advocacy for people suffering everywhere. We are particularly aware of the suffering of the people of Palestine and Israel where war was raging during our visit.

Today's world so interconnected in terms of challenges and hope. The forces of greed and corporate interests are so strong. We are on one side of the stream and you are on the other. We encourage The United Church to engage with partners in co-creating spaces to address these challenges together. We need to find ways to connect to advocate on and address these challenges together.

If possible, we encourage increasing the membership of the Partner Council to allow for greater global regional representation.

In their meetings, both the General Council and its Executive are focused heavily on the Canadian context and the issues in Canada. Partner Council engagement as corresponding members is an opportunity to say that the issues the United Church is experiencing are not only in Canada; they are global. Even as the Executive addresses governance, strategic planning and budgets, there is space there for Partner Council to draw attention to global issues, encouraging us to address these together.

We encourage The United Church of Canada to maintain these spaces of dialogue and partnership. The recommendation of Roundtables in the [Global Partnership Review](#) provides



broader spaces for partner participation than the Partner Council for the purposes of shared analyses, shared reflection and ideas.

## **Consent Proposals**

### **BP 04 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT – GCE CASCADES**

**Originating Body: Moderator, General Secretary and Kit Loewen**

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

Members of the Executive are cascaded to serve other committees and working groups. As we transition to the new Governance Committee away from the Business Planning Committee, the Moderator, General Secretary and Kit Loewen, as the chair of the Business Planning Committee, formed a nominating group to recommend the following appointments.

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

The Executive of the General Council needs to appoint members to the various committees in order to assist it in doing its work.

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

**That the Executive of the General Council appoint the following members as part of their cascading role as members of the Executive:**

##### **Governance Committee (with the power to add external support)**

Kit Loewen (Chair)  
Paul Douglas Walfall  
David Leyton-Brown  
Arlyce Schiebout  
Corresponding – Moderator  
Staff Resource – General Secretary

##### **Chairperson of the Total Compensation Task Group**

Jane McDonald

##### **Sub- Executive**

M. Chorney

#### **4. What will be the impact?**

These appointments are offered with a view to the strategic objective of Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship. The work that these roles advance varies. On this occasion they fall primarily within the strategic objectives Nurture the Common Good and Embolden Justice.

#### **5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

All of these members of the General Council Executive have understanding and commitment to the equity commitments of the United Church. They are expected to apply their ever-deepening understandings of equity to the processes and decisions of these groups.

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

The Executive approved the establishment of a Governance Committee and its term of reference - [BP03](#). This recommendation is to appoint its members. The Terms of Reference for the Total Compensation Task Group [GS08](#) requires that the Executive names the chair of the Task Group. Recently, Catherine Glover stepped down as a member of the Sub-Executive. This appointment is to fill the compliment for the Sub-Executive

**GS 61 PARTNER COUNCIL MESSAGE**

**Origin: General Secretary**

**1. What is the issue?**

The Partner Council was established by the United Church to help it live into its commitment and practice of partnership and mutuality. The establishment of the Council was also an attempt for the United Church to have some accountability to its partners and provide a mechanism for decision-making that might have impact of the partners. The Council is made up of six partners, four representing regional partnership programs, one representing an ecumenical global partner and the sixth representing a Canadian partnership. Each year the Council meets to explore a part of the life and ministry of the church. This year the Council met in person and explored the ways in which the church was living into its call and vision. As a result of this exploration the Council is offering to the executive and the church its reflection and recommendations.

**2. Why is the issue important?**

From October 18 to 27, 2023 the Council had the opportunity (in-person and virtually) to meet with staff and leadership at the General Council Office, to participate in the General Council 44, and to visit several ministries and communities of faith in Nakonha:ka and First Dawn-Eastern Edge Regions of the United Church. While two members of the five-member Council could only participate virtually due to challenges with visas, three were grateful for the opportunity to experience in person the hospitality and fellowship of hosting communities. It affirms that the church believes it is not alone but is part of the Body of Christ. Truly, the Spirit is present and at work in places all over the world, including Canada. Members of the Council expressed thanks to The United Church of Canada for the opportunity to collaborate in a joint mission to proclaim hope, human dignity, and care for Creation. They also expressed appreciation for the chance to participate in the shaping of the new strategy, as well as in the October annual meeting of General Council 44.

It is important to hear and respond to the voices and wisdom of our partners as we continue to learn what mutuality means in the journey of mending the world.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive

- a) Receive with gratitude the message of the Partner Council;
- b) Refer to the General Secretary for consideration in strategic planning; and
- c) Refer relevant sections to Regional Councils for information and consideration.

### **4. How does the proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

The Partner Council is an example of the church's commitment to equity and diversity. The Council continues to open the opportunity to learning to listen to all voices.

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

This is an ongoing part of a previous decision to establish this council in 2010, which came out of the Global Partnership Review <https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/whats-it-all-about.pdf>

## **GS 71 CHANGES TO THE MANUAL – A.4 AND D.3.1**

**Origin:** General Secretary, General Council

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

It is desirable to make certain editorial changes to *The Manual* for greater clarity and to reflect current terminology, policies and practices.

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

The General Council Executive has responsibility for approving changes to *The Manual* where it is redundant, ambiguous, or unclear.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following changes to A.4 and D.3.1. to update the type of meetings that can be held:

#### **A.4 Meetings**

Councils are responsible for deciding how to hold their meetings. They have the following options:

- a) ~~physically at one location in person;~~
- b) ~~digital technologies; by telephone conference call;~~

c) hybrid [combination of a) and b)] ~~in any other way where participants can communicate with each other at the same time (for example, by instant messaging or webcam simulcast technology).~~

#### D.3.1 Triennium Meetings

The General Council must meet on-site every third year. ~~An on-site meeting requires that each m~~Member of the General Council ~~must~~ have the following options of full participation:

- being physically on-site; or
- participating through digital technologies. ~~or the in-person meeting.~~

The General Council must meet at least annually through digital technologies. ~~electronic or equivalent means~~ to fulfill corporate legal requirements and for other business as required by ~~The Manual~~ or as determined by the Executive of the General Council.

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

N/A

## GS 72 CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL* – D.1.1 G)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

### 1. What is the issue?

It is desirable to make certain editorial changes to *The Manual* for greater clarity and to reflect current terminology, policies and practices.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

The General Council Executive has responsibility for approving changes to *The Manual* where it is redundant, ambiguous, or unclear.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following changes to section D.1.1.g) to clarify which meeting of the General Council given that it now meets annually.

D.1.1 g) the members of the Executive of the General Council who will be continuing to serve on the executive following ~~that meeting the first of the~~ General Council meeting ~~of the triennium~~; and

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

N/A

## **GS 73 CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL* – I.1.2.1 AND I.1.7.1**

**Origin: General Secretary, General Council**

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

It is desirable to make certain editorial changes to *The Manual* for greater clarity and to reflect current terminology, policies and practices.

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

The General Council Executive has responsibility for approving changes to *The Manual* where it is redundant, ambiguous, or unclear.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following changes to sections I.1.2.1 and I.1.7.1 to clarify the responsibilities of shared ministries regarding decision-making.

#### **I.1.2.1 Community of Faith**

A pastoral charge or other community of faith that has completed and filed a profile may issue a call or appointment.

In the case of a ministry shared among more than one community of faith, such decision is made by the participant communities of faith in the shared ministry, acting for this purpose as a single community of faith, under the procedure approved by the applicable regional council.

FYI: Under this section, each voting member of the participant communities of faith will have one vote towards the decision.

#### **I.1.7.1 Community of Faith Approval**

The community of faith is responsible for making a decision on the Search Committee's recommendation to call a member of the order of ministry or request that the regional council appoint a designated lay minister to the community of faith.

In the case of a ministry shared among more than one community of faith, such decision is made by the participant communities of faith in the shared ministry, acting for this purpose as a single community of faith, under the procedure approved by the applicable regional council.

FYI: Under this section, each voting member of the participant communities of faith will have one vote towards the decision.

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## Appendix III

### GS 62 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

Origin: General Secretary

#### 1. What is the issue?

The General Council Office of the United Church of Canada has historically relied on cost reduction and reserve funding to cover annual budgets, as Mission and Service revenues have continued a pattern of decline. The pattern has been to effect “once in a triennium”, multimillion dollar expense cuts including double-digit grant cuts and staff downsizing in each of 2007, 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2021. As part of remit implementation of a new funding model, governor guidance included a commitment to “live within our means”. This remains a guiding principle, but for the 2023 an extraordinary deficit budget (\$4 million) was approved recognizing the lasting impacts of the pandemic on congregational financial health were and are still unknown, and the need to incrementally fund the launch of the new strategic plan. At time of writing the forecast is for a \$3.7 million deficit for 2023

On a pure accounting basis, there will actually be a surplus reported for 2023 reflecting receipt of the Lloyd Hope bequest of \$8 million – the second largest bequest in church history. Imminent receipt of this gift was known at time of 2023 budgeting, with amount reduced from initial announcements due to stock market fluctuation while the estate was settled. However, this generous gift is to be shared with the Foundation and earmarked for supporting the strategic plan as opposed to deficit reduction. Consequently, there remains a structural deficit of \$4-6 million to be addressed.

Management continues to recommend investing in strategic plan activities with a particular emphasis on changing the narrative of relentless decline; supporting and invigorating existing communities of faith; adding one hundred new communities of faith; and a multi-pronged public communication strategy to strengthen invitation to the denomination and its ministries. It is recognized that our traditional methods can’t begin to achieve these goals.

The emerging strategic plan will require a multi-year investment from reserves (i.e. a deficit budget) in any case, but dealing with the existing expense gap cannot be deferred any longer and a multi year cost reduction initiative is proposed.

Further, 2023/2024 could be the high-water mark for assessment revenue shared with regional councils. Regional council Mission and Service revenue has been reducing over time, but assessment revenue has remained level since the 2019 implementation of the new funding model. The General Council Office budget has absorbed funding deficits to date, but this will be less viable in future. From 2024 onwards, the financial viability of having sixteen regions will increasingly become a topic of ongoing discernment.

A spike in inflation from 2022-2023 is also adding to expense pressure. As has been reported over the last 18 months, cost of living adjustments are a significant incremental expense for all parts of the church, causing governors to modify policy and add an affordability lens in its administration of COLA for both the staff system and the pastoral relations system. CPI will continue to be a factor in setting the yearly rate.

The Executive has previously approved the underlying assumptions and budget principles and direction for dealing with the regular operating deficit for 2024 and the balance of the triennium.

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

The recommendation for a further – but smaller – deficit operating budget is a response to extraordinary circumstances facing all courts of the church. It is recognized that this is not sustainable year after year, but we need to give change a chance. This is an annual governance action and establishes the financial parameters by which staff are to operate. This is the sixth post re-structure budget, but only the second after the ratification of an updated vision for the denomination. While there is no scenario where ongoing cost reduction will not be required, some deferral of major cuts could allow the emerging strategic plan to gain traction

Approval of the proposed 2024 budget and beginning work for 2025 will guide detailed planning by staff while preserving the ability to refine our operating budget further during a period of ongoing immense change. The current economic uncertainty in our world, and for our church, increases the urgency of these steps.

Alignment with the strategic plan will be the primary basis for any recommendations related to grant or staff deployment. Comprehensive reviews have been completed for all grant programs and recommendations include adopting a multi-year lens and related communication strategy where funding may phase out completely.

It must be recognized that we are in an overall declining revenue environment and that our revenues are not protected from inflation. The external environment, with considerable ongoing economic and social disruption arising from COVID-19, has created significantly more uncertainty as we plan resourcing in support of the strategic plan. Decisions related to staffing will be based on a variety of factors including impending retirements, succession planning, cessation of activities, business continuity and generally trying to allocate our resources as faithfully as we can to align with the strategic plan and target outcomes.

In 2022, when the Executive met for its strategic planning session, the weekend of uplifting discussions brought us back to a beloved place: the “Called to be Church” paragraph of A New Creed:

We are called to be the Church:



to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

For most of us in the United Church, these words pretty much say it all. They capture in a brief paragraph the many ways that we seek to live our discipleship. Yet, because they reflect so well the breadth of who we are, for the purpose of focussing priorities they do not offer a lot of guidance. A number of significant statements have been made over the years as the church has grappled with the need to lift up what is most important, and yes, even to set priorities. The strategic plan will endeavour to sharpen the focus on priorities and actual outcomes. The connected operational plan will include monitoring and evaluation related to proposed key results, enabling a more rapid change approach if planned strategies are not showing progress towards target outcomes.

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

**The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:**

**Approve the 2024 Operating Budget and underlying principles and assumptions as summarized in the appendices. The projected deficit for planning purposes is \$2.3 million, which includes funding allocated from the operating budget for both approved strategic plan activities and programs that were previously managed separately from the strategic plan. In the 2023 budget, a strategic plan budget of \$1.5 million was reported on a segregated basis. For the 2024 budget proposal, we have developed an integrated program budget approach to incorporate all existing programs into the strategic plan, aiming to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. As the growth objective has been identified as the highest priority in the strategic plan, it is also recommended that the additional investment required to achieve the strategic plan's growth objective be funded through annual draws on the Hope Bequest.**

**Key assumptions include:**

- a) Inflation will continue to moderate but not return to pre-covid levels soon**
- b) Travel and meeting expenses to target 40% of pre covid expenditure (which with increased travel cost implies 25% of pre covid travel). This implies a significant cultural shift in what we choose to participate in and how. Will require careful monitoring.**
- c) All financial and investment decisions must be evaluated through the lens of affordability and sustainability. Affordability will need to be considered in light of current and future reserves.**

- d) All financial and investment decisions must be evaluated through the lens of alignment with and linkage to strategic plan objectives;**
- e) Budget and programming decisions must be linked to proactive communication planning and delivery;**
- f) We will try to be as transparent as possible regarding the likely future direction of our spending and the likelihood of future reductions. When known, we will provide two or more years notice of a phased, complete cut.**
- g) We are seeking to evolve to a triennium approach to budgeting. Most immediately, we are looking at 2024 and 2025, but will extend that process as we gain more information about the state of the church post covid.**
- h) For 2025 we will need to update the assessment revenue sharing with regions as assessment revenue is projected to decline in proportion to membership from its 2023/2024 high water mark. This indicates we need to look at options for the church to continue being viable.**
- i) Increasing the assessment rate is not recommended for 2024 or 2025 and seems problematic going forward. The whole basis for the new financial model was for the financial capacity of the broader church to align with congregational health and ability to fund.**
- j) For grant funding reductions, we contemplate using an impact lens to the extent possible and will contemplate funding fewer programs but also invest more deeply when feasible.**
- k) Annual incremental investment in strategic plan not to exceed \$1.5 million;**
- l) Continued but slower decline in overall annual M&S (\$725,000 per year) consistent with membership related metrics;**
- m) Mission and Service grant reductions including:**
  - a. 25% reduction in regional council allocation (from \$240,000 each to \$180,000)**
  - b. 25% reduction in global grants**
- n) Indigenous church budgets to be maintained level for 2024 subject to ongoing discernment around longer term funding and participation in cost reduction in 2025. All aspects of our budget have suffered from erosion in real dollars over the years. We need to trigger the work of the church to be innovative in ways that we can support the Indigenous church without necessarily compromising our other commitments as well.**
- o) 2024 Assessment distributions to regional councils to be held level, with notice given of likely reductions for 2025;**
- p) The COLA factor for the General Council staff system will be 2% effective January 2024.**
- q) With exception of extraordinary Lloyd Hope gift, bequest income will be used to support the operating budget for the coming triennium as has been the case for 2019-2022 (this maintains on hold our 2014 policy of transferring 50% of bequests to the Foundation).**

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

This budget proposal and the previously approved guiding principles and assumptions underlying the budget, have been developed with input from the national Staff Leaders group and vetted by the Finance Advisory Committee. Finance Advisory Committee recommends this deficit budget as a necessary, but not sufficient step in cost containment. Committee support is based on a commitment to continued cost reduction in 2025, a sustained long-term focus on “living within our means”, and developing a clear shared understanding by the church of what is meant by this phrase.

The Finance Advisory Committee further cites the need for proactive communication and messaging of budget decisions, stakeholder impacts and risks considered. In considering risks, particular attention should be given to potential unintended consequences.

Governors and donors will need to take into account that every decision that adds permanent cost, must eventually be recouped from expense savings or new revenue generation from somewhere else.

## Appendix A

**The United Church of Canada**  
**General Council Office Budget**  
*For the fiscal year of 2024, with comparative information for 2023*  
*(amounts in thousands of Canadian dollars)*

|                                   | 2024 Budget    |              | 2023 Budget    | Year over Year |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                   | Operating      | Shared Costs | Total          | Total          |
|                                   | \$             | \$           | \$             | \$             |
| Revenues                          |                |              |                |                |
| Mission and Service Contributions | 19,500         |              | 19,500         | 20,225         |
| Denominational Assessments        | 10,750         |              | 10,750         | 10,950         |
| Investment Incomes                | 500            |              | 500            | 500            |
| Bookstore Sales                   | 350            |              | 350            | 280            |
| Internal Investment Admin Fees    | 900            |              | 900            | 900            |
| Other Revenues and Recoveries     | 953            | 4,392        | 5,345          | 5,416          |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>             | <b>32,953</b>  | <b>4,392</b> | <b>37,345</b>  | <b>38,271</b>  |
| Expenses                          |                |              |                |                |
| Salaries and Benefits             | 15,850         | 3,961        | 19,811         | 18,564         |
| Mission and Service Grants        | 7,429          |              | 7,429          | 9,435          |
| Denominational Assessment Grants  | 6,590          |              | 6,590          | 6,590          |
| Infrastructure Expenditures       | 2,999          | 431          | 3,430          | 3,362          |
| Governance Costs                  | 426            |              | 426            | 698            |
| Program Expenditures              | 1,959          |              | 1,959          | 3,622          |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>             | <b>35,253</b>  | <b>4,392</b> | <b>39,645</b>  | <b>42,271</b>  |
| <b>Net Deficits</b>               | <b>(2,300)</b> | <b>0</b>     | <b>(2,300)</b> | <b>(4,000)</b> |

**Notes:**

1. The Shared Costs include reimbursements for operating expenses from the Pension Plan, the group benefit program, and the UCC Foundation.
2. The Governance Costs include direct costs, such as travel and meeting costs, related to governance committees and personnel.

## Appendix B

**The United Church of Canada**  
**General Council Office Forecast**  
*For the fiscal year of 2023, with comparative budget information*  
*(amounts in thousands of Canadian dollars)*

|   | <b>2023 Budget</b> |                     |                | <b>2023 Forecast</b> |                     |                |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|   | <b>Operating</b>   | <b>Shared Costs</b> | <b>Total</b>   | <b>Operating</b>     | <b>Shared Costs</b> | <b>Total</b>   |
|   | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>           | <b>\$</b>      | <b>\$</b>            | <b>\$</b>           | <b>\$</b>      |
| <b>Revenues</b>   |                    |                     |                |                      |                     |                |
| Mission and Service Contributions                       | 20,225             |                     | <b>20,225</b>  | 18,605               |                     | <b>18,605</b>  |
| Denominational Assessments                              | 10,950             |                     | <b>10,950</b>  | 10,950               |                     | <b>10,950</b>  |
| Investment Incomes                                      | 500                |                     | <b>500</b>     | 500                  |                     | <b>500</b>     |
| Bookstore Sales   | 280                |                     | <b>280</b>     | 350                  |                     | <b>350</b>     |
| Internal Investment Admin Fees                          | 900                |                     | <b>900</b>     | 900                  |                     | <b>900</b>     |
| Other Revenues and Recoveries                           | 1,216              | 4,200               | <b>5,416</b>   | 1,216                | 4,200               | <b>5,416</b>   |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>                                   | <b>34,071</b>      | <b>4,200</b>        | <b>38,271</b>  | <b>32,521</b>        | <b>4,200</b>        | <b>36,721</b>  |
| <b>Expenses</b>   |                    |                     |                |                      |                     |                |
| Salaries and Benefits                                   | 14,772             | 3,792               | <b>18,564</b>  | 13,848               | 3,792               | <b>17,640</b>  |
| Mission and Service Grants                              | 9,435              |                     | <b>9,435</b>   | 9,435                |                     | <b>9,435</b>   |
| Denominational Assessment Grants                        | 6,590              |                     | <b>6,590</b>   | 6,590                |                     | <b>6,590</b>   |
| Infrastructure Expenditures                             | 2,954              | 408                 | <b>3,362</b>   | 2,954                | 408                 | <b>3,362</b>   |
| Governance Costs  | 698                |                     | <b>683</b>     | 698                  |                     | <b>698</b>     |
| Program Expenditures                                    | 3,622              |                     | <b>3,622</b>   | 2,700                |                     | <b>2,700</b>   |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                                   | <b>38,071</b>      | <b>4,200</b>        | <b>42,256</b>  | <b>36,225</b>        | <b>4,200</b>        | <b>40,425</b>  |
| <b>Net Deficits</b>                                     | <b>(4,000)</b>     | <b>0</b>            | <b>(3,985)</b> | <b>(3,705)</b>       | <b>0</b>            | <b>(3,705)</b> |
| <b>Extraordinary Items</b>                              |                    |                     |                |                      |                     |                |
| The Hope Bequest  |                    |                     |                | 8,039                |                     | <b>8,039</b>   |
| Transfer to M&S Endowment Fund in Foundation (note 1)   |                    |                     |                | (4,020)              |                     | <b>(4,020)</b> |
| <b>Net Surplus (Deficits) after Extraordinary Items</b> | <b>(4,000)</b>     | <b>0</b>            | <b>(3,985)</b> | <b>315</b>           | <b>0</b>            | <b>315</b>     |

**Notes:**

1. In May 2023, General Council Executive re-affirmed its 2014 policy direction for extraordinary gifts and direct that 50% of the Hope Bequest be allocated to the Foundation and 50% be earmarked for support of the strategic plan and reconciliation initiatives as opposed to regular budget support.

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## Appendix IV



# Pension Board Accountability Report

2022-2023 Report

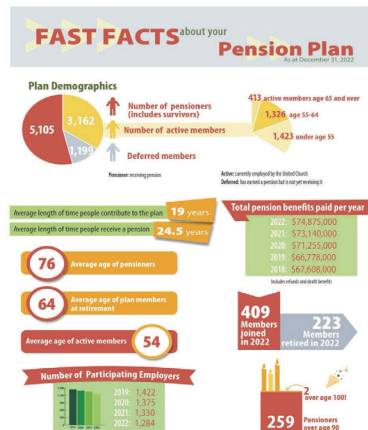
The United Church of Canada | L'Église Unie du Canada



## Key Discussion Points

- Pension Plan Strategy – 2023 to 2027
- Overall Plan Performance
- Benefit Improvements
- Pension Plan Administration
- Responsible Investment

## What the Fast Facts tells us...



- The Plan is “mature”
  - There are significantly more retirees than active members
  - We pay more pensions each year than we collect in contributions
- This means that we
  - Must rely on investment earnings to pay pensions to our retirees
  - Have limited ability to bear risks

## Pension Plan Strategy – 2023 to 2027

The Strategic Plan contains five main objectives:

1. Continue to actively prioritize plan stability and sustainability
2. Enhance risk mitigation
3. Strengthen approaches to active and responsible investment
4. Elevate Plan members' and employers' appreciation for the value of the Plan
5. Enhance and modernize administration to better serve members and employers

Staff report quarterly to the Board on key results and progress under each strategic objective



## Overall Plan Performance

The Board and its committees use a prudent and conservative approach to manage the Plan

As a result, the Plan is generally able to withstand challenges such as market volatility and uncertainty due to international conflicts and changing interest rates



## Investment Returns

Fund returns have exceeded policy benchmarks during the one to five-year periods ending June 30, 2023

| Ending June 30, 2023 | Fund | Policy |
|----------------------|------|--------|
| One Year             | 8.8% | 8.2%   |
| Two Years            | 0.1% | -0.9%  |
| Three Years          | 3.5% | 2.0%   |
| Four Years           | 3.8% | 3.1%   |
| Five Years           | 4.1% | 3.9%   |

On a relative basis, the Fund exceeded its policy return during the five year period



## Funded Position

The Plan's funded ratios remain strong

|  | Going Concern<br>Funded Ratio | Solvency<br>Ratio |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| December 31, 2019<br>(filed valuation) | 122%                          | 116%              |
| December 31, 2021<br>(filed valuation) | 119%                          | 122%              |
| December 31, 2022<br>(estimate)        | 130%                          | 124%              |
| June 30, 2023<br>(estimate)            | 128%                          | 128%              |

Negative asset returns during first half of 2022 were offset by decrease in liabilities due to rising interest rates

## Benefit Improvements

- Guided by provisions in the Funding Policy
- Benefit improvements considered when
  - Solvency ratio exceeds 100%
  - AND
  - Going concern ratio remaining above 115%
- Pension Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC)
  - monitors the Plan's financial position on a quarterly basis, and
  - recommends, when appropriate, improvements for Pension Board consideration

## January 1, 2023 Benefit Improvement

- PPAC recommended an increase effective January 1, 2023
  - Retired and Deferred Plan Members
    - Received a 4% increase to their annual pension benefit
  - Active Plan Members
    - Received an increase in their accrual rate from 1.4% to 1.85% for the calendar year 2023
- PPAC is conducting analysis to determine feasibility of improvements at January 1, 2024

## Recent Benefit Improvements

| Year | Active Members<br>(Accrual Rate) | Inactive Members<br>(Increase to pensions) |
|------|----------------------------------|--|
| 2020 | 1.85% (1.4% plus .45% )          | 4%   |
| 2021 | 1.625% (1.4% plus .225%)         | 2%   |
| 2022 | 1.85% (1.4% plus .45%)           | 4%   |
| 2023 | 1.85% (1.4% plus .45%)           | 4%   |
| 2024 | TBD                              | TBD  |



## Pension Plan Administration

- Implementation of new Pension and Benefits Administration System progresses well, but project duration extended from 40 to 47 months (revised go-live date in May 2024)
  - Extension required to accommodate Telus Health’s understanding of pension/benefits administration integration, payroll and financial reporting requirements
  - Additional cost met from 20% contingency provision in budget
- Implementation overseen by a steering committee comprised of the chair of the PPAC, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Officer Ministry and Employment
- Ongoing administration of the Plan continues on a “business as usual” basis
- Measures existing and continues to be developed to address cyber risks



## Responsible Investment

Sustainable Investing Working Group (SIWG) was formed in mid 2023 as an ad-hoc working group of the Pension Board

- Includes of members of the Pension Board, Investment Committee and Pension Plan Advisory Committee
- Responsible for executing on Strategic Plan Objective #3 “Strengthen approaches to active and responsible investment”, including
  - Incorporation of ESG factors in investments and related decisions, active stewardship, governance framework and risk management



## Responsible Investment

- Primary oversight of activities provided by the Investment Committee and staff
  - Engagement with investment managers , invested companies and policy makers on ESG matters
    - Engagement with companies via Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE)
  - Proxy voting
  - Commitment to Net Zero by 2050



## 2022 Engagement with SHARE

- Participated in 37 engagement initiatives with 28 companies to date
- Issues include:
  - Climate change (e.g. reducing greenhouse gas emissions)
  - Sustainable finance
  - Decent work
  - Racial justice
  - Truth and Reconciliation
- Success is measured by a company making significant progress against a desired outcome, or even engaging in positive dialogue. Roughly half of the engagements in 2022 were successful on this measure



## Shareholder proposal at Toromont Industries Inc.

- Requested that Toromont invest in the Indigenous economy, including achieving certification under the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
- Management and investors overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal (99% support) at Toromont's annual general meeting



## Proxy Voting

- Plan controls how proxy votes are cast
- Investment committee works with proxy voting agency to define voting guidelines for the election of company directors, executive pay, diversity and climate issues
- For 2022, Plan voted on 1,288 proposals at 88 meetings disagreeing with management 53% of time



## Commitment to Net Zero

- By signing on to the Canadian Investor Statement on Climate Change in 2022, the Plan has committed to long-term and interim greenhouse emission reduction targets aiming to achieve net zero by 2050
- Steps taken so far include:
  - Board and committee education on climate change metrics and regulatory environment
  - Obtaining data on Plan's green house gas emissions in order to establish reduction targets



## Discussion & Questions

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## Appendix V

### NIC – GCE Collaboration Feedback from Table Groups

- Intentional
- Build trust in one another
- There has been progress since apologies and there is more to be done - needs to be done together
- Not to be controlled by fear, especially fear re: control of resources
- Opportunities to gather, meet and break bread together
- Work of non-Indigenous church to do self-examining work re: existing/persistent white supremacy in church
- Respect for autonomy of Indigenous church
- Relationships and knowing each other
- Having an official covenant between NIC and GCE/UCC (cf. Australian example)
- Understanding difference
- Build understanding re: Remit 1
- Who are we becoming?
- What does it mean to “walk together?”
- Creating space to intentionally build relationships at all levels of the church
- Mentors re: admissions
- Sharing understanding of the Apologies across the church
- Understanding the structural and financial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous church

#### Questions:

- Why wasn't there consultation with the ANC re: restructuring / Comprehensive Review?
- How can we help the non-Indigenous church get over shame / guilt?
- Structure of NIC / GCE – how do we ensure NIC participation in GCE?
- Is the notion of dual membership for Indigenous communities of faith (within a region *and* the NIC) still in effect, or has that changed in 5 years?
- Where does the NIC fit in the overall structure? – a counterpart to GCE? a region? some kind of third way?
- Where does some of the technical authority lie (i.e. property development), or is that still to be determined?

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## Appendix VI

### **GS 63 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE USE OF THE WORD “MISSION”**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

We believe the church is called to wrestle with the legacy of its theology around mission, particularly with respect to the ways in which a colonial theology of mission guided the church's participation in colonization in Canada, in relation to Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as in its participation in global missionary and colonizing endeavours. The use of the word “mission” is common within the United Church and in ecumenical circles and it can be a trigger for those who have borne the brunt of missionizing efforts that were really about cultural and physical genocide.

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

This issue is important because the use of the word “mission” points to a larger concern about the theologies underlying the United Church's historic practices named as mission activities. Whether or not the United Church continues to use the word “mission,” the church is called to understand, explore, and learn more about the theologies that undergird a particular expression of mission, and to continue to decolonize our theologies so that we might live into our Truth and Reconciliation, Calls to the Church, and anti-racism commitments and aspirations.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:

- a) direct the General Secretary to develop theological, educational, and worship resources to engage the church in discussion, learning, and action around the histories, theologies, and practices of mission within the church, with a specific focus on naming and deconstructing those theologies and practices that contributed to harm, inequity, and colonization. Further, that the differences in the histories, theologies, and practices of mission overseas and domestically be named. In developing these resources, the General Secretary will ensure a particular focus on resources that can be used by local communities of faith and individuals connected to the United Church;
- b) encourage all councils of the church to use the word “mission” less and to use it with careful consideration, guided by a “hermeneutic of suspicion” (Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza), which invites us to raise questions about the assumptions, underlying theologies, and unconscious biases we bring to our understanding of “mission;” and
- c) encourage the church to continue to prioritize its decolonization work, through concrete, structural changes that are needed to address the continued inequity and harm that has happened, and continues to happen, through the church's participation in



colonization. The church is particularly encouraged to deconstruct its participation in colonization that was masked with the word “mission.”

#### **4. What will be the impact?**

This work aligns with the Anti-Racism Action Plan, the Caretakers’ Calls to the Church, the United Church’s commitment to UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation.

This work aligns with the following activities in the strategic plan:

- S1.02.009 “Theology: increase shift from white Euro-centric male dominant theology, encourage existing and new theologies that promote multiple marginalized identities and intercultural practices, and develop relevant accessible theological resources.”
- S6.01.004 “Theologies/Spiritualities: recover, restoration and development of Indigenous ways of being and knowing, including theologies and spiritual practices. \*connected to S1.02.009 on theology.”
- S1.02.007 “Education: Develop and implement educational strategy that deepens understanding of the diverse impacts of colonialism, White supremacy, and racism in our church). . .”
- S1.01.001 “Advocacy: Deepen understanding and action on the ongoing colonial injustices identified in the TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls to Justice by contributing to advocacy on TRC 1-6 as well as Calls to Action directed to the Churches and Parties to the Settlement Agreement.”
- S1.01.004 “Legacy: Support the relational, funding, and archival work related to Bringing the Children Home and develop further specific responses to denomination’s colonial legacy as discerned to be appropriate (e.g., sixties scoop, day schools).”
- S2.02.003 “Reimagine theological education: Create regular process for schools to collaborate together around needs the church and the schools see for ministry in church today and in future (e.g., exploration of collaborative ministry and bivocational models, distinct roles of church and schools, accessibility and pedagogy, distance education)…”

There will be staff time and a small budget needed in order to animate existing resources and create some new resources (primarily thinking bible study resources to engage exploration of some key biblical passages. This may mean asking some people to write short resources and offering honouraria). However, much of the staff time can be accounted for in the strategic plan activities noted above.

The hope is that all of the United Church will become more aware, as the church continues to live into its commitments and continues to engage the legacy of its past.

#### **5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

As above.

#### **6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:**

**If this proposal is in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting, please list proposal / motion numbers.**

Issues related to the use of the word “mission” were named at the November 2021 GCE meeting, both in discussion and in the report from the Just Peace Task Group, “In Support Of Just Peace In Palestine And Israel: A Call To Costly Solidarity”

GCE requested that the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee do some work on the use of the word “mission.” The General Secretary approved a suggestion that a working group be created, made up of members from TICIF, the Anti-Racism Common Table, and the Indigenous Church.

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## **Appendix VII**

### **GS 64 BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT FOR MEMBERS OF NATIONAL COMMITTEES**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

We believe that God is calling us to strengthen relationships that are grounded in behaviours and ways of being that demonstrate our Christian commitments in word and deed. As noted in *A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada*:

We sing of a church  
seeking to continue the story of Jesus  
by embodying Christ’s presence in the world.  
We are called together by Christ  
as a community of broken but hopeful believers,  
loving what he loved,  
living what he taught,  
striving to be faithful servants of God  
in our time and place.

We believe that one way to do live into this faithfully is through the creation of a Behavioural Covenant for members of national committees.

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

A Behavioural Covenant can provide guidelines on how committee members could work well together within the freedom of covenantal relationships for the uplifting of the whole of the United Church. It also offers additional guidelines for how committee members can be held accountable for, and increase the effectiveness through their behaviours on committees.

We, as people of faith, we may be familiar with covenants as expressed in scripture (including Genesis 9, Genesis 12 and 15, Exodus 6, Deuteronomy, Ruth, 2 Samuel, and Luke 1). In the United Church, we also engage in covenantal relationships between ministry personnel and communities of faith, with members of the Executive of General Council, and with senior leaders of General Council and regional council offices.

This Behavioural Covenant for National Committee members is not designed to be punitive. Rather, it is grounded in relationship.

Covenant is built on the diversity of thoughts brought together in dialogue and decision making to enhance the whole church and our relationships in wider society. As the United Church seeks to become an intercultural community, a Behavioural Covenant can help to provide safer space and a framework for understanding and deeper dialogue, and engaging cultural difference. It is based on relationships and accountabilities to one another.

As it is designed for committee members, it is separate and distinct from the Code of Conduct developed for General Council and regional council office staff.

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

**The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:**

- **Adopt the attached “Behavioural Covenant for National Committee Members” as policy, and**
- **Direct the General Secretary to ensure that all national committee members sign the Behavioural Covenant.**

### **4. What will be the impact?**

This Behavioural Covenant is aligned with Activity S2.03.022 - Equity in Governance.

The covenant offers an additional way of people being accountable to one another when serving on a governance committee.

There would be no cost for implementing the Behavioural Covenant. Some minimal staff time would be engaged in distributing and sharing about the covenant.

The Behavioural Covenant is designed for members of national committees, and so committee members would be the most affected.

### **5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

This Behavioural Covenant is created to honour and uphold diversity, and to enable the full and equitable participation of people of all identities. This covenant is also intentionally created to

be held alongside and complimentary to: all of the church's policy commitments to equity, as well as the church's Equity Aspirations.

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

In addition to the church's commitments to equity and the Equity Aspirations, this Behavioural Covenant is also created to be held alongside the already-existing:

- Holy Manners
- Seven Sacred Teachings
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response policy
- Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention policy.

**If this proposal is in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting, please list proposal / motion numbers.**

The development of a Code of Conduct for committees was initially named at the GCE meeting in November 2022. At that time, the members of the GCE Workflow Working Group offered 10 recommendations for the GCE (commons.united-church.ca, search "05 Action Plan for Governance Renewal"). The 10 recommendations were accepted in principle, and the working group was invited to continue to do follow-up work on these recommendations.

One of the recommendations from the workflow group (Recommendation 8) noted the following:

That the Executive establish code of conduct and behavioural covenant for the Executive; determine who will have the authority to hold Executive members accountable; and establish how the Executive will hold each other accountable.

The General Secretary later assigned the writing of a Code of Conduct to the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff to develop together with some elected members. A small working group was created, which consisted of one member of the Anti-Racism Working Group (Ibi Chaun), different members of the GCE at different times (Mitchell Anderson, M Chorney, Arlyce Schiebout), and the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff (Adele Halliday). As the group worked, they focused less on creating a "Code of Conduct" and emphasized more on writing a Behavioural Covenant. They also expanded the scope of this covenant to be not just for the GCE, but to be for all members of national committees.

## **Behavioural Covenant For Members of National Committees in The United Church of Canada**

### **Background and rationale**

The United Church of Canada seeks to strengthen relationships that are grounded in behaviours and ways of being that demonstrate our Christian commitments in word and deed. A Behavioural Covenant for Members of National Committees provides guidelines on how committee members could work well together within the freedom of covenantal relationships for the uplifting of the whole of the United Church. It also offers additional guidelines for how committee members can be held accountable for, and increase the effectiveness through, their behaviours on committees.

This particular covenant is also another way to help committee members to create common understandings of the commitments they have made and the expectations towards one another. This covenant is held alongside the United Church's commitments to Holy Manners the Equity Aspirations, and the Seven Sacred Teachings; this covenant aims to honour our diversity. When it is lived out, the Behavioural Covenant offers the possibility of creative and transformative decision-making. It is for committee members, and offers a different emphasis from the church's "Code of Ethical Conduct for Workplaces", a policy that is for General Council and Regional Council office staff.

### **Theological Understandings**

Theologically, the understanding of covenant in scripture is expressed in God's relationship with creation. In the Noahide story, God covenants with the whole creation, making promises to all creation. Throughout scripture, God continues to choose to covenant, where the terms of the relationship are set down by God and the people freely choose to live in covenant. Some familiar covenants include the covenant with Noah and the entire creation (Genesis 9), the covenant with Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah (Genesis 12 and 15), the covenant with the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 6), the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy), the covenant with Ruth and Naomi (Ruth), the covenant with David (2 Samuel), and a renewed covenant (Luke 1). These covenants, and others, are built on behaviours of responsibility and accountability, relationship with the integrity of all creation, and the vision of wholeness and goodness for all creation: shalom.

In the context of Indigenous relationships, we have received the teaching from our Mohawk friends "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren", which means "all my relations". This teaching is a reminder that we are connected to one another, and that our relationship includes a responsibility of becoming one in mind and spirit through our decisions together. These words were given by Indigenous Elders and the words are a part of the United Church Crest, to remind us of our commitment to a deeper spiritual relationship with one another.

From Indigenous teachings we also remember the story of the Peacemaker who brought us the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace from whom we learned the importance of peace and respect for all life. The Great Law of Peace teaches us to live in harmony with one and other and with the natural world.

### **Context and rationale**

Covenant is built on the diversity of thoughts brought together in dialogue and decision making to enhance the whole church and our relationships in wider society. As the United Church seeks to become an intercultural community, a Behavioural Covenant helps to provide safer space and a framework for understanding and deeper dialogue, and engaging cultural difference. The covenant is not designed to be punitive, but rather is based on relationships and accountabilities to one another.

The creation of a behavioural covenant is grounded in *A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada* and in scripture.

From *A Song of Faith*, we are reminded of how we can be in community together:

In and with God,  
    we can direct our lives toward right relationship  
    with each other and with God.  
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.  
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.  
We can recognize all people as kin.

*A Song of Faith* also notes that:

We sing of a church  
    seeking to continue the story of Jesus  
    by embodying Christ's presence in the world.  
We are called together by Christ  
    as a community of broken but hopeful believers,  
    loving what he loved,  
    living what he taught,  
    striving to be faithful servants of God  
    in our time and place.

We also continue to find inspiration in scripture from the Beatitudes in Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:1-12), suggestions for conflict resolution (Matthew 18:15-20), and behaviours of communication and mediation in the early Christian community (Ephesians 4).

**As part of our covenant, we are all accountable to one another.**

As a national committee member, the chairperson(s) of your committee, in cooperation with staff, are accountable to you to help ensure that you:

- are treated with Holy Manners in your interactions with others
- are respected as a contributing participant to enacting the Call and Vision of The United Church of Canada
- can engage in participation and service that is worthwhile
- have a clear understanding of the mandate of the role to which you have been appointed
- have a clear understanding of the limits and boundaries of the role to which you have been appointed
- receive foundational and important training on equity, diversity, and anti-oppression that is offered by the General Council Office, and its application to your committee's work
- can access the resources and time required to complete your responsibilities
- receive clear feedback, clarification and guidance should you fall short of fulfilling any responsibilities
- can name any challenges you are experiencing or barriers to your participation, that collectively they might be addressed with creativity and grace
- have access to Equity Support Team member(s) and/or the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff
- be recognized for your service and contributions
- receive reimbursement for approved out-of-pocket expenses
- are in an environment which is safe, and free from harassment or discrimination
- can speak with staff of the General Council Office (the Program Coordinator, Member Engagement regarding any difficulties you may encounter), the staff resource for your committee, or regional council staff as needed.

**As part of our covenant, we all have responsibilities.**

As a national committee member, you have the responsibility to:

- apply Holy Manners in your interactions with others
- not discriminate, and not engage in words or behaviours that are racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, discriminatory, or exclusionary in any way
- aim to apply the learnings from the educational experiences on equity, diversity, and anti-oppression to the ongoing work of your committee
- remember that everyone has a different intersection of their lived experience and lived identity
- show up for meetings having engaged with preparatory materials and being willing to participate fully in the meeting's processes
- be aware of one's duties, the mandate of the group, and policies related to expectations of membership
- fulfil your duties and expectations, in relation to the committee's terms of reference

- be engaged in conversation if there are concerns that one's duties or expectations are not being fulfilled
- notify staff resource people or the chairperson(s) of the committee, in advance, if one is not able to attend a meeting
- maintain confidentiality of what is discussed
- be aware of any conflicts of interest that you may have—and if needed, to remove oneself from a particular conversation or from the committee
- aim to participate fully: as much as possible, come to meetings with the intent of being “all there” and “fully present”
- seek training, clarification, and advice as needed
- strive for accuracy and quality to meet agreed-upon expectations
- share constructively for the good of the whole
- understand that different people have different norms in communication, and that it is important that people take time to communicate or avoid jumping to conclusions when someone communicates in ways that may be unfamiliar to the committee or individual
- respond to processes in order to work diligently
- be aware of and uphold The United Church of Canada policies and procedures on Sexual Misconduct; Conflict of Interest; Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Response; and the church's commitments to equity.

### **Continuing to Live Out the Covenant**

The General Secretary is committed to ensuring that participation on a national committee will be a full and meaningful relationship. This covenant is therefore created for the good of the whole. Each member on a national committee is expected to live into this covenant and to hold one another accountable for living into this covenant.

It is the responsibility of the committee chairperson(s), in cooperation with staff, to continue to work with committee members to help members live into their covenant—or to help committee members recognize when they can no longer do so.

If a member is unable to fulfill their duties, or if the member's continued participation in the group is not in the best interests of the group or the General Council:

- may voluntarily resign by submitting a written resignation to the chairperson(s), or
- the member may be asked to resign from their position, or
- the chairperson(s) of the group may consult with the committee or body that appointed the person in order to review the member's appointment.

If the behaviour of a national committee member is against the law, then it will be taken to the local authorities.

If there is conflict with national committee members, the church will follow mediation and the approved processes that are in place.



Committee members commit and agree to maintain healthy conversations.

### **Commitment to the Behavioural Covenant**

All members of each national committee, along with the chairperson(s), and General Secretary are asked to sign a single copy of the Behavioural Covenant. Signing is a tangible way to name the individual and communal commitments to living into mutual relationships, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

I commit to live into this Behavioural Covenant.

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| _____                         | _____ |
| General Secretary (signature) | Date  |
| _____                         | _____ |
| Chairperson (signature)       | Date  |
| _____                         | _____ |
| Chairperson (signature)       | Date  |
| _____                         | _____ |
| Committee Member (signature)  | Date  |
| _____                         | _____ |
| Committee Member (signature)  | Date  |
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| _____<br>Committee Member (signature) | _____<br>Date |

**Appendix 1: Holy Manners**

We will:

- keep God at the centre of everything we do;
- each speak for ourselves;
- speak for a purpose;
- separate people from problems;
- allow for full and equitable participation;
- attend to others carefully without interruption;
- welcome the conflict of ideas;
- take a future orientation;
- demonstrate appreciation;
- honour the decisions of the body;
- commit to holding one another to account when we do not keep our holy manners;
- keep the discussion at the table;
- be mindful of our body language;
- check in about good use of time;
- allow the quiet people to speak, with an invitation to speak; and
- sincerely say what we really feel.

## **Appendix 2: The Seven Sacred Teachings**

Within the Indigenous Church, conversations are often grounded in the Seven Sacred Teachings, also known as the Grandfather Teachings. It is not expected that non-Indigenous people understand or know these teachings on their own. If/When there are Indigenous members in a committee, space can be provided for Indigenous Peoples to bring their knowledge to the discussion. For members of the Indigenous Church, these teachings are often put ahead of the Holy Manners.

The Seven Sacred Teachings are:

- Love
- Respect
- Courage
- Honesty
- Wisdom
- Humility
- Truth

**Appendix 3:****Liturgy Based on Song of Faith (2006) & The Call of The United Church of Canada****One Voice:**

Called together by Christ  
as a community of broken but hopeful believers,  
striving to be faithful servants of God  
in our time and place as we offer our varying gifts,

**Many Voices:**

**We commit to keeping God at the centre of everything we do;**

**One Voice:**

We confess, that we have not always lived up our vision of community,  
we need the Spirit to reorient us,  
to live an emerging faith,  
challenging us to live by grace rather than entitlement,

**Many Voices:**

**we commit to be truthful in our communications by:  
speaking for ourselves; and speaking purposefully;**

**One Voice:**

we are called as a diverse community of people celebrating our differences;

**Many Voices:**

**and so, we commit to honouring our intercultural vision  
through welcoming the conflict of ideas;  
making space for the full and equitable participation of all,  
enabling especially people who are quiet to speak;  
being mindful of our body language;  
listening carefully without interruption and separate people from problems;**

**One Voice:**

we are called to be bold disciples,

**Many Voices:**

**As we live into our call to discipleship  
we will hold one another to account when we do not keep to our commitments;  
We will take a future orientation in our discussions and imagination;  
demonstrate appreciation;  
And honouring the decisions of the body;**

**One Voice:**

We are called to lead in hope with purpose and vision  
as members of a community held and inspired by God,  
partnering with God in the mending of the world

**Many Voices:**

**so, we commit to keeping the discussion at the table  
and to be faithful stewards of our time.**

**One & Many Voices:**

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

**Appendix 4:****Liturgy Based on the Call and Vision of The United Church of Canada**

One:

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.

**ALL:**

**As leaders,  
We commitment to living deeply into our spirituality through spiritual practices  
demonstrated in our ability to keep God at the centre of everything we do;**

**We commit, in our meetings we will respond to the call of deep discipleship by:  
speaking for ourselves;  
speaking with purpose;  
separating people from problems;  
allowing for full and equitable participation;  
creating the space for the quiet people to speak, with an invitation to speak; and  
sincerely say what we really feel.**

**attending to others carefully without interruption;  
being mindful of our body language;**

**welcoming the conflict of ideas;  
demonstrating appreciation;  
keeping the discussion at the table;  
honouring the decisions of the body;  
exercising faithful stewardship in the use of time;  
committing to holding one another to account when we do not keep our holy  
manners;**

One:

And, as we practice daring justice  
we will be courageous in taking a future orientation to our decisions and strategies.

Amen.

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## Appendix VIII

# Group Insurance Design and Funding Considerations

November 2023

- Key Points
- Reserves - Current and Projections
- Plan Design Considerations
- Plan Management Updates



## Key Points

- Reserves projected to be stable over next several years
  - Recommend use of reserves to offset fixed administration costs
- Reviewing minor plan enhancements to reduce age discrimination

## Reserve Projection

- The reserve as of August 15, 2023 was estimated at approximately \$13.5M
- Provided the following actions proceed, the reserve is expected to stay relatively steady through 2027:
  - Assessed rates to increase by approximately 5.5% for 2025 onwards to offset anticipated benefits claims trends
  - Pensioner rate adjustments of 13.7% annually through 2025, 8.0% in 2026, and 6.7% thereafter – this eliminates the subsidization of pensioners
    - About 65% of all pensioners have pensioner health and dental
    - Increase in rate has reduced take up from over 70% of retirees to 60% of new retirees
  - This projection does not include investment return or interest on reserves

## Administrative Expense Funding

- The fixed administration cost is currently estimated at approximately \$1.3M annually (~1% of the total CORE assessed rate of 7.77%)
- Due to shrinking headcounts, administration costs are expected to compose an increasing portion of the CORE assessed rate as the relatively fixed administration costs are spread across fewer plan members
- **Recommendation to partially offset these increasing costs using investment returns earned on existing plan reserves:**
  - Each 1% of annual investment return on the current reserves would offset approximately 10% of the annual administration cost
  - Many other comparable plans have a target investment return of between 5%-6% which would offset approximately half of the administration cost
  - If approved, target date of January 1, 2025 to implement this arrangement. In the meantime:
    - Establish Benefits/Funding policy and Statement of Investment Policies & Procedures (SIPP) to set out parameters, asset mix, and targets
    - Separate benefits assets from other UCC reserves and confirm service providers (bank/custodian/investment consultant/investment manager(s))

## Administration Fees Benchmarking

- Comparison of administration fees per member per year to other similar large multi-employer plans in Canada (source: HUB)

| Plan                    | Administration Expenses<br>(per plan member per year) |
|-------------------------|---|
| United Church of Canada | \$258   |
| Comparator Plan #1      | \$107   |
| Comparator Plan #2      | \$120   |
| Comparator Plan #3      | \$191   |
| Comparator Plan #4      | \$195   |
| Comparator Plan #5      | \$237   |
| Comparator Plan #6      | \$388   |
| Comparator Plan #7      | \$494   |

- Data for illustrative purposes only – many factors impact administration costs including size, structure and complexity of plans – costs are not directly comparable.
  - Most comparator plans with lower expenses are larger plans

## Plan Design Considerations

### Plan Design Considerations – Age Discrimination

- In 2022 HUB identified and assessed opportunities to increase termination ages beyond their current limits to remove age discrimination from the benefits plan. These results are summarized below:

i) Active Health & Dental for active employees who mandatory retire at age 71

No impact to the assessed rates and -80 new eligible members

ii) Life Insurance beyond age 65

0.19% increase to the assessed rates and -40 new eligible members

iii) AD&D beyond age 65

0.01% increase to the assessed rate, but no new eligible members; note, the carrier is unable to insure plan members age 70 or over

iv) RCP for active employees who mandatory retire at age 71

No impact to the assessed rates and -80 new eligible members

v) Employer Indemnity (6 months salary continuance on death of Ministry Personnel at pastoral charge) for active employees who mandatory retire at age 71

No impact to the assessed rates and -30 new eligible members

Aggregate Impact: An increase to the assessed rates of 0.20% and approximately 0-80 new eligible members (varies by benefit) - proposed for January 1, 2025 effective date

## Plan Management Updates

## Plan Management Updates

- ▶ Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP) - planning survey in **January 2024**, RFP in **Q2 2024** with transition to new provider if elected effective January 1, 2025
- ▶ **Proposing to terminate LifeSpeak effective January 1, 2024 (~\$85k annually) based on low usage rate**
- ▶ Have investigated redirecting pensioners to federal Canadian Dental Care Plan - at this point not judged to be a viable option
- ▶ Reviewing and updating plan governance practices and compliance certifications and assessments of key vendors

## Plan Management - DEI

- ▶ Proceeding with gap analysis for our approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
  - ▶ Expecting a number of no/low cost recommendations for improvement
- ▶ Proposed plan change to address age discrimination
- ▶ Addressing contractual definition misalignments with Canada Life
- ▶ Revisions underway to booklet language to promote inclusivity

## Questions



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## Appendix IX

### **GS 65 GROUP BENEFITS PLANS ADDRESSING AGE DISCRIMINATION**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

The United Church of Canada offers employees a core suite of group health and dental benefits and life insurance (paid for by employers), restorative care (short-term disability) and employer indemnity plans (paid for by employers), and long-term disability insurance (paid for by employees).

Historically, benefit plans have applied age maximums to reduce or eliminate coverage for active employees. In view of recent case law around such practices (e.g., *Talos v. Grand Erie District School Board*), staff sought external legal counsel to assess the risk of the current plan design to The United Church of Canada. The opinion stated that there was significant risk in maintaining the current design to the extent that providing the benefit would be cost prohibitive. Currently the only benefit that can be excluded on this basis is long term disability insurance due to limited availability in the market.

In view of the legal advice received, staff took advice from the plan's benefit consultants (HUB) to assess the likely cost of addressing areas of age discrimination in the current plan design.

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

The United Church of Canada's workforce has a high average age with many employees working past age 65 and even age 71 (age of mandatory retirement under pension plan in line with Canada Revenue Agency requirements). While the Restorative Care Plan and the Employer Indemnity benefit already extend beyond age 65, some benefits stop (e.g., Accidental Death & Dismemberment) or significantly reduce at age 65 (e.g., Life Insurance). All benefits cease for members who take mandatory retirement under the pension plan and benefit coverage is not available to any active employee age 72 or older.

Continuing to reduce and eliminate benefits purely based on an employees age brings risk to The United Church of Canada. The risk for the Church is elevated in view of the employee demographics.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:

Approve the following design changes effective January 1, 2025\*:

- Extend core health and dental coverage to active employees who mandatorily retire at age 71 (or are hired after age 71);
- Maintain life insurance beyond age 65 at a level affordable to the benefits plan;
- Extend accidental death and dismemberment coverage to the maximum age the insurer is able to offer (insurer currently does not insure plan members age 70 or over);
- Extend Restorative Care Program to employees who mandatorily retire at age 71 (or are hired after age 71)
- Extend Employer Indemnity to active Ministry Personnel who mandatorily retire at age 71 (or are hired after age 71).

\*to provide adequate lead time to configure the new administration system and promote to impacted employees and their employers

#### **4. What will be the impact?**

This request will extend benefit coverage to any employees currently impacted by age restrictions. Removing age discrimination from the benefit plans will only impact the core rate charged to employers. It is estimated that the changes would increase the core rate by 0.20%.

#### **5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

Revising the plan design to address age discrimination provides equity to those older employees who are precluded from certain benefits based on their age.

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## **Appendix X**

### **GS 66 GROUP BENEFITS PLANS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE FUNDING**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

The United Church of Canada offers employees a core suite of group health and dental benefits and life insurance (paid for by employers), restorative care (short-term disability) and employer indemnity plans (paid for by employers), long-term disability insurance (paid for by employees) and a retiree group health and dental plan (paid for by retired members who select the plan upon retirement).

Each year staff review the current plan design, premium rates, claims experience and reserves with advice from the plan's benefit consultants (HUB). The number of participating employers and active employees continues to decline. This represents a funding challenge as the plans' fixed administrative costs are borne by the remaining participating employers as part of the

core benefit rate (7.77%). Without reviewing options for funding the fixed administration expense, the core benefit rate will increase as the expense is shared by fewer employers.

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

To meet our fiduciary duties to the plan members and the participating employers, the plans' reserves should be managed to best support the plans continued sustainability.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council:

Approve the creation of a working group of up to 5 persons, including one appointed from the Executive, to direct the implementation of a funding model to utilize existing premium reserves to offset up to half the fixed administration costs. The group will:

- Establish a Benefits/Fund policy and a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) to set out parameters, asset mix and targets;
- Oversee the separation of benefit assets from other assets; and
- Recommend service providers (bank/custodian/investment consultant/investment manager(s)).

## **4. What will be the impact?**

The proposal will support the GCE in meeting its fiduciary duties to plan members and participating employers by effectively managing reserves to support the plans' administrative expense.

## **5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

Utilizing the reserves to fund the plans' administrative expense helps ensure the benefit plans remain affordable for current and future employees and their employers in spite of anticipated decline in membership. Without addressing the issue, the fixed costs would be borne by fewer and employers and divert money away from communities of faith and/or benefit provision.

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## **Appendix XI**

### **GS 67 GROUP BENEFITS PLANS – TERMINATION OF LIFESPEAK CONTRACT**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

The United Church of Canada offers employees a core suite of benefits including LifeSpeak. LifeSpeak offers a library of videos addressing employee wellbeing at an annual cost of \$85,000. Utilization of this benefit is very low and does not represent good value for money.



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

To meet our fiduciary duties to the plan members and the participating employers, the utilization and cost-effectiveness of ancillary benefit programs should be reviewed regularly.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council approve the termination of the current LifeSpeak contract effective December 31, 2023.

**4. What will be the impact?**

This request is a routine annual request to support the effective financial management of the benefit plans. The request will have a positive impact on the plans' finances and will have very limited impact on active employees. Active plan members can continue to access wellbeing support from the plan's Employee and Family Assistance Plan.

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**Appendix XII**

**PASTORAL  
RELATIONSHIPS  
THRIVING WITH  
EQUITY  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

## AGENDA

- Welcome to Kimiko and Marcie!
- Timeline for this report and proposal process
- Background to the report
- Highlights from the project and the report
- Discussion with guiding questions

## TIMELINE



## BACKGROUND

One of three interrelated research and statistical projects:

- Leadership Counts
- Total Compensation Task Group
- The Pastoral Relationships Equity Research Project  
(a joint project between Anti-Racism and Equity, and the Office of Vocation)

## BACKGROUND

Focus on equity-seeking ministry personnel who self-identify as:

- Indigenous
- Racialized
- Deaf
- People who speak English as an additional language
- Francophone
- Disabled
- Neurodiverse
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Trans
- Non-binary
- Female

## RESEARCH GOALS

- To identify current patterns of thriving and inequities in Pastoral Relationships with Equity-seeking Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada
- To identify ways that inequities can be prevented or mitigated through denominational actions such as proactive education, early intervention, pastoral support, and systemic change.
- To incite and foster positive change in The United Church of Canada and beyond.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is one thing that stood out for you from what you have heard?

What is one of the recommendations or implications that you want to lift up at this time?

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## Appendix XIII

### GS 68 PUBLIC REGISTRY OF MINISTERS

Origin: General Secretary

#### 1. What is the issue? Why is it important?

Under section E.2.9 of the Manual, the Office of Vocation is responsible for administering and maintaining the following lists:

- a) the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary)
- b) the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary); and
- c) the Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List.

These lists are only available to the Office of Vocation to use.

The issue is that the public does not have access to these lists and are unable to consult them if they would like to know the status of ministry personnel. The public's knowledge of the status of ministry personnel is a safety measure to protect the public from ministers who are not eligible to practice due to inappropriate behaviour, such as sexual and/or physical misconduct and/or financial irregularities.

#### 2. Background

***The Office of Vocation is similar to a regulatory body for professionals.***

In Canada, most professions are regulated in each province and/or territory by law through regulatory bodies. These bodies control licenses and certificates by setting accreditation standards and ensuring that their members adhere to the rules of professional conduct. Most regulatory bodies have a public registry of their members so that the public can verify their status (suspended, discipline, retired and so on).

The Office of Vocation operates similar to a regulated body by accrediting its members, setting professional standards and disciplining its members for professional misconduct. However, it does not have a public registry of its members like regulatory bodies.

***There is precedent for a church to publish a list of disciplined ministers***

In 2023, the Jesuit Church published a list of priests who have been credibly accused of sexual misconduct of minors. See link: [Release of Names of Jesuits Credibly Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors - Canada Province](#).

Since the 1990s, the Jesuits of Canada have taken steps to address abuse and boundary violations to help them in their governance and to offer "guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and the prevention of future acts of abuse, as well as prevention of sexual harassment."

Therefore, there is a precedent of a church publishing the names of priests (alive and deceased) to minimize sexual misconduct amongst the ministry personnel.

***Establishment of a registry or list of disciplined ministers***

To better protect the public from ministers who have acted inappropriately, the Office of Vocation should establish a public registry of all members and/or list of ministers who have been put on a discontinued service list (disciplinary) for the public to consult.

In the Basis of Union, the Office of Vocation is responsible for “administering the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary and Voluntary)” (8.1.7). Making public the list of those who have been put on a discontinued service list (disciplinary) can be considered part of administering the list.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:

Affirm the decision of the Board of Vocation to make public the list of ministers who have been put on a discontinued service list (disciplinary).

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

The Board of Vocation passed this proposal at its meeting on September 27, 2023, understanding the decision to be within its responsibilities as outlined in *The Manual*, as the elected body that oversees the Denominational Office of Vocation.

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**Appendix XIV**

**GS 74 RETIRED DESIGNATED LAY MINISTRY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

**Origin: General Secretary**

**1. What is the issue?**

At the annual meeting of the 44th General Council held October 21, 2023, the Council approved Section 5 of *GCE 08 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Need of the Church in the 2020s, Part B Designated Lay Ministry*:

**5. For People who Retired as Designated Lay Ministers**

- a. strongly encourage regional councils to review their practices under C.2.1 b) and I.2.4.1 b) of *The Manual* to consider, in light of the leadership roles and acquired experience of many lay members who retired as designated lay minister, granting both licences to administer the sacraments, and membership in the regional council to lay members who retired as designated lay ministers and are resident within the regional council; and

- b. encourage regional councils to review their policies on voluntary associate ministry and eligibility to practice other functions of ministry as may apply to lay members who have retired as designated lay ministers.

In further consultation with the Manual Committee, it was recognized that section (b) and the ability to grant sacramental licence was clearly under the authority of the regional council, but with respect to granting membership, there needed to be a change to the Basis of Union, section IV, 6.2, to allow regional councils the authority to grant membership to retired Designated Lay Ministers.

## 2. Why is the issue important?

The Manual Committee's recommendation will serve to both enable regional councils to grant membership to retired DLMS, but also create an opportunity for regional councils to broaden their membership to reflect the equity aspirations of the church. The Manual Committee is also aware that Manual C.1.2b is *ultra vires* to the Basis of Union, and that the Basis of Union takes precedence

We also realize that some regional councils have continued a practice that was common in the former Presbytery system of being able to add up to 10 people to help balance any under-representation (e.g., youth). This practice is not consistent with the section in the Basis of Union that deals with regional council membership:

Membership. The Regional Council is composed of: (2019)

6.2.1 all ministry personnel within the geographic bounds served by the regional council; (2019) 6.2.2 ministers of denominations within mutual recognition agreements while under appointment or call; and (2019)

6.2.3 lay members elected by the Community of Faith, respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.

The suggested proposal to be taken to the next annual meeting would be to add a further point, 6.2.4, to allow a regional council to add up to 10% of its membership to allow for equity and diversity.

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

**The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive delay the implementation of the request to regional councils in *GCE 08 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Need of the Church in the 2020s, Part B Designated Lay Ministry, Part 5*, which suggests that Regional Councils grant membership to retired DLMS, pending the General Council 44 annual meeting in October, 2024, at which time a remit to test the will of the church regarding changing the Basis of Union section IV, 6.2, could be authorized.**

## 4. What will be the impact?

### **5. How does the proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

The change, if the General Council is willing to consider it, will enable regional councils to effectively broaden the diversity of its council to add any necessary balances and missing voices.

### **6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive**

This is part of ensuring our decisions are consistent with *The Manual* and Basis of Union.

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## **Appendix XV**

### **GS 69 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Origin: General Secretary**

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

The Global Partnership Program Review 2023 was undertaken to assess program alignment with the church's Call, Vision, and Strategic Plan 2023-2025, and to inform and have an impact on the 2024 budget and beyond by providing recommendations related to program shape, structure, and priorities. With the decision made to reduce the number of partners and the percentage of budget, it is necessary to approve the structure of the program going forward.

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

The Review recommends a deep, bold, and daring Global Partnership program of five integrated components, within a Framework for Radical Accompaniment. The Framework directs the church towards decolonizing and deepening The United Church's ongoing relationships, with a reduced number of global partners, through implementing specific mechanisms understood as part of efforts to disrupt the "narratives of decline and despair" in the denomination. Using principle-based criteria, the Review explores how the United Church can live into this proposed program in the reality of reduced available financial resources within the period of the current Strategic Plan, and as the denomination goes forward into its second century post-2025.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive

- a. affirm "*Radical Accompaniment*" with its objectives and components (see appendix) as the framework for the United Church's Global Partnership Program in the current Strategic Planning cycle; and
- b. direct the General Secretary to
  - i. begin implementation in 2024, within the constraint of the budget; and



- ii. initiate a consultation process building on this review and recommendations, led by elected members to envision and propose a global partnership framework to guide the witness of The United Church of Canada into its second century.

#### **4. How does the proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

Not for the first time, this understanding of mission was expressed powerfully in the United Church's 2008 Review of Partnership in a time of Empire: 'Right Relations' are at the heart of God's Mission. The church believes that right relationships flow from an understanding that relationship is central to the nature of God and that the Spirit calls us to live relationships that reflect Christ's character of justice and love."

Other defining statements echo this call to relationship and deepen its implications to involve engagement with others for fullness of life for all, and actively resist all forces, powers, and systems which deny, destroy, and reduce life. "Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation" (2009) and "A Justice Seeking/ Justice Living Church," (2012) both offer a vision of the church as an intercultural, mutually transformative, equitable, justice-seeking and justice-living community.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Objectives**

1. Deepen mutual engagement, advocacy, and public witness of The United Church with partners;
2. Invite and involve the whole church in justice-living and justice-seeking in the midst of empire, and challenge intersecting systems of oppression through differentiated and coordinated activities with partners (including through critical self-reflection, shared contextual analyses, and advocacy); and
3. Facilitate mutually accountable, decolonizing spaces for ongoing collaboration with global partners that honour diverse partner voices, center global partner experiences, and de-centre decision-making.

### **Components:**

- a) Radical Accompaniment through participation in United Church of Canada governance bodies  
Partner Council participation in the meetings of the Executive of the General Council (2 appointed members of Partner Council per triennium) as corresponding members with no vote. The Partner Council's role relates directly to the Partner Council mandate to help decision-making bodies of The United Church listen to the global voice: to inform, help discern, and advise the Executive particularly concerning decisions that have implications for global partners.

- b) Radical Accompaniment through financial resource-sharing (See Appendix 4):
- i. A 25% reduction in Mission & Service resources to Global Partner grants;
  - ii. Application of principle-based criteria and guidelines (See Appendix 5) to implement a decrease in bilateral partnerships by ~16% (from 81 partners in 2023 to 68 in 2024). In addition to guidelines of flexibility and strategic ecumenical collaboration, the principle-based criteria will continue to shape a contextual Framework of Radical Accompaniment that reflects critical presence; vibrant, actively-engaged relationships; unique window into a context or an issue; alignment of partner and United Church staff context; sources of funding; sharing of vision and goals.
  - iii. An integrated global program of relationships of Ecumenical Partners (~77%) and Civil Society and Social Change Partners (~23%), shifting from the current program of separate global regions.

*Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S1.05.001*

- c) Radical Accompaniment through response in times of crisis (See Appendix 6):  
In collaboration with ecumenical and civil society partners in humanitarian response and sustainable development initiatives.

*Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S1.05.001 S4.04.001*

- d) Radical Accompaniment through solidarity, advocacy, public engagement, and people-to-people connections (See Appendix 7) that:
- i. Deepen mutually accountable and solidarity relationships of The United Church and global partners;
  - ii. Challenge intersecting forms and systems of oppression and injustice through critical self-reflection, shared contextual analyses, and advocacy, and networking; and
  - iii. Enliven whole church engagement, through the inspired theological reflection, bold discipleship and daring justice of global partners, and their invitation to join them.

*Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S1.02.010, S1.03.002 S1.04.001 S1.04.002 S1.04.003 S1.05.001 S2.01.003 S4.02.001 S4.02.002 S4.02.003 S4.02.004 S4.04.001 S5.02.001 S5.02.007*

- e) Radical Accompaniment through global partner roundtables as mechanisms for intentional partner engagement with Strategic Plan activities (See Appendix 8) with dedicated staff, budget (beginning in 2024 with a total of \$100,000 funding external to the Mission & Service budget), and annual work plans as follows:
- i. Facilitate and support Partner Council in its role to provide ongoing direction and advice on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the global partnership program, and as a mutual discernment space of the whole church seeking to do this transformative work. *(Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S5.02.001, S5.02.007);*
  - ii. “Mending the World” Roundtable of mutual engagement to address the global climate crisis and its many associated impacts on vulnerable population groups on different

fronts, including economic justice, food security/sovereignty, militarism and violence, water rights, refugees and migration, and other interconnected issues. (*Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S1.05.001, S1.02.010, S4.02.001, S4.02.003, S4.02.004, S4.04.001*);

- iii. Global LGBT+ Rights and Dignity Roundtable on mutual engagement to live out commitments to protect and promote gender and sexual identity as gifts of God, including through advocacy and networking. (*Relates to Strategic Plan Activities: S1.03.002, S1.03.005*)

**Partner roundtables would be based on the following:**

- a) Theological understanding: a methodology of mission engagement that comes from a commitment to mutuality among all mission partners. “Mutuality” here means the pursuit of goal-oriented relationships, strategic in outlook, that share a vision of God’s Mission and God’s Beloved Community among all people and creation; and
- b) Process: that calls on the engaged partners to join in seeking God’s interests for all by each rising above self-concerns in crossing humanly constructed boundaries. Mutual relationships are understood as a network of interdependent ideas, concerns, interests, groups, and individuals seeking the broader and larger goal of God’s Mission. For more detail, see Appendix 8.
- c) Objective: to deepen mutually-accountable, decolonizing engagement with partners to develop innovative practical ways of doing mission together, following Jesus's call to transform the world to manifest life in its fullness.
- d) Terms of Reference:
  - i. Timeframe: Roundtable processes to be implemented within the current Strategic Plan timeframe and through the following Strategic Planning cycle;
  - ii. Partner Council participates in oversight and design of Roundtable processes;
  - iii. Participation of all global partners, particularly partners engaged in the specific Roundtable priority;
  - iv. Full Roundtables to meet online a minimum of two times a year, with flexible, issue-specific working groups meeting more frequently as required by the task of each working group and the Roundtable work plans;
  - v. Are convened and staffed by Church in Mission staff with facilitation of Roundtable meetings to be assigned as determined by participants of each Roundtable;
  - vi. Relate directly with priorities in The United Church Strategic Plan that link with partner priorities;
  - vii. Share resources and participate in joint decision-making to advise and give direction on the allocation of shared resources;
  - viii. Recommendations and decisions of the Roundtables and their implementation are mutually accountable to United Church and partner reporting structures, as well as to the next Roundtable process.

## **Living into Radical Accompaniment and The United Church of Canada Strategic Plan**

Radical accompaniment is also about mutual accompaniment. Ecumenical collaboration with global partners brings the possibility of shared learnings that deepen our own engagement in the strategic objectives the United Church has named for itself in its Strategic Plan 2022-25.

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## **Appendix XVI**

### **Prioritizing the Governance Renewal Action Plan**

#### Background

The workflow task group met and reviewed the action plan to support the executive's discernment in how to move forward. Ultimately the executive will need to determine the ordering of its work. To facilitate that, the recommendations in the action plan have been broken down and themed into:

- Recommendations that relate to an ongoing commitment, a governing style or approach, a **lens** by which the executive engages in all of its work
- Recommendations that are discrete and identifiable **projects** with defined deliverables

#### Lenses

The following are lenses for the executive's ongoing work as noted in Recommendations 1, 2, 7, and 10. The executive should work in an ongoing way to ensure we are aligned and committed on the meanings of these words and recommendations, and hold ourselves accountable to governance that is purposeful, visionary, trustworthy, and decolonizing.

- **Purposeful:** The purpose of governance is to live out God's call and vision for the church (recommendation 1)
- **Visionary:** The executive's governance role is strategic and visionary, to set goals and establish direction, to monitor risk and performance, to call and accompany the general secretary, and to do so in ways that honour the conciliarity of the church and the (recommendation 2)
- **Trustworthy:** The executive seeks to act in honourable and trustworthy ways (recommendation 7)
- **Decolonizing:** The executive seeks to decolonize its governance (recommendation 10)

#### Projects

The following are discrete projects that executive should prioritize for implementation:

- Recommendation 10: That the executive reflect and act on how to decolonize it's governance
- Recommendation 9(a): Developing a mechanism to listen to the church, including commissioners to the general council and regional council leadership
- Recommendation 9(b): Establishing a framework for regular engagement with Regional Council Executive Ministers and regional council Presidents
- Recommendation 9(c): Clearly connecting [the executive's decisions and actions] to the fruit of that deep listening and consultation
- Recommendation 9(d): Incorporating the importance of communication, healthy relationship, and trust into the review of structural changes happening in 2023-2024
- Recommendation 9(e): Developing and implementing a strategic communications and relational plan aligned to the governance role of the executive, with key commitments/aspirations: we are a church not a corporation, communications are pastoral and seen as ministry, not bureaucracy, identify impacts of major decisions to the ministry
- Recommendation 8: That the executive establish a code of conduct and behavioural covenant for the executive; determine who will have the authority to hold executive members accountable and how the executive will hold each other accountable.
- Recommendation 6(c): Revising the proposals process to reflect the conciliar nature of the church and the strategic alignment, including ministry implications (costs, risks, benefits, challenges, etc.)
- Recommendation 5(a): That the executive clarify the role of the Moderator and Moderator's Advisory Committee in governance
- Recommendation 5(b): That the executive clarify the role between the executive and the General Secretary supervision committee with regards to the supervision of the General Secretary is not clear, and its relationship with monitoring the progress on the ministry plan
- Recommendation 5(c): That the executive clarify the role of the business planning committee and its chair in governance.
- Recommendation 3(a): Establishing a framework for the executive and its members to engage in regular self-assessments, establishing a baseline and monitoring ongoing improvement annually
- Recommendation 3(b): Ensuring a governance education component is imbedded in every meeting
- Recommendation 3(c): Shaping agendas to maximize the right level of conversations and on the right topic (after a baseline is set, establishing a goal for either improvement or sustained performance)

- Recommendation 3(d): Monitoring how the executive uses it's time to ensure that >50% of time is on forward-looking questions of vision, direction, and strategy
- Recommendation 4: That the executive arrange for objective and external governance coaching to accompany the executive in this work

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## **Appendix XVII**

### **Centennial**

#### Feedback from Table Groups

- Celebration of Black ministry in the UCC over the past 100 years
- Looking forward to the next 100 years
- Engage every community of faith to celebrate 100 (e.g. plant a tree)
- Celebrate the "firsts"
- Travelling centennial quilt
- National worship service – televised / broadcast
- Pow-wow celebration
- Animators across the church
- Tent revival service
- Circuit ride through the year
- Covenant between NIC & GCE (next 100 years)
- Gala party
- Timeline – dynamic
- The original Installation bible needs to come out of service – could the Mohawk bible come in?
- Tell the history of the UCCan through stories and lives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour
- Hymn writing!

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## **Appendix XVIII**

### **GS 70 RECOGNIZING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA'S CENTENNIAL**

**Origin: General Secretary**

### 1. What is the issue?

2025 will mark the centennial of The United Church of Canada. The formation of union in 1925 was an historic event as The Methodist Church, Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada and a number of General Council Union churches came together. The 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh provided inspiration for the union movement. Just as the June 10, 1925, was a historic event, so too must the 2025 commemoration of union.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

Jesus' prayer for the people of God in John 17:21, that "they all may be one," has been one of the features of the united and uniting movement. The United Church is one of the oldest United Churches in the world. In the larger ecumenical landscape this is a big deal. So, it will be important to pause to commemorate and honour the experience and achievement of the church, its people and its impact in Canada and world. There is a rich storied history that needs to be honoured and remembered. There are lessons to be learned from the evolving progressive self-understanding of the church and how that might be helpful as the church seeks to chart a new future.

At the same time, the centennial provides an opportunity for the church to "lean into God's future, rooted in the richness of its past." Questions such as what it means to be The United Church of Canada today; or how do we invite a new generation of Canadians to discover the church and encounter it as a hospitable transforming place? What does it mean to rediscover a movement identity rather than a denominational identity?

These features all need to be a part of the centennial.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:

- a) Recognize June 2024 through June 2025 as the centennial year of honouring and commemoration, to begin with a service of thanksgiving on June 9, 2024, and culminating in a national service June 8, 2025;
- b) Adopt the following theme for the commemoration – Deep Bold Daring;
- c) Affirm the following framework for the centennial year:
  - An external focused communication and action plan focused on introduction and invitation, shaped by the Call and Vision<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>2</sup>**Call:** The United Church of Canada Call reflects the core of our purpose, sharing who we seek to be in "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). *Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice*

- An internal focused communication and action plan focused on the Vision statement of being “a bold connected evolving and diverse church;”
  - Model a new understanding of being The United Church OF Canada;
  - The development of a capital campaign;
  - Development of liturgical and other resources for communities of faith; and
  - Global and ecumenical engagement;
- d) Approve the attached logo as the logo for the centennial; and
- e) Direct the General Secretary to develop a detailed budget with funds to be drawn from reserves to be presented to the February 2024 meeting of the General Council Executive.

#### 4. What will be the impact?

It is hoped that the whole church will be impacted by the event and experience of the honouring and commemoration of 100 years of faithful transformative ministry. It is hoped that Canadians will be invited to take a look at the United Church again. The members of the church will re-member their history and feel connected to a larger story of God’s action in the world.

#### 5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?

This will provide us with the opportunity to live into the reality of these commitments.

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### Appendix XIX

#### GC45

##### Feedback from Table Groups

- Intentionality to be intercultural in practice – including worship
- Proposals – review to send back for re-draft (fact-check)
- The proposal format “drowns the fish” – too much context in proposals
- WORSHIP that has some business in it
- Celebrate the 100 new communities
- Time for play

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**Vision:** The United Church of Canada vision reflects what the church aspires to be over a 5- to 10-year span. *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.* These interlinked statements were adopted by the Annual Meeting of General Council 43 on October 23, 2021.