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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 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Apologies for the late nature of this report. I'm submitting it only days before our meeting – mostly so there is a written record to go with the meeting and we don't have to amend the consent agenda. My report will also be shorter than normal. Rather than focusing just on accountability for my work and scheduling, I wanted to reflect back to the GCE some of what I'm hearing as I'm out in the church – especially as we cut funding for travel for other senior staff to try and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and manage our financial resources.

Reflections

Past the halfway point in my journey as Moderator, I am continually astonished by both how much the church is struggling, and despite that, how many communities of faith I have visited that seem to be a bustling and thriving as they ever were. Some are even growing.

We are clearly still struggling as a denomination – to find our bearings, to understand each other, and to see ourselves clearly as part of a bigger whole. The General Secretary already expresses this well in his Accountability Report.

Life of the Church

We continue in our journeys into life as a church of deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice. Last fall when our Partners Council met, they reflected to us that we are well known for our commitment to daring justice – but they heard little in our public proclamation about deep spirituality. I can see that – but I also wonder, as I wrote about in my Easter message in *Broadview*, if that's more of a sign of our uncertainty about bold discipleship. I know many very deeply spiritual people across this church of ours. But we haven't reconciled with mission, evangelism, proclamation, or invitation – and what those words can mean in a progressive, liberal space.

I also notice in the church, as in society more broadly, a tendency to jump to conclusions and assume the worst of each other. I wonder if there might be some contributing factors to these dynamics that we need to be attentive to. When we fail to assume positive intent and get clarification from those with whom we disagree, or when we believe there is an urgent issue to which the church should be paying attention, we can sometimes cause harm, and oftentimes cause more work.

We know we have a systemic communication problem in the church. The staff at the GCO have done a lot of background research, assessment, and are coming up with stronger ways to communicate internally and externally about the life and work of the whole church. But communication doesn't happen when information is produced, it happens when it is received. So we can produce all the content on all the channels we want: E-ssentials, other newsletters, GCO website, all the social media platforms, United in Learning, General Council's website, etc... – not to mention all the regional channels. But it's not being picked up and consumed / processed by our intended audiences (both inside and outside the church), then communication hasn't happened – just content generation.

Could it be that Presbyteries played a bigger role in our denominational communication channels than we really understood?

I wonder about what it is we can do to increase communication between the three courts of the church. It seems that there might be a breakdown in how communities of faith, clusters, and networks understand their relationship to the regional councils and their executives, and likewise new processes for how to access the agenda and decision-making time of the denomination council and its Executive and Sub-Executive. I intentionally use the world denominational council here to indicate that the structures have changed, as have processes and relationships. But what hasn't changed is the function of using conciliar structures to discern how then we might live and do the ministry of God's church at any particular moment in time.

Strategy & New Business

I've also been reflecting on the priorities of the General Council, how we're seeking to resource them. Two things weigh on me: 1) I keep reflecting on a comment made in a previous GCE meeting about having clearer foci in our work. It appears that we are still trying to decide what *not* to do, but we haven't really had a significant discussion about that at the GCE level. We can make plans, but then what happens when we make a plan and then the world changes – as in the case of what is currently happening now in Gaza and Israel. How do we ensure that we can be nimble enough to pivot when the world requires us to pivot?

Conversations, and the sheer volume of email we've all gotten, about the war on Gaza continue to touch on our perennial communication issues. There is a strong desire with those faithful and prophetic leaders across the church who would like to see more resources put towards "mobilizing the church." But to do that, without animators to engage in proactive and labour-intensive outreach to each of the 2,000+ communities of faith, seems challenging. I'm working

with the Church in Mission team to pull together an educational resource I can share for the church through United in Learning (ChurchX).

Scanning a horizon broader than the war on Gaza, I will say I see the church calling on the General Council Office and the regions to take on more and more work, and being hesitant to question plans that include too little investment across too many activities. Realistically, although it might hurt to change, we might be better served by investing more in fewer things. But those conversations don't always seem to make it through hallways and back rooms through to the courts of the church. That includes the work of the General Council Office and the discussions of the GCE – something I hope we'll continue to work on in the second half of this triennium.

Gaza

While I sometimes encounter online reaction to church positions of things posted by networks of people advocating for just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel, the sense I get is that there is more concern and understanding about the current situation and ongoing military actions of Israel than ever before. This is also prompting more to want to understand the last 100 years of history, especially since the creation of the State of Israel and what that's meant for the Palestinian people.

We need to continue to provide mechanisms to help communities of faith learn about the conflict. The [Apartheid-Free](#) movement started by the Society of Religious Friends (Quakers) in the US is an excellent resource that can be used by all three courts of the church, regardless of whether or not we take action to sign on at a denominational level. The General Secretary and I had a productive meeting with a small group of folks leading the advocacy efforts across the church in response to the correspondence we received. The issue was a source of a lot of questions at the Canadian Shield Regional Council meeting the first weekend of May, and I was able to give a fairly lengthy answer to questions about what the church is doing that seemed to resonate well with members of the court. The Regional Council Executive Minister asked for permission to share a clip of that explanation at the Shining Waters Regional Council meeting, which I happily granted.

Ordination of Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs)

As I'm (tardy in) finishing this report, I wanted to also share something that is weighing heavily on my heart. It is especially important as we move into regional council meeting time. The website created by "concerned clergy" about the pathway to ordination and commissioning for DLMs who feel/felt a lifelong call to ministry was deeply distressing to me, and to many others. While some folks needed clarification that this was not a way to circumvent the failed remit on One Order of Ministry, others objected on the grounds of the "lack of education" as a requirement for ordination. Perhaps this feels acute because this is the year to implement those changes (I imagine there will be a few stragglers in coming years). So maybe this will be a non-issue in the future. But the culture of judgment and educational hierarchy in the church existed before the creation of DLMs and it will persist after their ordination.

When I acknowledged my own call to ministry (early 2000's), because of my passion for social justice, I seriously considered diaconal ministry as a call. What I was told by some on my discernment committee, and by some in my extended family and circle of friends, was essentially that I had 'no excuse' to pursue diaconal ministry over ordained ministry, and that if I were commissioned instead of ordained, I would be regarded as someone who "didn't have the chops to make it through an MDiv." When I felt called and requested to be ordained to further study, I was questioned about why I felt I was better than other ordinands that I would dare to pursue post-graduate studies in theology – that it was classist, elitist and unnecessary to pursue a PhD as a United Church minister.

Then, over nearly two decades, I have watched our church rely more and more on DLM's – to call them to broader engagement than just one community of faith. To see the DLM's take on more and more leadership in positive and life-giving ways. I have seen those who are ordained ministers (and it is particularly the ordained folks who seem to be most challenged by the ordering of DLMs) say nothing as this ministry grew outsized from its intention, then try and pull down DLMs every time there is a conversation about recognition of the vital ministry offered by these faithful folks whose path looks different from theirs. I have heard judgments stated overtly like "they just didn't want to take on \$xx,xxx in student debt like me" or "they did this the easy way." Or "they don't have a degree." These things are said with little regard to their hurtful impact on those serving as DLMs or the communities of faith they so thoughtfully and pastorally serve. We say that we recognize the ministry of the whole people of God – so why can that not include also recognize the gifts of lived experience and dedicated lifelong learning through doing? DLMs are not uneducated, and as someone who spent the better part of two decades in post-secondary education, I can tell you that not all education ensures giftedness in ministry. But more than that, I grieve for the fact that there is so much judgment attached to these ideas of status. Someone who was just ordained as a DLM said to me recently: "When I looked at the website and saw who signed on to it, it broke my heart. I saw the names of colleagues I love and admire, and it hurt me so much to realize that that respect and love was not mutual."

No one forced any of us to take on student debt if we did (I'm pretty confident I can say that I probably have the biggest student loan in the United Church), so let's not play the victim card about the choices we made. And maybe those of us with an MDiv didn't have some of the same constraints in life as those serving as DLMs. The ongoing hierarchies of education are tired; as if degrees are the things that matter most, not the quality of one's ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care. I have an MDiv, a ThM and an PhD – and I have yet to meet a DLM that I wouldn't want to serve as my pastor. So my prayer for the church as we go through this transition is that we be mindful most of all of those who have been affirmed by their regional councils to serve in the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care. They have been educated by life, experience, and DLM training programs.

In addition – the assumption that no DLMs have more "formal" theological education is a broad generalization. This past week I attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Shield Regional Council. One of the retirees honoured was a DLM who had completed her MDiv over four

decades ago. Due to family circumstances, she was not able to complete internship and transfer and settlement at the time. So this person served the church faithfully as a DLM for decades. Given her current circumstance, she was also not ordained at this meeting, but I laid hands on all three DLMs who were commissioned and ordained in honour of her service to the church.

Lastly, Just because their learning did look like the majority doesn't make it less worthy. And it's time for us to start lifting each other up and celebrating the wide diversity of ministries, backgrounds, identities and gifts we have in this church. That is in itself a form of intercultural ministry. As I end this rant, I'll be looking forward to laying on hands where I can, and lifting up the ministry of those with a lifelong call who will be ordained this year, holding all in prayer with deep gratitude in my heart. And I hope you'll join me.

The Mod's Book Squad

Monthly gatherings for The Mod's Book Squad continue to bring me deep joy and have been a lovely way to engage with the church. Happy to say at least two former Moderators have been faithfully attending our monthly gatherings. June 2024 will kick off our "Centennial" editions where we highly 4 United Church authors over the coming year:

- The Rev. Alf Dumont's memoir *The Other Side of the River* (June 2024)
- The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton's *Faith as Protest* (November 2024)
- The Very Rev. David Giuliano's first novel *The Undertakings of Billy Buffone* (February 2025)
- The Rev. Janet Gear's *Undivided Love*

Special shout out to Renée Saklikar, who is a member of Oakridge United Church in Vancouver. We will be reading her epic poem *Bramah and the Beggar Boy* in May 2024. And it is epic, indeed – it might be one of the hardest reads of the book club.

The book club was also designed to be an evergreen resource for Communities of Faith and individuals. It's still possible to register (for free) through [United in Learning](#).

It's an interesting way to engage the church, and so will consider if and how I might like to continue this work after my term as Moderator is finished (and/or will the next Moderator want to continue this engagement in their own way?)

(Re)Generate

The first residency of (Re)Generate took place in October at Five Oaks Centre and focused on strategy and leadership, facilitated by the Rev. Dr. D. Ayana James and Laurel Richardson from STRAAD consulting. The second residency will be online, focusing on increasing financial literacy. I will be the primary facilitator, but pleased to have best-selling author [Sarah Bessey](#) join us every morning to lead us in a short devotion/theological reflection.

Participants will also be starting to submit their first draft of proposals for their Capstone Projects (which they'll work on over the next year). In October we meet again at Five Oaks, and the focus will be on leadership, communication and feedback, facilitated by [Mimi Gordon](#).

We have started to think about how to share more about (Re)Generate and its participants and their ministries over the coming year. As with many other programs, news about the program and understandings of what it is seem to be limited.

Travel/Meetings since November 2023 GCE Meeting:

- Glorious Vacation & Study leave at the end of November/through December (except for a few days in the office) – fell in love with Curaçao where my cousin and I traveled to see our uncle and work on a writing project.
- I started January by attending the national annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics; generally I have attended the American Academy of Religion on an annual basis, but decided to switch it up this year.
- January 16-18, 2024 – Church Leadership Retreat w/ Canadian Council of Churches (Mississauga)
- January 21-26 – First residency of the (Re)Generate program (Five Oaks Centre, Paris ON)
- February 6/7 – Final board meeting/retreat with the Vancouver Foundation (not work related)
- February 8-11 – Flourishing Project Events, Pacific Mountain Regional Council (Preaching: Peninsula United Church, White Rock; Keynote address & fireside chat with [Afdhel Aziz](#) at St. Andrew's Wesley UC, and Flourishing Workshop @ PMRC's regional offices at Jubilee United Church, Burnaby)
- March 6-7, [SHARE Investor Summit 2024](#) – Closing Keynote (Vancouver)
- March 9-23, Visit with partners in Zambia and Kenya, accompanied by Japhet Ndhlovu, Executive Minister for Church Mission)
- April 6-7 – 75th Anniversary Weekend, Highlands United Church – Keynote & preaching (North Vancouver)
- April 9-14, Flourishing Events, Bermuda Nova Scotia Regional Council (Keynote & Fireside Chat w/ Andre Picard, Church workshop @ Bedford United, and preaching at First United in Truro (alongside 4 other local congregations))
- April 18-20, Indigenous Peoples' Consultation, World Communion of Reformed Churches (Newark, NJ)
- April 25, Association of UCC Ministers, Nova Scotia (Virtually)
- May 3-5, Canadian Shield Regional Council Meeting (Sault-Sainte Marie, ON)
- May 8, Covenanting Service – St. Andrew's United Church (Brampton, ON)
- May 12, Preaching – Wesley-Knox United Church (London, ON)

Newsworthy (news/other coverage of Moderator work):

- "[How Easter makes me rethink the Church's role in justice](#)" – Moderator's Easter Reflection, Broadview Magazine (March 2024)
- Late April 2024 - Interviews with Globe & Mail and the Winnipeg Free Press about *Bill C-63 Online Harms Act* (unclear if articles published at the time this report was written)

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: The General Secretary

2 Corinthians 3:12 "Since we have such hope, we act with great boldness..." (NRSV)

Executive Summary

This is the second of the quarterly reports of the General Secretary, General Council, to the 44th General Council Executive. This accountability report is intended to provide the Executive with an overview of the work of staff. Two items in the report are meant to invite conversation and future thinking of the Executive.

This report has six (6) sections. The *Introduction* and *Thinking Out Loud* sections set the context in which the church finds itself, and invite a conversation about the churches processes and values. The issue raised in the *Thinking Out Loud* section of this report will be dealt with as part of the time with the General Secretary as listed in the agenda.

The second section of this report provides a brief update on four pieces of work from the *General Council Office*: Remit 1, Centennial planning, the new worship resource, *Then Let Us Sing*, and the move to 300 Bloor Street West. The third section focuses on the *strategic operational plan*, a key accountability for staff. It provides an overview of the plan development and learning, and shares some of the activities from the Common Good, Justice, Indigenous Pathways and Leadership objectives. The fourth section deals with the work of *financial planning* for 2025 and beyond. It offers several questions for reflection and discernment necessary for future planning and decisions.

The General Secretary and the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) were directed to implement a number of decisions of General Council 44, 2022. The fifth section (*Update on GC44 Decisions*) accounts for the work on Antisemitism, and process for ordination for qualified Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs), in addition to the work on Discipleship as assigned to TICIF. The final section identifies a number of risk management factors that the management team are giving its attention.

Introduction

When you're lovers in a dangerous time
Sometimes you're made to feel as if your love's a crime
Nothing worth having comes without some kind of fight
Got to kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight
Lovers in a dangerous time
Lovers in a dangerous time
Lovers in a dangerous time
Lovers in a dangerous time

We gather in this season between Easter and Pentecost, I am reminded of the words from Bruce Cockburn's song, *Lovers in a dangerous time*. As we gather to engage in conversation and make decisions for the wellbeing of The United Church of Canada, we do so in the context of a

world in pain – genocide and starvation in Gaza, the war in Ukraine, unrest in Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan, change in climate patterns, the lingering effects of COVID, the sense of tiredness, fatigue, feelings of unease and helplessness. I am further reminded of the reflection of Rabbi Joshua Heschel and Margaret Atwood in the Prelude to the 1997 document, *Mending the World*. Heschel reminds us that, “Theology consists of worrying about what God worries about when God gets up in the morning,” and Atwood writes, “The facts of this world seen clearly are seen through tears; why tell me then there is something wrong with my eyes?”

In the church, there is the continual sense of the disconnect between the local, regional and national. There is a weariness in some places, and great hope in others. Financial resources and volunteers are in short supply. Some would say there is a lack of trust in the system.

So, we meet to do our work amidst these realities. To love the world and each other and to be faithful in our ministry as governors.

We are indeed lovers in a dangerous time.

Thinking Out Loud

In the new vision statement, we affirm that we are an “evolving church.” We see part of that evolution as we seek to embody the 2018 structural changes to the church and their implications for governance. We are noting that there are opportunities to sharpen our understanding and practice of being a conciliar church, however, these opportunities require our attention and reflection, especially as we continue to imagine the future for the church.

In the past couple of months, you as an Executive have individually received correspondence from two groups and an individual on a variety of issues. All the correspondence has requested **urgent** and **timely** action on your part. At the same time, these correspondences contravene the normative understanding of the conciliar nature of the church which provides prior discernment on a subject by the governing body of a community of faith and/or a regional council through a proposal. Additionally, with the exception of the correspondence from the one individual, who happens to be a GC44 Commissioner, the other correspondences are from groups with no formal standing within the councils of the church. The critical question is then how to deal with these correspondences.

In response to your direction, the Governance Committee has been considering how the General Council Executive can best respond to requests for urgent and timely action it receives as correspondence. The Governance Committee does not have a definite answer, recognizing that the Executive is confronted by what some organizational experts call a “wicked question.” On the one hand, it is important to acknowledge that the structural change (2018) preserved the church’s conciliar nature (council to council) and it is important not to fall into patterns that undermine that understanding. On the other hand, the challenge is how to respond to urgent calls to action from individuals and groups without appearing to use process to stifle conversation, silence dissent or inaction, while, at the same time, ensuring that the it (the

Executive) does not default into practices that undermine the conciliar nature of the church and lose the wisdom of prior discussion by another council.

The above issues come to play in correspondence and in one of the proposals before you at this meeting. *NEW 01 Join the Apartheid Free Communities Movement* asks that, you, the General Council Executive take action. This proposal is related to *GS 17 Regarding CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02 Peace in Palestine and Israel* (p. 107 of the [2022 Record of Proceedings](#)) which was postponed definitely by GC44 until the work regarding Principles-Based Justice Work (GC44: *GCE 03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada*; and *TICIF 02 Principles-Based Justice Work*) was adopted, and in response to *Way Forward 09: CS01, SW09, FSL01, PM02, RC1501, SW02 Peace in Palestine and Israel* (ROP p. 102.) As part of your discernment, you will need to determine whether you will deal with this proposal, or forward it to the October, 2024 annual meeting of the 44th General Council (*The Manual* D.5.3.2.) Your disposal of this proposal and the correspondence from the group of former staff will lend clarity to both the process for dealing with proposals and an understanding of the conciliar nature of the church.

Related to this conversation about conciliarity and process, is the new structure of the General Council which meets in-person once a triennium and twice electronically over the period of the triennium. *The Manual* states that the annual electronic meeting of the General Council is to fulfill corporate legal requirements and for other business as determined by the General Council Executive. To date, that has largely been the agenda along with items deferred by the General Council itself. However, there is precedence for new business coming from Commissioners to enable the church to make a somewhat timely response to a current situation.

The practice of receiving proposals once every three years dates from the time when the General Council only met once every three years. The church has adopted technology to meet a legal requirement without reflecting on how this practice might otherwise serve its needs. When the in-person session of General Council is dealing primarily with proposals sent to it, there is little opportunity for generative, future-focused discussion. The Business Planning Committee for GC45 is wondering if the church might embrace the idea of the triennium more fully with regard to proposals to provide time for the church to do in-person what can only be done in that setting. The Business Planning Committee is drafting a proposal for the Executive's consideration as to what proposals might be received and handled by the Executive and what ones would need to be directed to the General Council. This would be a shift in thinking and process, but recent experience suggests such a shift is already underway.

Both these situations provide us with an opportunity for clarity and consistency.

General Council Office Updates

We are grateful to God for the church's affirmation of *Remit 1, Establishing an Autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada*. The National Indigenous Council and the National Indigenous Elders Council will continue to articulate the shape of the Indigenous

Church. At the October 19, 2024 Annual Meeting of the 44th General Council, the Council will be asked to enact the remit.

The year-long Centennial commemoration will begin on June 9, 2024, with a Union Day service at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto, near the site of the inaugural service at the Mutual Street arena. The service will be live-streamed. We are inviting the church to participate either by attending or joining online. In addition to the service, we have developed a liturgy for communities of faith to use on that Sunday as part of their local acknowledgement. A Centennial section is being prepared for the website and will be launched mid-May. Each month a different theme from the church's history will be explored in a Minute for Mission style format that will be available in video and text form.

As part of the centennial program, we will be launching *Then Let us Sing!* (TLUS) the new worship resource. The team has worked on curating songs that meet discerned gaps in our current collection. We celebrate the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship for their support of the development of Hymn Sing events as well as educational resources to promote congregational songs from an anti-oppression frame work. *Then Let Us Sing!* will be presenting at the hymn society in Atlanta this year. A bilingual (English and French) platform for *Then Let Us Sing!* is under active development. Please sign-up to our newsletter for updated information on TLUS!

300 Bloor Street West: Plans continue to develop for the office move in 2026. The General Secretary, on behalf of the church, signed the lease agreement with Bloor Street United Church. The design for the space is being done by KPMB Architects and is now in the final phase. The next phase will involve the costing for construction.

We are grateful for the ministries of several colleagues who have served in the General Council office. At the end of June 2024 after 15 years, Erik Mathiesen, Executive Officer, Finance, after almost 40 years, Shirley Welch, Administrative Assistant, Governance, and after almost 30 years Patti Talbot, Team Lead and Regional Coordinator, Global Partnership Program, will be retiring. We wish them God's blessings as they begin a new chapter of their journey.

Strategic Operational Plan

As our overall strategic and operational plan has completed its first year, we are in the process of preparing full year report for 2023. Included in your package for this meeting is a quarterly report for 2024, that highlights the progress on the first quarter of our second year. A streamlined reporting process has meant more consistent reporting processes, showing an operational planning, implementation and reporting cycle better integrated within the organization. Also better integrated is the budget to the whole of the operational plan. We continue to support the development of annual work plans for staff, so that as we strengthen annual performance reviews there is a "what" as well as "how" of staff work to assess in the review process. As we have full reporting and budget integration in place, we will be turning our attention to the quality of our plans, integrating stronger evidence with the help of our new research and development (data) team, and strengthening our strategies.

As of this first quarter of 2024 we have a full staff complement, with all Strategic Plan positions filled. We are already feeling the increase in capacity as the dreams of the early planning process, such as those related to strengthening existing congregations or growing new congregations, are beginning to be realized in initial steps. All the Growth Animators are now in place, working actively with regions on their strategies for renewing and creating communities and inviting strong participation in The United Church of Canada. In January and February alone, Growth Animators met with 71 ministry personnel, 37 governing bodies (phone, online or in person), 16 communities of faith (CoF) and facilitated 31 conversations about Growth to some form of regional body. The focus of these meetings has been visioning, collaboration with other communities of faith (CoF), exploration of neighbourhood profiles, creation of renewal or growth strategies, and exploring practices of discipleship and invitation. Staff continue to develop possibility in 40 potential sites of new communities of faith (CoF) amongst migrant and diasporic and Francophone communities; close to ten are sufficiently developed to have leadership contracts to support their continued progress.

In looking at opportunities to more confidently invite people into The United Church of Canada, we are both shifting existing tools and developing new campaigns. A recent e-newsletter project is using research to assess the scope and focus of national church e-newsletters, considering where there might be possibilities to strengthen and focus content towards broader constituencies. As well, we are working with external partners to strengthen the visual identity (look and feel) of the United Church in communications and, pairing with the Centennial commemoration, to launch a public relations and media project that would raise the profile of The United Church of Canada in the general public. A recent opportunity to test concept has emerged with the *Stars on Ice* Tour, where a [30 second video](#) will air to all audiences throughout April and May inviting people to find community within The United Church of Canada. Our goal is to ensure that we are both known and offering confident welcome to those who share our values in action, or are seeking spirituality, purpose, and community.

a. Objective: Common Good

Mission & Service: As we continue to promote, inspire, and invite folks to participate in financially supporting our shared Mission and Service, there are a number of items to highlight. For example, we have updated and coordinated banners, offering envelopes, bulletin covers, pens and suggestions for promotion at regional spring meetings. These meetings are a good way to familiarize and re-engage folks with Mission and Service through both local and national expressions of our work. Similarly, the team has been meeting with regional staff to update them on Mission and Service and encourage information exchanges and partnership so that we all have a good sense of the depth and breadth of work supported through Mission and Service.

We will be promoting May as 'PAR Month'. We will be reaching out to church leaders and encouraging and resourcing them to do promotion and invitations throughout May to increase both Congregational and Mission and Service giving. All material will be uploaded to the PAR web page and promotion started the week of April 8.

We are working with the Indigenous Ministries and Justice team to raise funds for a ministers' retreat in the fall for personnel serving communities in Northern Manitoba and Northern Ontario who need respite and training to help them improve their own well-being as well as their approach to trauma in their communities.

I have mentioned before, the power of the stewardship education we offer. I share with you now two examples of congregations that have participated and the results they created. A congregation in Eastern Ontario-Outaouais Region conducted a Stewardship Best Practices program in Spring 2023. Comparing their 2022 statistics to 2023, they had a 14% increase in local giving and 8% increase in the number of donors to local expenses. While they had a 7% decrease in donors to Mission and Service, they had a 28% increase in gifts to Mission and Service. On PAR, they had a 13% increase in those using PAR and a 28% increase in money coming in through PAR. A congregation in First Dawn Eastern Edge Region conducted a Stewardship Best Practices program in the Fall of 2022, followed by the Setting Up Your Giving Program. Comparing their 2022 statistics to 2023, they had a 27% increase in local giving and 3% decrease in the number of donors to local. While they had the same 3% decrease in donors to Mission and Service, they had a 1% increase in gifts to Mission and Service. On PAR, they had a 40% increase in those using the program and a 113% increase in dollars received.

We now have enough data from participants in the Called to Be the Church stewardship programs, and a system to pull the data together to be analyzed and I look forward to sharing broader results in the near the future.

The United Church of Canada (UCC) Protect initiative is by far the largest financial commitment of the strategic plan, with a \$3 million loan funding a captive insurance program aimed at helping participating United Church ministries first reduce and then contain insurance costs. In addition to providing the start-up capital, the church is also exposed to needing to provide more capital in the event of particularly adverse claims results - especially during the early years.

The program was rushed into place for December 2022 to provide immediate premium relief with a rollback of premium increases from 2020 and 2021. This meant premium reductions of 11-27% during a year when insurance premiums in the industry were going up by 15-30%. Even with a premium rate increase in December 2023, on an apples-to-apples basis, participants were paying less for insurance than two years prior.

So far - repeat - so far, the program has been a success financially. Annualized premiums paid for 2021/2022 were \$10.1 million versus \$8.1 million for the first year of captive insurance - a saving of almost \$2 million when adjusted for new business and closures/amalgamations. The interest on the start up loan is being paid annually. Claims experience has been well within target levels, and with each additional year of reasonable claims experience the captive insurance arrangement becomes more self-sufficient and the start-up loan potentially repayable.

Despite the very encouraging **initial** financial results, the customer service and administration has been very poor and caused much frustration for participants. Much of this was attributable to rushing the launch of the program to deliver the financial benefit, but our partner's existing systems and staff proved inadequate for the volume of queries that arose. Church side decisions to deliver more savings also proved challenging administratively. There has been much remedial activity underway and we expect to achieve proper service capacity by Q2 2024. This will also be when we launch greater coverage flexibility and improved communications.

Everyone is reminded that this initiative will need to run just like a traditional insurance company and claims administered accordingly. The difference is that we are all in it together to try to reduce risk and claims - and therefore premiums. This captive insurance arrangement exists solely to benefit participants.

b. Operational Objective: Justice

Refugee Program: In December 2018, the UCC's Refugee Program was approached by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to sponsor a number of 2S-LGBTQIA+ refugees out of the Dadaab refugee Camp in Kenya. Because of the harsh laws against the 2S-LGBTQIA+ community in Kenya, the UNHCR was unable to officially identify the refugees for resettlement for fear of persecution including imprisonment from the Kenyan government. We shared this with a number of Communities of Faith who were receptive to the idea. We then formed a partnership with UNHCR Canada in 2019 to do this work. COVID slowed down the processing of the refugees, but now those sponsored will be arriving this year. Because of the success of the initial success of this partnership, we have decided to renew the partnership with UNHCR Canada to help refer directly 2S-LGBTQIA+ refugees for refugee sponsorship for 2024/2025.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) – Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) online course: A 6-week SOGIE-PSRP online course is under development. The course is designed to provide United Church communities of faith a solid introductory understanding of the Canadian PSRP's Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP) and an awareness of the international context in which the RRAP-PSR program operates when it comes to offering protection to 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) through resettlement. The estimated launch is September 3, 2024.

The Apology Task Group has been meeting monthly and has developed a working draft document of the Living Apology. The group is looking to have a first draft ready for review by the General Council Executive in June 2024. The task group is continuing to be informed by their experiences, and personal consultations with congregations and communities, in the drafting of a Living Apology that would also prompt The United Church of Canada into further self-education and action in terms of reconciling with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities

Antiracism: The work of anti-racism and equity is ongoing, long-term, and sustained work that continues to work towards the transformation of the church as a whole. It is not easy work, and yet it is necessary work to continue to live into our commitments. The church's racial justice education program continues to be mandatory for ministry personnel. This year, however, the

program expanded based on demand, with a new online course now offered for lay leaders. Expanded components of the program also have additional practical ways to engage the content in local contexts. The courses are available on the church's e-learning platform, ChurchX.

In addition to the work around systemic and structure changes, there continue to be resources and processes available for people across the church to continue to engage in antiracism work in their own local contexts. Resources include a brand-new United Church resource for leaders of children now ready for use. This resource, is called [I Am A Changemaker](#), and it has been in development for several years. This six-session resource is grounded in scripture and it is ideal for Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, or adults who work with children aged 6-12. It is available through the United Church Bookstore. A [new antiracism education app](#) was launched early this year, and it is available on [Google Play](#) as well as the [Apple Store](#). This educational program was developed by racialized young people in the United Church as a creative way to learn and challenge racism. The young people noted that youth would be more engaged through an app, and so people of the church developed one for them!

c. Operational Objective: Indigenous Pathway

The Youth Leadership Coordinator and colleagues in the Church in Mission Unit have developed a program that is specifically designed to meet the needs of Indigenous and Racialized young people. And we are looking to administer and support Camp Gibimishkaadimin in 2025, with 2024 being a transitional year. With our work in justice and reconciliation we are addressing both the TRC Calls to Action and the Calls to Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People. We formally encouraged communities of faith to witness for justice in this area. This included the Moose Hide Campaign and our own #SearchTheLandfill social media campaign regarding the Brady and Prairie Green landfills in Winnipeg.

d. Operational Objective: Leadership

Audacious Hope is the theme for the National Youth Event, Rendez-vous 2024 www.audacioushope.ca. This is our first in-person event for youth, young adults, and their leaders since 2017, and is being planned in partnership with The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and provides opportunities for Affinity Groups to gather, and spaces for spiritual practices, neuro-divergent activities, and a health centre. It will also include an Ecumenical / Global Young Adult Community. Four young adults from The Presbyterian Church in Canada and four young adults from the United Church will gather global partners from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) and from the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ).

Financial Planning

"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. The financial management of the Church has faced significant challenges due to variability and uncertainty in current financial outcomes and future projections.

Historically, the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada has managed annual budgets by implementing cost reductions and tapping into reserve funds in response to the ongoing decline in Mission and Service revenues and rising expenditures in a high-inflation environment. As part of the implementation of a new funding model in 2019, the Executive mandated a commitment to 'live within our means'. This remains a key guiding principle for the Church's ongoing financial planning. This principle emphasizes the need for a sustainable long-term financial strategy that not only guides our ongoing work, but also aligns with our strategic priorities. The plan to achieve financial sustainability unfolds in three phases:

Phase 1: Streamlining the Budgeting Process - In 2024, an integrated program budget framework was introduced, which consolidates all existing programs under one strategic plan. This enhances efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The implementation of this framework marks the completion of phase 1.

Phase 2: Comprehensive Financial Assessment - Currently, the General Council Office is in the midst of Phase 2, which involves a thorough assessment of the current financial situation. This phase includes assessing various financial reserves, understanding revenue assumptions, identifying trends, evaluating risk factors, and analyzing the implications of various expenditure categories. The goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current finances and set the foundation for optimizing the budget structure and spending, thereby aligning it more closely with our strategic objectives.

Phase 3: Expanding the Time Horizon of the Budget Cycle - The future Phase 3 aims to extend the budget cycle to a triennium basis. This shift will enable the Church to focus more on long-term outcomes rather than merely measuring current financial performance. Expanding the budget cycle will also promote greater efficiency and allow the Executive and management teams to better plan in alignment with strategic priorities.

As we progress on our journey to achieve long-term financial sustainability, these broader topics will continue to be on our collective minds:

1. What does a financially sustainable "broader church" look like? Can we simply downsize expenditures to align with revenues? Can we afford our current structures with the responsibilities currently assigned?
2. What does a financially sustainable indigenous church look like and how might it be funded? How would the broader indigenous church structures participate in cost containment?
3. How can we advance equity, diversity and anti-oppression ambitions and commitments?
4. From a risk management perspective, what is the appropriate balance between "living within our means" and investing in the strategic plan?

The financial planning and management strategies adopted by the General Council Office are designed to ensure that the Church not only overcomes current financial challenges, but also

thrives in the future. By adhering to the principle of 'living within our means' and strategically aligning our resources, we aim to establish a financially robust future that enables the Church to live out its Call and Vision

Update on work assigned from the 44th General Council

Antisemitism Education: The Countering Antisemitism Working Group launched two initiatives during Lent, focused on worship leaders: (a) creation of a Good Friday worship service, including a sermon and sermon video, and (b) a webinar series drawing from Bearing Faithful Witness. The timing was intentional, so that worship leaders would have resources to help them address lectionary texts for Holy Week that have a long history of anti-Jewish interpretation. The 3-week webinar series, was held in collaboration with faculty from Vancouver School of Theology, Emmanuel College, and St. Andrew's College, and guests. Each session was recorded and the videos will be made available for everyone on the United Church's YouTube channel at a later date.

Implementation of the proposal on Designated Lay Ministry: General Council Office staff began implementation of the General Council decision (October 2023) that Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs) who demonstrate a lifelong vocational call to ministry would be eligible for ordination or commissioning, through a process of determining testamur equivalency. The Credentialling Committee, on behalf of the Board of Vocation, was asked to create interview teams to meet with each eligible DLM to discuss their call to either the ordained or diaconal stream of ministry. Members and former members of Board of Vocation committees and boards were asked to be part of these interview teams. An application process was developed and launched in early January 2024. Over 70 DLMs have been found eligible to be ordained or commissioned. 11 DLMs have discerned that they are called to diaconal ministry and 63 have discerned that they are called to ordained ministry. Regional Council staff have been working with eligible DLMs and communities of faith to put into place changes in terms, including provisional calls or appointments.

Discipleship: The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) is working on the mandate given by the 44th General Council (2022) to "engage the church in a study of discipleship." This work had been slated for engagement in 2024, due to other time-sensitive pieces of work that General Council had also requested TICIF to take on. The committee identified three main aspects of this work:

- Current context and history of discipleship,
- Collective and personal discipleship, and
- Connection to the Call of the United Church: how are we to be deep, bold, and daring in our discipleship?

The committee had a fulsome discussion about ways in which to engage the church in this study; current and potential resources that already exist; and ways in which this works connects to the work of the Growth objective and particularly the work of the new Growth Animators. A small working group has been established to determine concrete next steps; we anticipate that all committee members will be involved in various ways.

Risk Management

There are a number of risk factors that we are monitoring and managing which can have impact on the sustainability of the ministries of the church.

One of the most significant risk factors is the ongoing post-COVID shakeout of congregational finances and their ability to call ministry personnel and maintain property. We are already noting the rising number of communities of faith who function without ordered ministry. Additionally, the post-COVID fallout present a risk to both Mission and Service and assessment revenue. Financial sustainability is a constant challenge. This is mostly out of the hands of management. Monitoring the emerging issues and seeking ways to mitigate some of the challenges is the best course of action at present.

A related risk, with the loss of full-time call opportunities for ministry personnel has raised curiosity as to whether we are at the end of an era, and whether bi-vocational and collaborative ministry opportunities will become the norm.

The aging workforce, retirement of long-term employees and the loss of institutional memory, coupled with the hybrid working environment, and the need for more robust upgrade to technical skills poses a significant risk to the organization. Management is intentionally working on a succession plan for staff and exploring ways to build staff capacity.

The move to 300 Bloor and possible challenges with the current office lease and the timing of construction will require careful attention of the management team.

The forthcoming Centennial commemoration provides opportunities to tell our story in new ways, and at the same time we need to monitor any reputational risks related to policies or actions of ministry personnel.

Cybersecurity is another risk factor requiring the ongoing attention of management.

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

Strategic Plan 2023—2025

2024 Operational Plan Report

Quarter I

April 25, 2024



2024 Operational Plan Report: Quarter I

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Legend:

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

Overall Results: Quarter I 2024

Here are three ways of looking at the big picture for this quarter (i.e., dashboard, graph and narrative). **Note that Indigenous pathways is using another process other than key results methodology for their reporting.

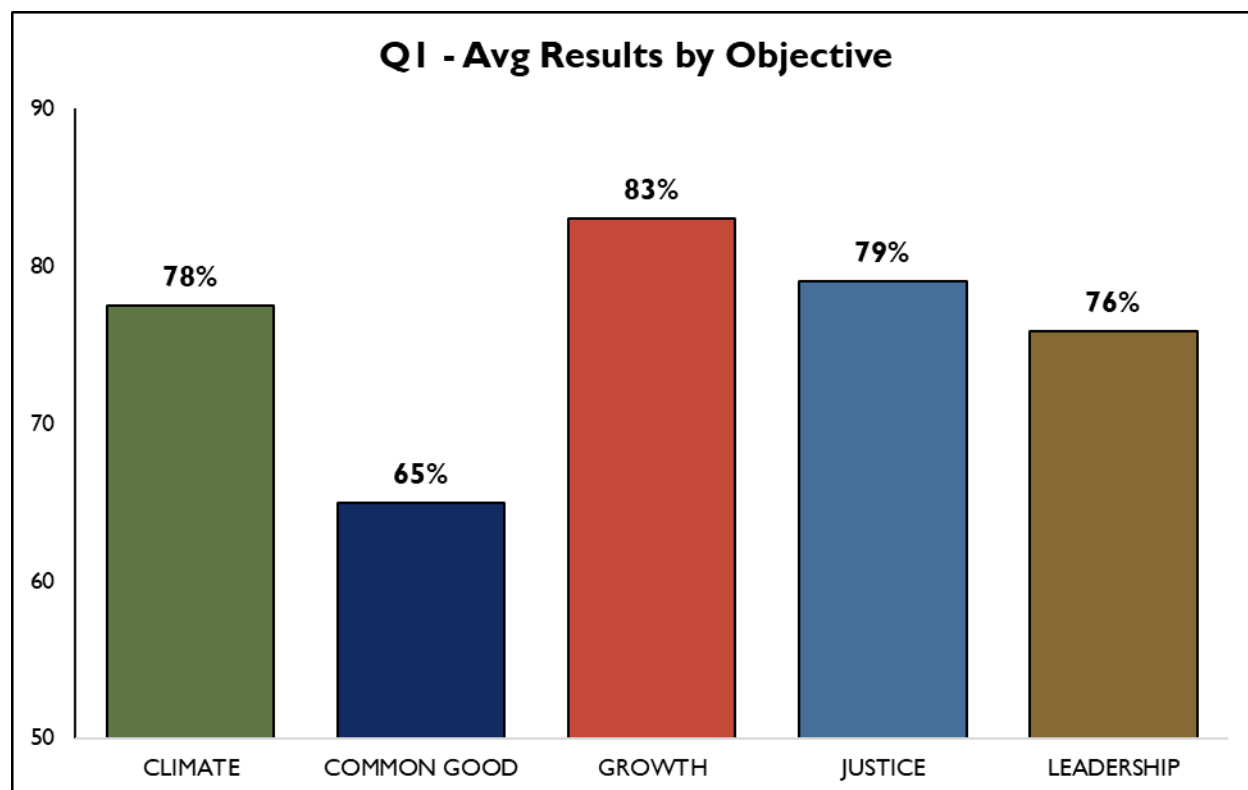
Overall Average for QI 2024

Q1 2024 Dashboard

Overall Q1 2024 Average 76%

Strategic Objective	Progress on Key Results
Strengthen Invitation	83%
Embolden Justice	79%
Nurture the Common Good	65%
Invigorate Leadership	76%
Deepen Climate Integrity	78%
Journeying Indigenous Pathways	Good

Q1 2024 Graph



Q1 2024 Summary Narrative

“Our overarching goal is to create the conditions for renewal, dedicating focus, energy, and resources to slowing—if not interrupting—a decrease in participation, giving and impact.”

—The United Church of Canada Strategic Plan 2023-2025

This overarching goal for the strategic planning process led to the development of a strategic objective on Growth (Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith) and the decision to make that objective the priority, with other strategic objectives contributing to its accomplishment in intersecting ways. Because Growth was a significantly new terrain, the first year of the GCO operational plan (2023) involved preparatory elements, taking aspirations and developing or retooling human and other resources to shape and support anticipated outcomes. This quarter, the first of the second year of the operational plan (2024), the **Growth strategy shifts from developmental to implementation**, having an impact also on intersecting strategic objectives.

Key shifts to implementation this quarter are reflected in the following:

- The Growth department is fully staffed with either retooled positions or new positions, most notably the Growth Animators;
- All other enabling strategic plan positions, including the Government Relations Officer in Justice are, and the Lead for the Research and Development (Data) Team, are in place;
- Growth work in the areas of RENEW and CREATE, which in the first year focused almost exclusively on engagement with migrant and diaspora communities, is now expanded to include other work on key regional priorities, including with existing congregations;
- Growth work in INVITE, also in a preparatory phase over the last year, is now becoming visible in brand/identity strategy, public relations campaigning, and Centennial initiatives;
- Intersecting objectives, particularly Leadership and Common Good, are working closely with Growth to enable their initiatives to amplify Growth in the areas of RENEW, CREATE and INVITE.

With the shift into implementation, the focus will need to be on whether efforts are effectively “slowing—if not interrupting—a decrease in participation, giving and impact,” grounded in clear baselines and drawing from relevant data.

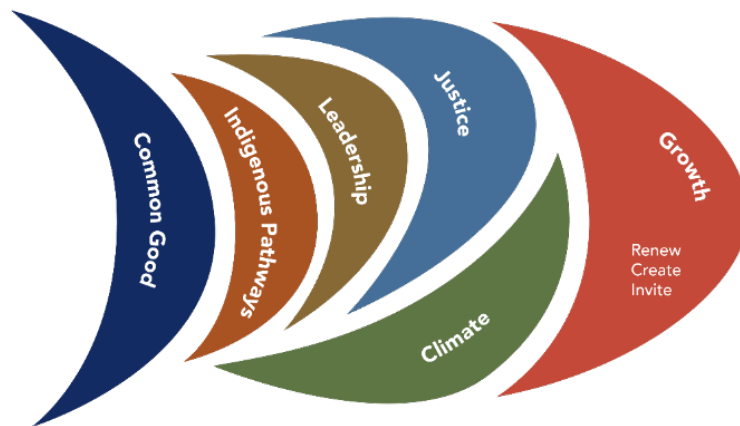
While the Growth strategy is performing well, meeting 83% of its key results in Q1, and other objectives are also solidly progressing (between 69-79% progress against key results), there are still challenges. These include:

- continuing to strengthen the intersections of the objective areas towards the plan's overall Growth strategy;
- a requirement for increased focus, and therefore impact at the appropriate scale for national initiatives;
- a stronger strategic mindset and capacity in management and staff;
- integrating stronger evidence with the help of our renewed Research and Development (Data) team.

New streamlined reporting system and full budget integration has advanced the infrastructure support for planning in the GCO, as have advancements in aligning newly developed human resources systems with strategic planning.

Strategic Objectives

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



Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith

83%

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

Accomplishments

Renew: 6 regionally deployed Growth Animators have engaged with 80 ministry personnel and 57 Governing bodies. They have conducted 16 workshops for full Communities of Faith (CoFs) and convened 42 conversations about Growth and Renewal with a Regional body or gathering. Growth staff presented as part of a workshop on *Strengthening Invitation* with Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council and at the Nakonha:ka Regional Council Annual meeting on contextual ministry. Rural Connect administration and strategy was brought under Growth as part of work articulating a Growth strategy for rural contexts. The Vancouver Flourishing workshop engaged congregational leaders.

Create: Conversations occurred with the Regions about possibilities and challenges in the area of creation including what sort of resources are necessary around creating new communities of faith in priority areas. Staff and volunteers attended Churches Witnessing with Migrant events to deepen an understanding which will inform how migrant justice shapes the possibilities of emerging migrant/diasporic/intercultural communities of faith. Relationships with United Methodist Church of Zimbabwe and the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe in Canada (MCZC) continues to develop including work towards a MCZC church plant in Montréal with United Church support.

Invite: A Public Relations firm to aid in public outreach campaigns has been selected. Good progress is being made on the francophone website MonCredo.org including new bloggers, new podcasts and the creation of a content calendar. An increased number of bilingual staff has significantly assisted. “Deep Bold Daring” merch and engagement materials have been released for use in congregations, and the liturgy for the Centennial Launch Service has been written.

Challenges

We are learning important things about how the pledge around CREATE is being understood throughout the church and what concerns and questions are arising. This is helpful to understand specific spaces where work can be done to create the conditions necessary for new experiments—experiments which build on learnings from existing work. Connecting emerging migrant and francophone communities with established communities of faith requires attention and collaboration with regions.

Looking Forward

The work of this quarter gives a strong foundation across the Growth initiative. Growth Animators have all begun their work and are developing initial perspectives and approaches. The necessity to ground work in the foundational concepts of Strengthened Invitation and developing individual and collective capacity to share faith will be further explored in next quarters. A test project combining the work of a Growth Animator and Stewardship Coach working with Regional Pastoral Relations Minister and a cohort of CoFs is being developed. Conversations with Regions about CREATE will inform the development of strategic approach. Work under INVITE in this quarter will see significant progress in francophone and national outreach goals.

Accountable: Cameron Fraser

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
RENEW: Strengthen the capacities of existing communities of faith Shift: Increased ability to welcome, attract, retain, transform and send people into the world.	Tools and Accompaniment for CoFs	85
	Stewardship for CoFs	98
	Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops	100
	Renewing Francophone Communities	80
CREATE: Gathering learning from our own experience and that of denominations and global partners, create 100 new communities of faith. Shift: Towards vibrant diversity, and intercultural community, transformative in the world.	Online Communities	50
	Regional/Identity Communities	75
	Migrant Communities	100
	Intercultural communities	100
	Francophone Communities	100
	Diverse Identity Communities	60
INVITE: Galvanize common identity and purpose and communicate effectively to the public about the spiritual home or pathways to home in the church. Shift: Towards greater internal connectedness; stronger external outreach.	Engage with Call and Vision	70
	Outreach: Communication Strategy	80
	Francophone Outreach	90
	Centennial Commemoration Project	75

Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World

79%

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

Accomplishments

Clarity, focus and scope has helped the different pieces of work under the Embolden Justice pillar shape into spirals of movements towards inclusion. With the view that, “solidarity is love in action,” we are joining together in a common struggle with 2SLGBTQI+ movements, witnessing presence in key spaces, and strengthening work including on refugees.

The Anti-Racism commitment has been advanced in the development of educational materials, youth-focused apps, and opportunities for engagement with communities of faith. The goal continues to be to deepen understanding of the diverse impacts of colonialism, White supremacy, and racism in our church.

Progress was made on the work on reparations, including outlining theological principles. The team is keen to include stories to help demonstrate the complexity of this work, as well as engaging in a relational way. On self-defined healing initiatives, supporting racialized communities, a communications plan and promotional strategy was partially completed.

The Government Relations Officer was hired and oriented and initial meetings with key staff were held successfully to do some mapping for advocacy methodological development. In each aspect of the Justice work there has been an effort to facilitate inter-unit and ecumenical collaboration.

The Moderator’s Book Club has garnered just short of 500 registrants to date given the quality of conversation and expertise of the Moderator and her guests. Continued attention is being given to increasing the audience to the general public.

Challenges

Certain pieces of our work depend on either ecumenical partners or other key collaborators who work at their own pace with their own priorities. This quarter work related to Truth and Reconciliation was impacted. Having waited for almost a year for feedback on a project, it has been somewhat difficult to re-engage given developments in peoples’ work lives, but the project is moving forward.

The Flourishing key note, held in this period in Vancouver, offered an excellent high-calibre speaker presenting engaging thoughtful content, but fell short of expectations on the number of attendees. Work is being done to strengthening marketing for the final three public events in the Flourishing

Initiative, given that the quality of presentations offer an excellent opportunity for showcasing United Church engagement and support on key issues in Canada's future.

In some areas, creating too many key results proved to be a challenge.

Looking Forward

In Indigenous Justice, a Youth leadership program, engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, is being developed in collaboration with the Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre. A webinar has been planned with the family of Morgan Harris, one of the women who are believed to be in a Winnipeg landfill.

An online refugee sponsorship course, focusing on 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees, is being developed for September on ChurchX. The new Government Relations Officer will convene monthly meetings and advance a strategy for developing and deepening United Church presence and influence in decision-making spaces on key priorities.

The LGBTQIA+ Africa consultation, supporting Global South to South strengthened advocacy is on target for August in Mozambique. Preparations for the first Radical Accompaniment roundtables are underway with a Partner Council meeting in person in May to work on the content and flow of the first Roundtable

We are looking forward to a gathering of all UCCan representatives to ecumenical organizations such as the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), KAIROS, Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGF) and others to clarify the church's expectations, share the strategic plan objectives, and confirm accountability expectations

It remains a bugbear that the Moderators book club initiative simply hasn't caught to a wider audience. It is a hard lesson to learn that it isn't always about the bums in seats; the quality of the presentation offers a high standard for engagement.

Accountable: Japhet Ndhlovu

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
INDIGENOUS JUSTICE: Address anti-Indigenous racism and white supremacy and make the church and Canada safer and more equitable for Indigenous peoples. Shift: Towards decolonization and increased justice.	TRC Calls to Action Campaign	95
	Indigenous Strength Learning Opportunities	35
	Reparations	70
	Bringing the Children Home	70
RACIAL EQUITY: Advance racial equity. Shift: Towards transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized people.	Self-defined Healing	75
	Racial Equity in Housing Advocacy	75
	Addressing Antisemitism	80
	Anti-Racism Education	100
	Addressing White Privilege	50
2S-LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS: Enhance 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights including addressing religious-induced homophobia. Shift: Towards integrating and intersecting with other justice issues.	Refugee Sponsorship	50
	LGBTQIA+ Global and Ecumenical Advocacy	90
ECUMENISM: Increase ecumenical collaboration and effectiveness. Shift: Towards stronger impact and reduction in overlap.	Ecumenical Youth Exchange	100
	Stronger Ecumenical Partnership	100
RADICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: Strengthen accompaniment of global partners. Shift: Towards needs development.	Financial Sharing	60
	Crisis Response	95
	People to People	100
	Witness	90
	Visits and Meetings	75
	Roundtables	100
PUBLIC WITNESS: Strengthen presence in the public sphere and effectiveness in advocacy as a denomination. Shift: Towards greater public presence, clearer principles and processes of response.	Moderator's Initiative: Public Events and Book Clubs	85
	Advocacy: Presence and Methodology	65

Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship

76%

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

Accomplishments

The equity, diversity, and anti-oppression (EDA) training, and the facilitated conversations with national committees, have both had an excellent response. The evaluation of that training shows notable impact in increasing committees' comfort with and commitment to integrating EDA into their work. By self-assessment, 96% of committee members stated they will use EDA in their committee work - up from 73% prior to the training. Chairs of committees' self-assessment shows 100% agreement that their committee will use EDA going forward (up from 57% prior to the training) and 100% agreement that they are comfortable discussing EDA with their committees (up from 81%). With 104 responses from committees and staff, the EDA team has strong information to guide next steps.

Collaborative ministry continues to be a growing topic of interest. There are 18 participants in the Solidarity Circle, 15 in the Reimaging Church lay event, and numerous conversations are being held across the country. There has already been some interest in the five collaborative Supervised Ministry Education positions that are projected to start in the fall 2024.

The culmination of two years of tracking on who is not moving forward in Admissions has reduced the list of ministers in process from 180 to 125; three ministers completed the process this quarter bringing the number of those in process to 122. Of these 122, 36 moved forward by at least one step in the process this quarter. Another Open House was held in February in relation to the "matching" project for Admission ministers and communities of faith. Evaluations from that event will lead to additional strategies for engaging with regional councils and communities of faith as they seek to call and appoint Admission ministers.

The Human Resources Performance Management Program 1.1 has been automated and deployed, including a system for assessing proficiency level of competencies. Both the program and process has been well received by staff.

Challenges

We continue to work collegially and collaboratively with regional council colleagues and elected members, particularly in drawing on their wisdom about how best to approach matters such as communicating the continuing education standard for ministry personnel.

Challenges include some emerging needs which impact staff capacity and workloads. In turn, this sometimes means that progress on some specific key results happens more slowly than we had collectively anticipated. We are ambitious about what we hope to do! Some of the work is evolving in slightly different ways than anticipated, and so staff are creatively adapting, to ensure that the work

on the activity streams continues to move forward.

Looking Forward

This quarter has helped set foundations for some new activity streams; for collecting and reviewing data; for developing programs and leadership development opportunities that will be carried out in Quarters 2 and 3 (e.g., Audacious Hope, collaborative ministry training, young adult leadership development connected to General Council 45).

Accountable: Jennifer Janzen-Ball

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD: Reinvigorate our commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God. Shift: To better coordinated support and resources.	Whole People of God Training	60
	First Third Ministry Leaders	80
	Worship Resources	75
	Statement of Ministry Review	100
MINISTRY PERSONNEL: Work to align policy and systems for recruiting, training, authorizing and overseeing ministry personnel with the new Vision. Shift: Leadership development from a program to a mentorship-model (investing in ministers in first 5 years, ministers interested in developing leadership skills, Indigenous church, First Third).	Reimagine Theological Education	80
	Collaborative Ministry and Mentorship Pilot	80
	Recruitment-Ministry Personnel	90
	Appointments for Admission Ministers	100
	Leadership Counts	60
	Moderator's Initiative: (Re)Generate	95
	Pastoral Relations Equity Animation	50
ELECTED LEADERS: Support the increased diversity and effectiveness of faithful elected leaders. Shift: Towards greater inclusivity and accountability.	Support Equity Groups in Governance	70
	Equity Training	70
	Onboarding Volunteers	75
STAFF: Strengthen equity, accountability and effectiveness in GC/RC staff system. Shift: Towards learning culture, alignment, and evaluation against work plans.	Performance Management System	100
	Training: Learning Strategy	30
	Equity in Recruitment and Retention	75

65%

Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources

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

Accomplishments

The 2023 activities under this Objective enabled us to test and gather information to propel the 2024 activities. With the majority of the resourcing issues faced in 2023 resolved, the team is able to move forward well with the 2024 key results. Of particular note is the success of the webinar series offered for Treasurers and other key, technical roles in communities of faith as indicated by the ongoing large number of participants in the events. Further there is a significant amount of collaboration with the Regions in the various activities within this Objective through the participation of regional staff on activity teams and in consultations. What is particularly encouraging to this work are the signs that there is a cohort of communities of faith that are forward-thinking in terms of digital ministry. Their learnings can be shared across the church to help folks learn more than just the “how to” use technology, enabling them to be more effective in creating disciples in our digital age.

Challenges

Challenges in implementation are not related to the activities themselves, but rather on-boarding staff and volunteers; this indicates that timelines for completion of certain key results were ambitious. We will need to consider experience related to resourcing and on-boarding for future iterations of the plan. Similarly, consultation timelines were somewhat ambitious and future gatherings may need more lead time. A number of the activities that had lower completion rates will be finalized early in Q2 without negatively impacting the ability to complete the second quarter key results.

Looking Forward

In Q2 the “technology best practices” activity team will launch a guide for communities of faith to support stronger decisions related to technology purposes. The team will also host a roundtable with communities of faith that are tech enthusiasts to learn and determine how best to support them in their innovations. The “information technology management” activity team will launch phase one of a project that will significantly improve the GCO’s marketing and communications capacity.

Mission and Service information and materials will be present and shared at Regional Council meetings.

Q2 will also see the initiation of resources for communities of faith with respect to their property. This is a collaboration with the United Property Resource Corporation and will help communities of faith make more informed decisions about the use of their buildings and spaces.

With a full staff complement, team members trained up and the relevant technologies mastered, the Archives team will make significant progress on their key results.

Consultations for reviews related to compensation and the Office of the Moderator and General Secretary will happen in Q2 and will result in data gathering and conversations that will inform recommendations to the Executive of the General Council in Q3.

Accountable: Sarah Charters

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
FINANCIAL HEALTH: Remove barriers to congregational financial health. Shift: Towards financial viability and administrative effectiveness.	Support to CoFs: Treasurers Plus	85
	Grant and Donation Portal	25
	Technology Best Practices	100
COLLECTIVE DECISIONS: Strengthen decision making and management of property and resources. Shift: Towards decisions that reflect the ministry needs of the whole church.	Optimize Asset Retention	25
	Fundraising: 2025 Anniversary	Not activated
	Major and Planned Giving	60
	Mission and Service Support	100
SHARED SERVICES: Reduce costs and improve capacity through shared service structures. Shift: Towards administrative efficiencies and effectiveness.	Shared Space (300 Bloor Street West)	95
	Information Management: Marketing and Contacts	30
	Digitization	70
	Licensing Fix	100
	Improve PAR	Not activated
ACCOUNTABILITY: Strengthen planning--strategic and operational--and increase accountability. Shift: Towards evidence-based decisions, greater alignment and impact.	Operational Planning	90
	Data Driven Decision Making	55
	Transparency	40
	Role and Structure Review	75
	Legal Capacity	25

78%

Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments

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

Accomplishments

With any initiative, the link between the intention of the strategy and implementation in the local context is often the challenge. The enthusiastic response of communities of faith to the Faithful Footprints' initiative is evidence of such a link. There is a clear and immediate benefit to the community of faith that prompts and supports their involvement. One of the possibilities to consider is how we might also move their action to reduce emissions through energy retrofits into greater climate advocacy.

This year's Lenten study, "Act Fast", along with Earth Week resources now on the web, provide a spiritual grounding for members to connect climate action with their faith.

It is helpful to note that, although not connected with key results, the intention of this strategy is permeating other elements of denominational life and planning such as the travel policy for staff and the travel support being offered for the Centennial worship services.

Challenges

Having noted that one of the strengths is the agreed upon need for climate action, one of the challenges is how to capitalize on that with sensitivity to diverse contexts and their reliance on certain energy resources. Nobody questions the benefits of energy retrofits. That unanimous perspective begins to dissolve as specific actions are considered and people react to the potential impact on them personally.

Looking Forward

The next quarter will move forward the Climate Motivators program. This program captured the interest of participants and of those who engaged with them last year. This year its impact may have even broader impact through Audacious Hope, our upcoming Youth Conference. That, in turn, may spark interest in GC45 Youth Forum with the potential to have youth championing climate justice when we gather.

Accountable: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa / Erik Mathiesen

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
INTEGRITY: Put our own house in order through reducing church emissions. Shift: Towards broader engagement across the church; towards system change in key related sectors.	Faithful Footprints	90
VOICE: Raise our spirited voice. Shift: Towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United church leadership in responding.	Advocacy on Climate	80
	Youth Climate Activists	80
RECONNECT: Reconnect with the Earth Shift: Towards reawakened and strengthened love for all God's creation	Eco-Spirituality	60

Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations**

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

Accomplishments

In this quarter, voting for Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization concluded. The National Indigenous Council, 16 regional councils, and 80% of pastoral charges in The United Church of Canada participated in the vote. Remit 1 passed, with detail on the vote results available [here](#).

Even while the remit process was taking place across the church, focus has continued on structure and sustained funding for the Indigenous church. Youth initiatives, including support to Camp Gibimishkaadimi, are facilitating strengthened Indigenous Youth Leadership. For example, Camp Gibimishkaadimi is integrating graduates into the leadership of the Indigenous Church.

Looking Forward

In response to the Remit results, the National Indigenous Council shared their vision statement with the whole church. They offered words of thanks for all who have brought the church to this moment and stated their commitment to moving forward together on the path of Right Relations.

Statement from the National Indigenous Council on the Results of Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

We, the National Indigenous Council, are a diverse group of Indigenous Peoples, rooted in distinct innate values and wisdom. We:

- carry a common vision and dream*
- respect everyone's story*
- care for one another*
- uphold community*
- build positive relationships.*

We thank our Ancestors and All Our Relations who have brought us to this moment.

We are all spirit first.

The work of Right Relations continues.

We commit to moving forward together in a good way.

Accountable: Murray Pruden

***Note that Indigenous pathways is using another process other than key results methodology for their reporting.*

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



Origins of the Plan

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

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

Call



Vision

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

For more Information:
Planning@united-church.ca



KAIROS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Origin: KAIROS Transitional Executive Director

Leadership Changes

2023 marked a significant leadership transition for KAIROS. Executive Director, Aisha Francis, resigned in August 2023. Leah Reesor-Keller was hired as the Interim Executive Director. She will continue as Transitional Executive Director through May 2025, while the Steering Committee mounts a Search Committee for the permanent ED role.

New Kairos Transition Plan

KAIROS member churches and agencies continue to move forward with the restructuring plan for KAIROS to be an independent non-profit with its own charitable status. The members formed the New Kairos Working Group, with representatives designated from all members, to develop the new bylaws and structure. The Steering Committee and staff are identifying operational transition pieces and developing transition plans. It is anticipated that it will be at least Spring/Summer 2025 until the charitable status is obtained and the formal organizational transition can happen.

PROGRAM UPDATES

KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE)

KAIROS paused the KAIROS Blanket Exercise program in 2023 to undertake a review and consultation process and develop a new model that centres Indigenous voices telling Indigenous stories. The Steering Committee approved the new model in November 2023, and plans are now underway to roll out the new approach.

Phase 1 begins in May 2024, and will involve long-standing KBE partners and new partners with extensive KBE facilitator experience (approximately 5 years or more) who do not require training, and where these partners' facilitation teams already possess all the necessary KBE materials.

Phase 2 begins in July 2024, and will involve newer KBE partners who have less than five years of facilitator experience or have occasionally delivered KBEs. While these partners' facilitation teams have the required KBE materials, they may benefit from training for new facilitators who recently joined their team.

Phase 3 begins in September 2024, and will involve new partners and their facilitators who have yet to facilitate a KBE. Comprehensive KBE training and access to the partner's facilitation materials will be provided to support their successful implementation. This last phase will include an official in-person new model launch, location to be determined.

Migrant Justice

Nov. 15-18th: The Migrant Justice Lead and Director of Programs attended the Canadian Council for Refugees Consultation to learn and participate on the current immigration and migrant work in Canada. It was also an opportunity to network and establish new partnerships with organizations nationwide doing similar work.

The Migrant Justice team has been busy reconnecting with Migrant Justice contacts and partners through a series of consultations. They have continued to connect with partners from the concluded Empowering Temporary Foreign Workers Project, and more recently have connected with Migrant Rights Network, The Neighbourhood Group and the Caribbean Migrant Workers Network in the Niagara Region.

Global Partnerships

Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: We have been working with an ecumenical working/planning group of member church staff on a Canadian expression of the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage - Canadian Churches for Just Peace.

The initiative involves the following key areas:

- Pilgrimage in Ottawa to Parliament Hill
- Advocacy and MP meetings in Ottawa Communications and press conference in Ottawa
- Working with KAIROS and member church networks and congregations on local pilgrimages

The Ottawa Pilgrimage will take place on May 22, followed by a press conference and meetings with MPs on May 23. We are asking member churches to name and support church leaders and /or representatives from their church houses to participate in the pilgrimage, advocacy, and communication in Ottawa. We are asking all member churches to consider participating and sending a representative. We are also asking churches to participate by mobilizing congregations and networks in local pilgrimages in the lead up to the Ottawa Pilgrimage on May 22. On May 22 we are asking people in Ottawa to participate in a pilgrimage to Parliament.

Women, Peace and Security: Our 6 year funded program through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) came to a close at the end of March 2024, with the bulk of program activities finishing in December 2023. We have recently submitted all narrative and financial reporting forms and are waiting for feedback and approval from GAC.

Solidarity Partners: We continue to work with our solidarity partners in Latin America, Africa, Palestine/Israel and the Philippines, providing grants and supporting their advocacy work. To date we have proposals for the 2024 programs of the Human Rights program Diocese of San

Cristobal, Mexico; Kaji' Ajpop, Mexico; Mesa Ecu mica por la Paz (MEP); OilWatch Africa, and B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights.

Ecological Justice

For the Love of Creation: KAIROS worked with For the Love of Creation (FLC) (<https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/about-us/>) on public outreach and advocacy around COP28, coordinating an animators circle and organizing Candles for COP28 Vigils. From December 8-10, over 20 groups (and over 200 people) gathered across the country to hold vigil for Creation in the last weekend of COP28.

During Lent, KAIROS supported the advocacy and outreach of FLC's Give it Up for the Earth campaign.

The FLC visioning retreat will take place from May 1-3 at Seven Oaks. Kairos is helping to plan and coordinate this retreat and will be participating.

KAIROS received a grant from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation in late 2023 *Strengthening Voices for a Just Transition: A project uniting generations for equitable and sustainable futures*, Community Consultations are being planned in four locations:

- Edmonton, Alberta
- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- Sarnia, Ontario
- Sydney, Nova Scotia

A call for applications to participate in these consultations has been posted, with a focus on Indigenous and youth voices. KAIROS is collaborating with Indigenous Climate Action on these consultations and the overall project.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNITED CHURCH INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

This report provides the Finance Advisory Committee and the General Council Executive with a summary of:

1. The activity of the Investment Committee, Treasury Funds over the past year,
2. The performance of the Treasury Funds,
3. The integration of the Responsible Investing mandate,
4. Policy and documentation changes, and
5. Priorities for each coming year.

Executive Summary

With activities such as manager review completed in prior years, a key activity in 2023 was the review of our responsible investing activities, external commitments and related communications – particularly the website. A new commitment was signing on to Climate Engagement Canada, to add our voice and participate in key engagements.

A large bequest and maturing annuities were held in GICs pending ongoing management evaluation of cash needs. There was no change in investment managers. Bond holdings in our core Fiera portfolio were a regular discussion topic with initial steps taken to transition a short-term bond mandate to longer term.

After incurring losses in 2022, Investment markets were quite volatile in 2023 but finished with a one-year return of 11.73%, (0.76) % versus the benchmark. The three-year return was +5.80%/year (annualized basis).

The Committee operates at a policy level. Tactical asset allocation is generally left to Fiera, our core manager. This has not generated added value in recent years and will be re-evaluated in 2024. Fiera offers a unique value proposition for the church – offering a responsible investment product array that delivers our required returns, at significantly lower fees.

The Committee devotes considerable effort to responsible investment activity and United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) engagement. Shareholder engagement in partnership with like-minded investors continues through our contract with SHARE.

Performance Summary as of December 31, 2023

	Market Value	% Allocation	Cumulative			Annualized Returns						
			Dec 2023	One Quarter	YTD Calendar	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five Years	Seven Years	Ten Years
Total Portfolio	90,896,736	100.00	3.04	7.26	11.73	11.73	2.21	5.80	7.79	9.45	--	--
Policy			2.05	6.64	12.49	12.49	1.87	5.22	6.32	7.76	--	--
Value Added			0.99	0.62	(0.76)	(0.76)	0.34	0.58	1.47	1.69	--	--
Cash & Equivalents	11,896,199	13.12	0.45	1.29	4.96	4.96	3.38	2.10	1.55	2.40	--	--
FTSE Canada 91 Day T-Bill			0.39	1.28	4.71	4.71	3.25	2.22	1.88	1.83	1.58	1.31
Fiera Integrated FI ST FD	13,235,189	14.59	1.60	4.36	5.71	5.71	0.88	0.33	1.68	2.06	--	--
FTSE Canada Short Term Overall Bon			1.51	4.11	5.02	5.02	0.39	(0.06)	1.26	1.62	1.44	1.68
Canadian Equity	21,037,045	23.19	4.76	8.66	15.44	15.44	6.53	11.58	10.97	13.60	--	--
S&P/TSX Composite Index			3.91	8.10	11.75	11.75	2.58	9.59	8.58	11.30	7.85	7.62
U.S. Equity	11,184,129	12.33	0.62	7.41	19.50	19.50	4.64	13.41	15.28	17.53	--	--
S&P 500 (CAD)			1.67	8.93	22.90	22.90	3.90	11.27	12.51	14.88	13.14	14.48
N.N.A. Equity	11,317,441	12.48	3.72	11.83	21.75	21.75	3.12	4.16	6.64	9.29	--	--
50% MSCI EAFE 50% MSCI EM			1.74	6.44	10.98	10.98	(0.68)	0.66	3.20	5.31	--	--
Fiera Intl Equity ESG Fund	11,317,441	12.48	3.72	11.83	21.75	21.75	2.43	6.63	9.48	12.50	--	--
MSCI EAFE (CAD)			2.42	7.69	15.07	15.07	2.76	5.22	5.39	7.41	6.65	6.55
Cdn. Fixed Income	4,402,476	4.85	3.53	8.49	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
FTSE Canada Universe			3.43	8.27	6.69	6.69	(2.93)	(2.80)	(0.05)	1.30	1.49	2.42
Domestic Bond Pools	4,402,476	4.85	3.53	8.49	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
FTSE Canada Universe			3.43	8.27	6.69	6.69	(2.93)	(2.80)	(0.05)	1.30	1.49	2.42
Fiera Capital Pooled Invest.	1,769,746	1.95	2.19	5.88	10.01	10.01	3.54	7.77	8.27	9.91	--	--
Fiera Capital Pooled BM			2.55	6.93	11.84	11.84	2.39	5.69	6.27	7.92	--	--
Global Equity	15,854,510	17.48	5.33	9.14	7.57	7.57	(1.98)	4.61	10.09	12.71	--	--
MSCI ACWI CAD			1.92	8.29	18.92	18.92	2.05	6.97	8.74	10.94	9.78	10.28
NEI Environmental Leaders Fund	8,225,928	9.07	5.56	12.14	16.06	16.06	(1.59)	5.78	10.17	12.56	--	--
MSCI ACWI CAD			1.92	8.29	18.92	18.92	2.05	6.97	8.74	10.94	9.78	10.28
Greenchip Global Equity Fund	7,628,582	8.41	5.08	6.08	(1.62)	(1.62)	0.16	4.86	15.01	18.10	--	--
MSCI ACWI CAD			1.92	8.29	18.92	18.92	2.05	6.97	8.74	10.94	9.78	10.28

Policy = 5.0% FTSE Canada 91 Day T-Bill + 25.0% FTSE Canada Short Term Overall Bond + 20.0% S&P/TSX Capped Composite + 20.0% S&P 500 (CAD) + 10.0% MSCI EAFE (CAD) + 10.0% MSCI Emerging Markets CAD + 10.0% MSCI ACWI CAD

Background

Until 2019, our year over year investment balances had been decreasing due to UCC Treasury cash flow needs, despite favourable investment returns. This reflected an intentional drawdown of our group benefits reserves plus the need to fund operations and one-time costs associated with the restructuring of the church. As donations and other traditional revenue sources decrease, investment income is an increasingly important element to sustaining our mission. However, much of the Treasury Fund assets are comprised of special purpose or restricted funds, which are not available for general operating purposes.

Financial Statement Category	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	(million)
General Fund	50.1	45.5	52.9	46.3	40.1	Includes reserves for Group Benefits, Insurance, Unrestricted
Trusts and Endowments	9	8.1	9.0	8.3	9.5	Should remain level, any growth would be Kairos endowment
Charitable Annuities	11.3	19.1	19.8	20.4	20.3	Decline over time as annuities mature
Property & Building Funds	26.6	28.9	32.6	27.8	37.5	Decreases due to funding commitments (Faithful Footprints, UPRC)
Total:	97.0	101.6	114.3	102.8	107	
United Property Resource Corporation	8.1	9.8	10.7	10.1	3	
Captive Insurance	3	3				
Adjusted Total	108.1	114.4	125.0	112.9	110.4	

There are aggressive plans to eliminate operational deficits in the next few years, but COVID-19 pandemic impacts have created further uncertainty around future cash flows and the potential need to draw down investments. The Committee receives regular updates on operational developments and has accordingly prioritize the liquidity needs of the portfolio.

History

The Investment Committee was formed in 2010 by the Permanent Committee on Finance (precursor to Finance Advisory Committee) to focus greater time and expertise on asset management. Prior to this, the one external investment manager, Fiera Capital, reported directly to the Permanent Committee on Finance. During the initial years, the Committee met extensively to establish policies, objectives and provide more hands-on oversight of the Treasury Funds. Key documents created included the Terms of Reference for the Investment Committee and the Investment Policy Statement, which are now reviewed annually. In 2012, the first formal review of Fiera Capital was done, updated in 2016 and the most recent review done in May 2022. These formal reviews included an external investment consultant advisor, Mercer. A second major initiative has been the ongoing development of the Responsible Investing policies and decision-making structure for the Treasury Funds.

Membership

The Investment Committee has comprised the following people during 2023:

	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Appointed As</u>	<u>City</u>
Tim Bradshaw (Chair)	Sept 2014	Member-at-large	Toronto
Dan Markovich	Feb 2016	Member at large	Brockville
Jeff Horbal	June 2017	Member at large	Toronto
Michelle de Cordova	September 2021	Member at large	Bowen Island, BC
Andrew Bedeau	December 2021	Member at large	Mississauga
Daisy Xu	November 2022	Member at large	Vaughan

Meetings during 2023

Investment committee recruiting and renewal continues. Tim Bradshaw completed his maximum term 2023 having served so capably as committee chair since 2017. Andrew Bedeau has agreed to chair going forward. Investment committee members are recruited as subject matter experts and jointly recommended to the General Council Executive for appointment by the Finance Advisory and Nomination Committees. Investment Committee meetings are attended by members of the United Church staff including Erik Mathiesen, Harry Li, and Mary Worrall. Staff members are not voting members, but provide support and information to the Investment Committee.

The Investment Committee seeks to meet at a minimum of four (4) times per year. The Committee maintains a workplan and schedule to ensure all duties are carried out. Face to face meetings are minimized as a cost saving measure and also to reduce demands on volunteer time. In 2023, it met by Zoom on the following dates: March 10th, May 15th, August 23rd and in person on December 14th, with email updates to the committee members between meetings.

Individual members may attend institutional investor events throughout the year representing the Church (Responsible Investment Association, UNPRI, SHARE etc.). Meetings are scheduled normally within 6 weeks of quarter end (for investment performance reporting) and if possible, a week prior to the meetings for the Finance Advisory Committee.

Governance

The Investment Committee has established a standing timetable for reviewing various governance matters each year. All material changes to governance documents are submitted to the Finance Advisory Committee for approval.

Treasury Fund Assets

The next table summarizes investment holdings by investment manager/mandate. The Investment Committee does not manage the real estate assets of the church, nor a legacy bond portfolio that backs charitable annuities.

Investment Holdings at Dec. 31, 2023

	2023	2022	(million)
Fiera Core Funds	67.79	73.4	Primary asset manager, diversified mandate (Incl. RBC IS & IMA)
Segregated Bonds (Annuities)	11.30	11.4	Backs charitable annuities (\$4.2M self managed bonds/\$7.1M held by Fiera)
NEI Leaders Fund	8.2	9.4	"Green" Asset Allocation
Greenchip	7.6	5.4	"Green" Asset Allocation
OikoCredit	1	1	3rd world microlending, increased to \$1 million in Jan 2017
Designated Investments	1.1	1	
Captive Insurance	3	3	
UPRC	8.1	9.8	Investment in United Property Resource Corporation
Total:	108.1	114.4	

GIC Segregated Funds	12.2		GIC backing Captive Insurance - cash collateral
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A component of Treasury Fund assets is allocated to “green investments”. As at December 31, 2023, \$8.2 million is allocated to the NEI Leaders Fund, managed by Impax Asset Management, an international institutional asset manager with specialist expertise focused on sustainable development goals, resource efficiency and environmental markets. This fund incurred a gain of 16.06% for the year 2023. In December 2017, \$1 million was invested in the Greenchip Global Equity Fund, managed by Greenchip Financial, a Canadian domiciled firm investing in sustainable “blue chip” businesses operating in the green economy throughout the globe (NOTE that Greenchip Financial was purchased in 2020 by Mackenzie Investments; and the main principals remain in place managing the portfolio at Greenchip). This has now been increased into a core holding. The Greenchip fund holding is \$7.6 million at December 31, 2023 with a one-year return of (1.62) %. Multiyear return of 18.10%

Decisions on the allocation of Treasury Funds to these strategies are at the discretion of the Investment Committee. These non-Fiera holdings are added to Fiera balances to ensure compliance with overall asset allocation ranges allowed by our investment policy. A target weighting of these thematic funds was set at 15% in 2022.

Responsible Investing Activities

We strongly believe that environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors can affect investment risk and return and are relevant to the overall mission of our church. Our approach to responsible investing continues to shape our investment program in a positive way. The United Church of Canada is considered a leader in this field in the Canadian faith sector. We apply negative screens to our direct investments and explicitly measure ESG scores in our international and U.S. pooled fund holdings. The portfolio has been fossil fuel free since 2015, based on a directive from the General Council that year. Proxy voting and shareholder engagement is led by our external service provider, SHARE. SHARE is an organization that specializes in this activity and represents various denominations and institutional investors across Canada. Our voting record for each company's annual proxy circular is posted on The United Church Commons website for any interested party to review.

The United Nations PRI was established in 2006 and is a voluntary set of principles for institutional investors throughout the world. It commits members to ESG principles, reporting on activity, and promoting the principles of responsible investing to a broader audience. The United Church was the first Canadian religious asset owner to sign on. Fiera Capital, Impax and Mackenzie are all signatories and have established reporting systems that will be able to assist The United Church.

In 2023, a fulsome review of our responsible investment materials, commitments and practices was completed. This identified opportunities to refine our documentation and, in particular, update our documentation and monitoring. Our website materials will be updated in 2024 to be more accessible and informative. We continue our active shareholder engagement and continue to push our investment managers to up their game in this space. In 2023, we sought to co-file two shareholder initiatives that were both subsequently withdrawn when companies agreed to take the requested action. We continue to sign on to various high profile investor statements including:

- Climate Engagement Canada
- <https://climateengagement.ca/>
- Canadian Investor Statement on Climate Change
- <https://www.riacanada.ca/news/canadian-investors-call-for-increased-climate-accountability-in-corporate-sector/>
- Powering Past Coal Alliance for COP26
- <https://www.poweringpastcoal.org/>
- Canadian Investor Statement on diversity, equity and inclusion.
<https://www.riacanada.ca/investor-statement-diversity-inclusion/>
- Global Investor Statement in Support of an Effective, Fair and Global Response to Covid-19
<https://accesstomedicinefoundation.org/news/investors-issue-urgent-call-for-fair-and-equitable-global-response-to-covid-19>

Service Providers and Expenses

The Treasury Fund benefits from a very low investment manager fee structure arising from our long-term relationship with Fiera and its predecessors. The fact that other United Church funds also are Fiera clients helps to keep the fees low. Typical fees for a fund of our size would be more than double what we currently pay.

The United Church of Canada
Treasury Investment Committee

Summary of Expenses at December 31, 2023

Description	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fiera Investment Manager Fees	171,869	178,971	183,400	164,497	154,422
RBC Investor Services (Custodian)	9,238	6,834	7,638	11,054	11,003
NEI Investment Manager Fees	52,633	59,125	76,961	69,363	62,316
Mackenzie Investment - Greenchip Fund Fees	8,397	10,589	31,455	38,409	56,659
Investment Fee Recovery (Kairos)	(24,743)	(22,704)	(19,592)	(26,422)	(22,005)
SHARE Engagement and GIR Proxy Voting Services	11,808	10,995	12,310	14,848	11,334
Membership & Registration Fees (incl. RIA & UN PRI)	1,419	1,393	1,507	2,669	1,391
**Consultants Fees (Mercer)				22,347	
Meeting Expenses/Events	2,438	414	436	1,374	2,604
Total:	233,058	245,617	294,115	298,138	277,724
Investment assets (\$millions)	107.4	112.8	125.0	114.4	108.1
Total investment cost vs assets	0.22%	0.22%	0.24%	0.26%	0.26%

** No Mercer or MSCI expenses from 2018-2021 which lowered the total consultant fees

Priorities for 2024

In planning its agenda for 2024, the following are priorities for the Investment Committee.

1. Protecting the capital of the Treasury Funds in a volatile environment and planning for any drawdown of investments to support operational priorities. (Ongoing)
2. Continue transition of bond portfolio from longstanding short term focus.
3. Updating responsible investment documentation and website materials to ensure plans are in place for commitments made.
4. Focusing on select RI issues to optimize limited resources, but maintain The United Church of Canada's strong moral voice on various investment issues. (Ongoing)
5. Leveraging relationships and knowledge sharing with other complementary organizations to achieve RI objectives. (Ongoing)
6. Ensure clear succession planning at the Finance leadership level in The United Church and within the Investment Committee.

2023 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The United Church has seven financial assistance funds. The funds support ministry personnel, lay employees, and pensioners of the United Church during times of extraordinary financial hardship and personal or vocational assessment. A bursary fund assists the children of ministry personnel receiving minimum salary with post-secondary education. There is one fund to provide financial support for counselling to enhance the healing of those individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct in a United Church of Canada context. Finally, there are funds to help with sabbatical leaves, either for intentional interim ministers or by assisting communities of faith with the costs of visiting ministry personnel during a sabbatical.

HISTORY

For the last few years, the accountability report has been shared with the Executive of the General Council, as part of its responsibility for, “supervising the unified plan of finance, the Mission & Service fund, and all other funds for the mission of the United Church” (The Manual 2023, D.5.3.7.b).

STAFF REPORT

In the April 2021, the Executive of the General Council approved updates to the Financial Assistance policy document, including agreement that an annual accountability report would come to the General Council Executive reporting the number of applications for assistance approved annually, along with an update on the status of the Financial Assistance funds.

Applications between January 2023 and December 2023

Staff considered 33 applications from ministry personnel, lay employees, pensioners, spouses of pensioners, and survivors of sexual misconduct and supported 33 applications:

- 23 Compassionate Assistance Fund (totalling \$147,076 in grants and \$102,000 in loans)
- 2 Fund for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct (totalling \$13,263 in support from the fund this year, including for applicants from 2021 and 2022)
- 4 Personnel Emergency Fund (totalling \$81,917 in support from the fund this year, including for 1 applicant approved in 2022)
- 3 Interim Ministry Sabbatical Fund (totalling \$101,953.16 in support from the fund this year)
- 2 bursaries to children of ministry personnel from Torrance Bissell Bursary Fund (totalling \$1,268)

Staff considered four applications from pastoral charges and approved four applications:

- Five grants from Fund for Visiting Ministry Personnel during a Sabbatical (totalling \$9094.) Due to the COVID-19 pandemic delaying sabbatical plans, one grant was offered to a pastoral charge whose application was approved in 2020.

In 2023, we continued to receive a number of applications to the Compassionate Assistance Fund from Admission Ministers requesting vehicle loans, as they settle into their first pastoral relationships within the United Church. These loans are helpful because of the discrimination these ministers experience from Canadian financial institutions due to their immigration status.

While the Office of Vocation finds it challenging to predict the need for Personnel Emergency Fund support because we cannot forecast how many ministers will be placed on administrative leave or suspension within a year, in 2023 we had a much lower draw on the fund than we have in previous years. Applications to the other funds were consistent with the trends seen in previous years.

Status of Loans

As of December 31, 2023 there were 17 loans from the Compassionate Assistance Fund in the total principal amount of \$208,861.89 with a total amount still owing of \$137,140.84. Repayment on the funds occurs regularly with a total of \$4,500 being repaid monthly.

In 2023, two loan recipients completed their loan repayments on the total principal amount of \$10,600.

Fund balances at December 31, 2023:

For some funds, there is capital within the fund that is not available to use for support. In these cases, the balances shared are for the available funds.

Compassionate Assistance Fund	\$2,529,002	(Available funds)
Counseling Fund for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct	\$11,737	
Personnel Emergency Fund (PEF)	\$8,083	
Interim Ministry Sabbatical Leave Fund	\$258,076	
Ministry and Life Assessment (Vocational Assessment) Fund (Warren Estate Fund)	\$144,531	
Torrance Bissell Bursary Fund	\$5,028	(Available funds)
Visiting Ministry Personnel Fund	\$36,378	

The Compassionate Assistance Fund, the Ministry and Life Assessment Fund (Warren Estate), and the Torrance Bissell Bursary Fund reside in the United Church Foundation. Staff are grateful for the partnership with the Foundation in this work. The Compassionate Assistance Fund has been in existence for nearly as long as our denomination and has grown through gifts from generous donors for over 95 years. The Ministry and Life Assessment Fund and the Torrance Bissell Bursary Fund both originated through generous gifts to the United Church.

The Personnel Emergency Fund and Counselling Fund for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct receive a top-up from the General Council budget, of at least \$90,000 and \$25,000 annually.

The Interim Ministry Sabbatical Leave Fund is funded by contributions from communities of faith currently being served by an intentional interim minister. Currently these communities of faith contribute the equivalent of one week of salary to the fund.

After the Church in Mission Unit was no longer able to provide sabbatical grants to communities of faith, the Visiting Ministry Personnel Fund was founded using \$75,000 from GCO budgeted funds, which were originally used as the seed money for the beginning of The Interim Ministry Sabbatical Fund in 2008.

APPENDIX – OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS

Compassionate Assistance Fund

To provide financial assistance in the form of grants and/or loans to eligible applicants where the family income is insufficient to meet recognized basic living expenses due to extraordinary need. Active and retired ministry personnel as well as their dependants, as defined by the pension and group insurance plans of the church, are eligible to apply for assistance. Lay employees and members of the pension plan are also eligible to apply.

The fund also provides support and advocacy through financial assistance for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited ministry personnel (as defined by The Manual) who are experiencing difficulties in maintaining employment in the church because of their known or perceived sexual orientation.

Fund for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct

To help ministry personnel who are survivors of sexual misconduct to stay in active ministry while participating in therapy to deal with sexual abuse issues that are part of their history, and to enhance the healing of individuals who have experienced sexual abuse in The United Church of Canada context, as defined by the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy, by extending the ministry of the United Church to include financial contributions toward the cost of counselling or therapy. Applications can be from lay and non-United Church individuals.

Personnel Emergency Fund

Available to ministry personnel who qualify according to section J.6 (concerns about the effectiveness of ministry personnel) of The Manual. The fund provides salary support during administrative leave or suspension.

Interim Ministry Sabbatical Fund

Provides funding in order to cover the salaries and benefits of those intentional interim ministers taking sabbaticals who are not in receipt of a pension.

Ministry and Life Assessment (Vocational Assessment) Fund

Provides funding to members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers for a vocational assessment undertaken at their own initiative.

Torrance E. Bissell Bursary Fund

Provides a bursary grant for post-high school education for the dependent children, as defined by the church's pension and group insurance plans, of active members of the order of ministry and designated lay ministers in The United Church of Canada who receive minimum salary.

Fund for Visiting Ministry Personnel during a Sabbatical

Provides funding to assist pastoral charges that would be subject to undue financial difficulty in funding supply ministry during a sabbatical leave of ministry personnel and to encourage the vitality of ministry personnel who refrain from taking a sabbatical leave because of the financial difficulty of the pastoral charge.

THE UNITED PROPERTY RESOURCE CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: UPRC Board

Report

As part of the governance structure, the Executive of the General Council (GCE) is to receive periodic reports of UPRC's progress. An independent Board of Directors is responsible for governance. To fulfill the reporting responsibilities, the UPRC Board submits an accountability report to the GCE at its spring meeting and provides updates at other meetings if required. The Board trusts this information is useful and will be pleased to provide supplemental information anytime.

UPRC - Background

The UPRC is the primary point of contact for property matters and provides advisory services to communities of faith, regional councils and other entities within the United Church when requested. This assistance extends to helping these communities make prudent and faithful decisions regarding their real properties, whether it involves disposition, development, or various other strategies.

The UPRC has engaged over 268 communities of faith over the last three years, underscoring its commitment to supporting these communities in navigating property-related challenges. Recognizing the financial needs of many communities, the UPRC offers guidance on utilizing properties to generate necessary financial resources, including redevelopment or rental strategies.

As determined by the community of faith, when a property sale is deemed necessary, the UPRC often supports ensuring that the interests of the United Church are protected by reviewing the development/listing proposals, collaborating on legal reviews of purchase and sale agreements, and facilitating independent studies and valuations. UPRC is focused on providing support and guidance to communities of faith navigating difficult property decisions.

UPRC fosters a belief that property within the church can be considered a collective portfolio. As part of a larger portfolio, the UPRC acknowledges that each individual property may not fully maximize its potential benefits alone. However, when viewed collectively, these properties can have a more significant impact on their neighbourhoods and society as a whole.

The UPRC envisions church properties not just as buildings but as potential community hubs. By repurposing them for ministry, social activities, or even leasing opportunities, they can foster a sense of belonging and support, continuing the legacy of the United Church. Additionally, generating revenue through strategic leasing or development ensures long-term financial resources to sustain ministry. This approach reflects a comprehensive understanding of property management, emphasizing financial considerations and the broader social and communal benefits that can be achieved through strategic planning and collaboration within the Church.

Regional Trusts

In collaboration with certain Regional Councils, the UPRC established the Regional Trusts approach to hold and manage surplus property within the United Church where the local community of faith has disbanded or amalgamated with another community of faith. These trusts aim to achieve long-term financial stability and stewardship for the common good.

Site suitability for the Regional Trusts is assessed in consultation with and approved by the Regional Councils, considering factors such as revenue generation potential, future development prospects, and strategic value for ministry within the Church.

Transferring properties to the Regional Trusts is also considered when a faith community seeks to establish a non-profit organization. Rather than transferring the title of the property directly to the non-profit, it is transferred to the trust with a lease agreement back to the non-profit. If there is an active community of faith, a provision is included to ensure ongoing space for ministry activity. This preserves the property's long-term legacy while providing space and access to funding for new initiatives.

The UPRC's professional property management services focus on optimizing rental revenue, managing capital budgets to address maintenance and repair needs, and ensuring space availability for local communities and the ministry of the United Church. Tenants often include diverse groups such as other faith communities, community organizations, childcare facilities, youth groups, food security programs, and more, reflecting the Church's commitment to serving broader community needs.

Four Regional Trusts have been created: Eastern Ontario Outaouais, Eastern Central Ontario, Shining Waters, Horseshoe Falls and United Church General Council. Regional Trusts are being established for Western Ontario Waterways and Antler River Watershed, and pending approval of their respective governing bodies. Regional Trusts will be created for Prairie to Pine, Northern Spirit and Nakonhaka.

Overall, the UPRC's holistic approach to property management balances financial considerations with social and communal benefits, ensuring the preservation of the United Church's legacy while facilitating new ministry opportunities for future generations in accordance with the UCC's Strategic Plan.

Legacy Housing Corporations

The UPRC recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing legacy housing initiatives built by United Church communities of faith in the 1980s and 1990s. Through collaboration with these housing corporations, the UPRC aims to consolidate projects under a unified governance and management structure. There is a significant opportunity to support existing boards and provide professional management and governance support to these housing corporations.

Consolidation offers several benefits, including:

Preservation of United Church Legacy: By consolidating legacy housing projects, the UPRC ensures that the United Church congregations that built them are upheld.

Maintenance of Deep Affordability: Consolidation enables the UPRC to maintain existing deeply affordable units at their current affordability levels providing access to safe and affordable housing options.

Ensuring Respectable Repair and Maintenance: Centralizing management under a single structure allows for a more efficient allocation of resources, ensuring that properties receive the necessary repairs and maintenance.

Supporting Board Transitions: Many volunteer boards require support as communities of faith struggle to appoint members or the boards can no longer attract board members with the necessary skills to ensure the smooth governance and management of the housing corporations. The UPRC can help facilitate a smooth transition by providing the necessary expertise and capacity.

Through strategic governance and management, the UPRC aims to ensure that these housing projects continue to serve their intended purpose while meeting the evolving needs of residents and communities.

Background – Kindred Works

Kindred Works is an affiliate of the UPRC and operates as a separate and distinct entity with a specific focus on developing and managing rental housing projects. It is anticipated that Kindred Works will be 49.9% employee-owned. Its creation represents a strategic initiative to reimagine certain church and other urban infill properties to address pressing social issues while generating sustainable financial returns, delivering on the United Church's bold commitment to deliver 5,000 new affordable housing units by 2037.

Kindred Works is tackling the housing crisis and climate change because it is necessary and doing it profitably to meet the scale of the challenge. Building rental housing for people and planet by building beautiful, sustainable, desirable homes and shared spaces will help foster thriving neighbourhoods for generations to come. The goal is that one-third of units constructed will meet core housing needs in each local community while striving to be carbon neutral by 2030, creating equitable and climate-safe solutions to the housing crisis.

By developing rental housing, Kindred Works offers a scalable alternative solution for communities of faith and regional councils who may have considered selling their property to a private developer. Instead of divesting assets, they can partner with Kindred Works to repurpose underutilized or surplus sites to benefit the community and the environment while generating on-going annual income and capital growth.

At the core of Kindred Works' model is the mixed-income approach, which seeks to create housing that is not only financially viable but also environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. By providing rental units at various price points, Kindred Works contributes to diversifying housing options and promotes social equity within communities. Kindred Works has established specific targets to address core housing needs and carbon reduction.

Core Housing Need: Create housing opportunities for low, moderate, and median-income households, with each property targeting 20% -30 % of housing units below market rent to meet the Core Housing Need (CHN) of the local community. Statistics Canada defines households experiencing CHN as those that spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are housed in units of unsuitable type (insufficient bedrooms to accommodate household members) or are housed in units in disrepair. The data is collected and reported on a census district basis.

Carbon Neutrality: minimize the carbon footprint of its projects by targeting low carbon emissions (specifically targeting eliminating onsite carbon emissions from operations and significant reductions in embodied carbon emissions through construction). The goal is to achieve carbon neutrality through sustainable design, construction and operational practices by 2030, with the following goals for new construction:

- Scope 1: 100% reduction 0 kgCO₂e/m²yr – on-site GHG emissions (Scope 1),
- Scope 2: 85% reduction 5 kgCO₂e/m²yr – in-direct GHG emissions (Scope 2)
- Scope 3: 80% reduction 100 kgCO₂e/m² – embodied carbon intensity (Scope 3)

This environmental strategy eliminates 100% of the carbon emissions we directly control (on-site generation of carbon emissions) and the greatest possible reduction for emissions we do not directly control (electrical grid emissions and embodied carbon in construction materials and processes). To minimize grid emissions, projects are designed to accommodate solar panels to generate clean electricity for projects. To mitigate embodied carbon, careful material selections are made to choose low-embodied carbon materials, and advocacy work is done to encourage the construction industry to continue to reduce carbon intensity.

Debt financing through initiatives such as the National Housing Strategy (NHS) allows Kindred Works to finance housing developments in a manner that provides both risk-adjusted financial returns and positive social outcomes. NHS offers various financial incentives, such as lower interest rates and risk mitigation, creating opportunities for socially impactful investments that align with Kindred Works' stated objectives.

Kindred Works' initial Impact Report can be found at: [Impact Report](#). Many more metrics are worthy of measurement; more will be added over time as progress is made.

In March of 2024, Kindred Works was named one of Fast Company's World's Most Innovative Companies, with the #2 standing in the Urban Development and Sustainability category.

In April of 2024, Kindred Works received its B-Corp certification. This certification demonstrates Kindred Works' commitment to making business a force for good and playing a role in transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet.

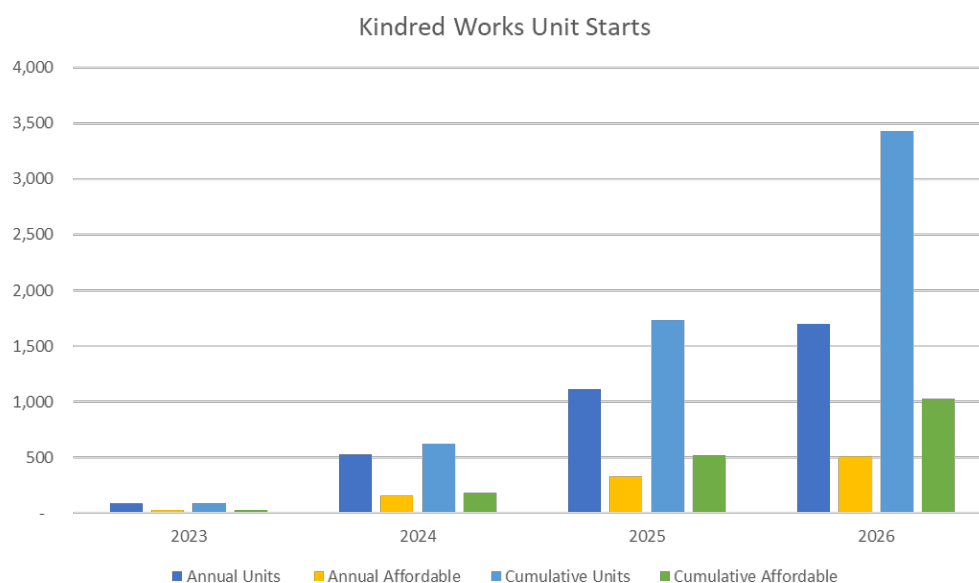
Kindred Works – Project Update

Sites that are suitable for development by Kindred Works require the necessary scale and financial viability for development. Projects progressing through municipal approval typically meet CMHC's financial viability calculator, ensuring feasibility. These sites typically consist of more than 50 units in primary and secondary markets with rents for new construction that generate the necessary cash flow to sustain the project and generate the required risk-adjusted return. However, rising interest rates and construction costs have further limited the number of viable projects. As a result, there's a heightened emphasis on focusing development efforts on primary markets where the potential for financial viability is greater. Given the current market conditions, this ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, and projects have the best chance of success.

Kindred Works has a strong active pipeline in various stages of pre-development, pre-construction, and construction representing:

- 23 projects with an average of 124 units per project
- 3,500 units are targeted to be completed or under construction by 2026 representing over 1,000 units below-market
- \$2.2B in estimated project costs requiring an estimated \$200M in equity and \$2B in debt financing

The following chart identifies the build-up of Kindred Works' current pipeline to a cumulative portfolio of income-generating rental housing.

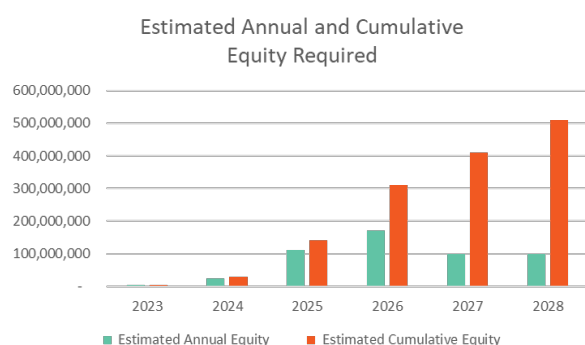


In 2024, seven projects will be construction-ready representing approximately 600 housing units. Two projects are under construction; two are in the pre-construction phase, with construction expected to begin in the third quarter of 2024. Three projects are pending final CMHC financing approval.

Project			Target Units	Status
Regent Park	175 Oxford St	Orillia	48	Under construction
St. James, Hamilton	308 Parkside Dr	Hamilton	44	Under construction
Portland	50 Newport Cres	Saint John	95	Pending CMHC
Westminster- SC	180 Queenstown St	St. Catharine's	44	Pre-Construction
Green Cedar	3385 Lawrence Ave E	Toronto	155	Pre-Construction
WhiteOaks	1901 Jalna Blvd	London	113	Pending CMHC
Trinity	20 1st Ave	Uxbridge	95	Pending CMHC
			594	

Equity investment is crucial for securing financing and ensuring the successful completion of the projects. The surplus land contribution by communities of faith or regional councils is important (where possible, a severance is obtained, and only the surplus parcel is transferred).

It is estimated that Kindred Works will need to start construction on approximately 1,100 units annually by 2026 to meet the 5,000 affordable unit commitment of the United Church, requiring an estimated \$80M to \$100M of equity annually. This is partly a result of the current and expected continued interest rate environment above 3% for the 10-year government of Canada bond and requirements of NHS/CMHC financing requirements. The equity also demonstrates financial capacity to the project lenders, particularly under NHS/CMHC.



In 2023, Kindred Works conducted market-sounding and explored opportunities to raise sufficient equity. It was determined that a pooled open-ended fund model would align with the impact values of Kindred Works and the long-term ownership. Based on market requirements and to ensure a fiduciary duty to third-party investors, the fund will be separate and distinct from the United Church and Kindred Works, with independent governance, influence, and

control. This has led to the creation of Heartwood Trust (the Trust). Independent Trustees will govern the Trust. In addition, the Board has agreed that certain members of the senior leadership of Kindred Works will have a separate and independent role with the Trust from their role at Kindred Works, including but not limited to serving as trustees. The Trust will have project-level decision-making and liquidity consistent with a financial partner. The Trust's financial returns will be consistent with those of land investors. It is also anticipated that other institutional financial partners will be sought over time as growth drives an increased requirement for additional equity.

Operational and Financial Update

The United Church provided the initial capitalization to the UPRC through a \$5M equity (Initial Equity) investment and a \$5M loan (the Initial Loan). The UPRC is structured as a for-profit business entity with the intention of being self-sustaining. The financial resources and profit are earned from the development and property management fees. Generating sustainable revenue ensures long-term viability and is expected to provide the United Church with an annual distribution in future.

On a consolidated basis, in 2023, the UPRC had a net loss of \$1M as the business remains in the growth phase. This is anticipated to be the last year with an operating loss as the business stabilized with projects under construction. It is anticipated that at the end of 2024, the UPRC will begin to repay the accrued interest on the Initial Loan.

Board of Director Changes

In 2023, Tim Laronde, was added to the Board of Directors. Tim has a proven track record in commercial banking, construction, and community development. David Constable and Tim Blair were also added to the Board of Directors. There have been no other changes to the Board.

Summary

The UPRC's accountability report highlights its steadfast commitment to property stewardship and sustainable development within the United Church community. Through collaboration with Regional Councils, faith communities, and strategic partners like Kindred Works, the UPRC focuses on a holistic approach that balances financial considerations with social and communal benefits; the UPRC is ensuring the preservation of the Church's legacy while creating opportunities for new ministries.

Looking ahead, Kindred Works remains focused on fulfilling United Church's bold commitment to deliver 5,000 new affordable housing units by 2037. With a robust project pipeline and strategic partnerships in place, including Heartwood Trust, the business is well-positioned to continue its impactful contributions to society and the Church's mission for generations to come.

The UPRC will continue to work closely with regional councils and general council leadership to support the strategic plan. Leveraging the creation of regional trusts provides a sustainable

solution for managing surplus properties and ensuring their long-term value for future generations.

FAITHFUL FOOTPRINTS REPORT

Origin: Faith & the Common Good (Michelle Singh)

April 22, 2024

Background

The Faithful Footprints program was launched in March 2018 when the essential financial, communication, support tools and governance foundations necessary for implementing the five-year program were put into place.

2019 to 2020 focused on continuing to engage UCC communities of faith in climate action via the continued promotion and delivery of the Faithful Footprints grant program, improved UCC outreach and integration of Faithful Footprints into church wide climate action and faith building stewardship and the piloting of two regional support centres to further support and assist UCC communities of faith to live their creation care commitments. The results of this phase were highlighted in the first United Church of Canada's 2019-2020 Sustainability Report, [Living With Respect In Creation](#).

Based on learnings from the previous three years, in 2021-2022 we focussed on expanding communications resources, streamlining the grant application process, upgrading our tools, providing building audits and certifications as well as continuing outreach to communities of faith through webinars, presentations and more. While our results were hindered by the pandemic, we still achieved substantial recognition for the program within UCC which meant a significant increase in applications once we started coming out of the pandemic. Highlights of these two years can be found in the United Church of Canada's 2021-2022 Sustainability Report, [Deepening Climate Integrity](#). UCCs Communications team distributed a media release for this report that received significant attention outside of Church circles.

High-level goals

At our annual Governance meetings, we continue to refine our goals for the program.

Goal 1: Reduce emissions 80% reduction by 2030

Goal 2: Engage 550 United Church communities of faith by end of 2024; 1,000 by end of 2030

Goal 3: Establish a national grant program for reducing financial barriers to building efficiency work

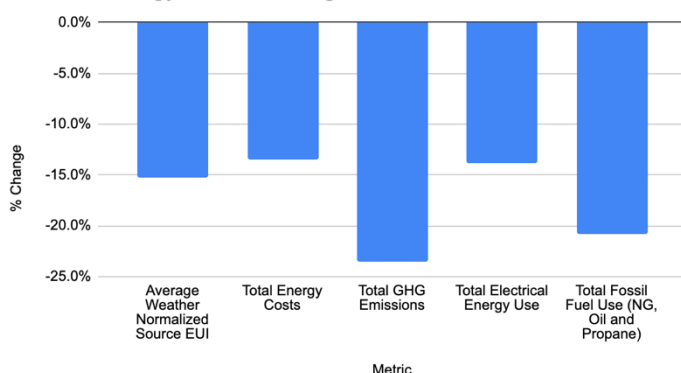
Goal 4: Establish regular communication of high-level vision, project progress, opportunities and learnings with UCC staff and integrate advice and learnings from the exchange to strengthen efforts

Goal 5: Regular reporting to track progress, amplify the stories of congregations, uncover barriers and connect the dots with other UCC Creation Care actions

Goal 1: Reduce emissions 80% reduction by 2030

Faithful Footprints is one of the key programs contributing to The United Church of Canada's aspirational goal of 80% emissions reduction by 2030.

Carbon, Energy & Cost Savings



By December 2023, 113 communities of faith, representing 1,856,286 sq. ft. of property, fully completed the program by submitting their final energy data.

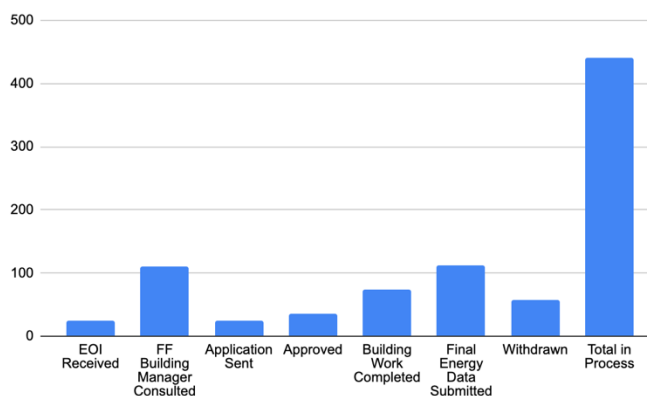
109 CoFs represent a 23.5% reduction in emissions. They also achieved a 13.5% reduction in energy costs and a 20.8% reduction in fossil fuel use. (Four CoFs had "outlier" data that

couldn't be confirmed such as sharing a natural gas metre with an apartment building so they were not included in these statistics.)

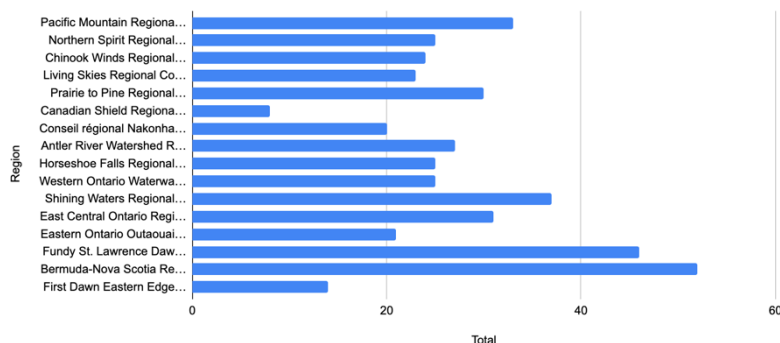
Goal 2: Engage 550 United Church communities of faith by end of 2024; 1,000 by end of 2030

Faithful Footprints original goal was to engage 500 communities of faith by 2025. Due to the success of the program, particularly post Covid, we revised the goal to 550 by the end of 2024. At the end of 2023, we had already engaged 441 communities of faith.

The Faithful Footprints program has four Regional Support Centres (RSC) – Atlantic, Central, Prairies and Western – to support delivery through outreach and engagement, project assistance and relationship building. Following are a few highlights from 2023.



Engagement by Region



Atlantic – Ecology Action Centre

- Collaborated with the Climate Motivator Youth Program and Eco Justice Working Group.
- Met with St. John's United in Cape Breton to learn about program participation barriers for rural communities. This contributed to the launch of new program tools in 2023 (more below).
- Referred congregations to Efficiency Nova Scotia's Affordable Multi-Family Housing Program which provides higher rebates for churches that support their community food banks and warming centres.
- Worked closely with government and utility partners to provide congregations with current knowledge regarding programs, incentives and grants.
- Worked with Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council and United Church Extension Board to pilot free energy audits in NS.
- Applied for and received a grant from Government of Nova Scotia's Low Carbon Communities to do energy audits for faith buildings in 2024. Includes training by Stephen Collette for NS energy auditors and is available to at least 30 diverse faith communities.
- Hosted InterSpirit Roundtable on Climate in September at Tatamagouche Centre with Mi'kmaw Elder and representatives from UCC East, Ummah Mosque, Atlantic Quakers, Shambala Center, EcoJustice Committee, Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax, Anglican Diocese, Rabbi David Ellis, Jewish Community member at large and the Catholic Diocese. The group formed an InterSpirit Climate Network that will meet three times per year, serve as an advisory group and work together on climate change mitigation.

Prairies – Purpose Construction

- [Transcona Memorial United Church](#) in Winnipeg was able to leverage their \$30,000 Faithful Footprints grant to acquire \$480,000 in federal funding for an extensive building renovation to further reduce the church's environmental footprint.
- In-person outreach has been key to this region. Webinars early in the year attracted less than 10 participants however, by the end of 2023 webinar participation tripled.
- Presented to faith based and faith adjacent groups who were interested in learning about Faithful Footprints, climate justice and the model in general; including Jubilee Foundation, a social finance group started by several faith-based communities.
- Collaborating with an advisory council focussed on creating an interfaith municipal lobby to support the implementation of the Community Energy Investment Roadmap – Net Zero Strategy for Winnipeg.

Western – Newo Global Energy

- Piloted an Energy-Efficiency Expertise program for rural outreach. A brief report outlining opportunities for energy savings and recommendation for prioritization was submitted to nine communities of faith.
- Newo produced a [video](#) featuring a pilot solar installation on Bissell Centre financed by SPICE (Solar Power Investment Cooperative). This investment model has the potential to help congregations and non-profits across Alberta reduce emissions and free up operating expenses to do more work in the community.

Goal 3: Establish a national grant program for reducing financial barriers to building efficiency work

The Faithful Footprints grant provides a maximum of \$20,000 for energy efficiency-related projects. For applicants that opt to include decarbonization measures (e.g. physical removal of a fuel-burning appliance and its replacement with an electric counterpart), an additional amount of \$10,000 becomes available, augmenting the initial \$20,000 grant to \$30,000.

In the following graphs, the Amount Requested represents the Faithful Footprints grants while Total Project Costs reflects the additional funding communities of faith accessed during the project. At the end of 2023, \$5,412,439 was requested by 222 projects while the total project cost was \$30,225,281.

\$2,798,932 was requested by the 113 projects who submitted their final energy data while the total project cost was \$6,921,690.

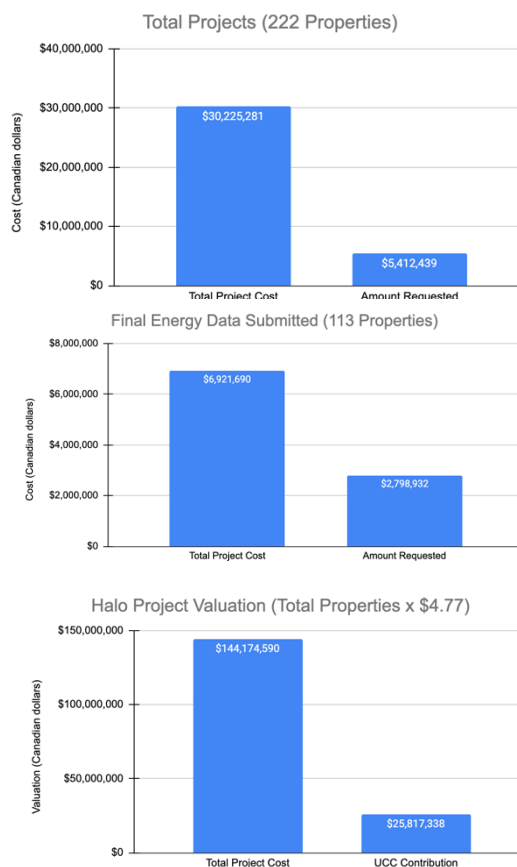
In order to determine the impact of the Faithful Footprints program on the wider community, we use the Halo Canada Project Valuation which looks at how religious congregations act as local economic catalysts through providing space, volunteerism, family support, services to seniors and youth, in-kind support and more. For every dollar spent, the surrounding neighbourhood receives about \$4.77 in social benefit.

The Faithful Footprints grants are relieving financial-anxiety of building repairs and replacements so that CoFs can explore how the greening of their building increases the resources available for mission and programming.

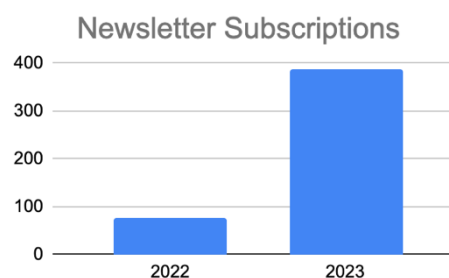
Goal 4: Establish regular communication of high-level vision, project progress, opportunities and learnings with UCC staff and integrate advice and learnings from the exchange to strengthen efforts

Faithful Footprints has multiple communication touch points starting with an annual presentation to a Governance body facilitated by Erik Mathiesen.

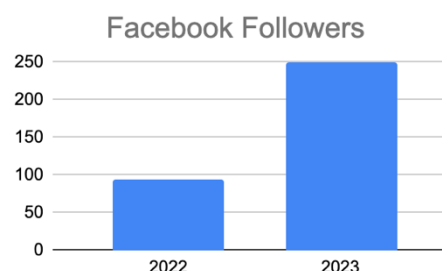
We started working more closely with Lori Neale, Climate Activities Lead, and team to ensure that Faithful Footprints became more integrated with UCC strategic and communications plans. This evolved into monthly promotions meetings to review quarterly Key Results that includes the FF team and UCC staff. Faithful Footprints is now regularly featured in E-ssentials, Concern for Climate Justice and various Regional newsletters.



In 2023, we continued to refine our communications tools and deliverables for the program including a monthly newsletter, 7 climate action blogs, 13 project case studies, regular social media posts as well as presentations to regional councils, individual churches and climate and justice committees. Nationally, we presented at the National Trust of Canada conference in Ottawa and internationally at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago.



We tested social media channels and learned that UCC has a highly active and engaged Facebook community where we maintain an approximate reach of 4,000 people per month.



Retrofit Tours

Faithful Footprints Retrofit Tours are in-person events hosted by past and current Faithful Footprints program participants. The tours are opportunities for communities of faith to celebrate their building upgrades and a chance for others to get a closer look at the renovations. In 2023, 4 congregations in Ontario and 1 in Nova Scotia led tours during Together For the Love of Creation's Earth Week celebrations.

Goal 5: Regular reporting to track progress, amplify the stories of congregations, uncover barriers and connect the dots with other UCC Creation Care actions

Grant Management Tools

We have several tools to track progress that are accessible to the Faithful Footprints delivery team and UCC staff. These tools help to improve awareness of neighbouring Faithful Footprints participants and we have seen participants who have completed projects supporting CoFs who are thinking about or just beginning the process.

The [National Grant Management Database](#) provides detailed information concerning every community of faith within the program. Through the database, users gain an understanding of program engagement nationally and by region. Users can access regional information to support their communities in achieving their goals and celebrate their successes. Users are encouraged to motivate program participants to engage with other United Church of Canada climate work. The data in this database is live and constantly fluctuating.

Faithful Footprints maps were produced in collaboration with Sharon Buttrey and updated on a bi-annual basis. The maps include approved projects, those who have completed their building work and those who have submitted their final energy data one year after completion of the building work.

The [Grants](#) map includes a brief description of a property's project and its reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, electricity usage, fossil fuel use and energy costs.

The [Energy Data](#) map allows users to explore the energy data of finished projects from the program. Users can compare the baseline and current datasets to view the changes and significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, electricity usage, fossil fuel use, energy costs and energy use intensity from completed projects.

Regional Climate (Justice) Roundtables

We initiated the roundtables after learning that there was a strong desire for more collaboration across regions. All but five regional councils have been represented at the roundtables. In 2023, we hosted two roundtables for regional staff in collaboration with Lori Neale (for a total of five since 2021).

Initially, participants were climate justice ministers however, over time participation expanded to include some congregational support staff. The roundtables have been instrumental in providing feedback that allows us to continuously improve our tools and resources. It has also helped us to understand the unique needs of the regions; for example, some regions prioritize energy efficiency while others focus on climate justice. This allows Faithful Footprints Regional Support Centres (RSC) to be proactive in the approach they use in the region.

The success of the roundtables led us to invite regional communications staff to a similar event to learn about the Faithful Footprints program and UCCs participation in For the Love of Creation.

Behavioural Covenant

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 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.

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 is designed to guide relationship of members of national committees. It is grounded in relationship, and is not designed to be punitive.

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 practicing 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 GCE:

- **Adopt the attached “Behavioural Covenant for National Committee Members” as a framework for all national committees, 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 national committee.

There would be no financial cost for implementing the Behavioural Covenant. Some minimal staff time would be engaged in distributing and educating about the covenant. There is, however, recognized emotional labour and time engaged by staff in drafting this 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 all 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
- Dispute Resolution 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 then created, which consisted of one member of the Anti-Racism Working Group (Ibi Chuan), 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.

When the first draft of the covenant was reviewed by the GCE in November 2023, there was strong affirmation of the overall work, and also some slight suggested changes in wording. The GCE suggested that there be consultation with additional committees and groups in the following months in case there were additional suggested wording changes, and then to bring a revised proposal back to a subsequent GCE meeting. Between November 2023 and April 2024, there were a number of consultations and conversations held with groups from across the Indigenous and non-Indigenous church, as well as a consultation with national committee chairs and related staff. All of their feedback was incorporated into an updated and revised draft of the covenant.

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

Background, Context, 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.

The Behavioural Covenant helps to provide safer space and a framework for understanding for and deeper dialogue and co-creating intercultural community. It also offers additional guidelines for how committee members can be held accountable for and increase their effectiveness through their behaviours on committees. The covenant is not designed to be punitive, but rather is based on relationships and accountabilities to 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

What is a covenant? A covenant is a relationship agreement.

Theologically, the understanding of covenant in scripture is expressed in God's relationship with creation. In the story of Noah, 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.

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. 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.

Mohawk peoples offer the teaching "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 all of us of our commitment to a deeper spiritual relationship with one another.

The United Church Crest holds the 4 colours of the medicine wheel. These colours symbolize the many teachings of how Indigenous peoples relate to one another and with the world.

From Indigenous teachings, we 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.

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).

THE BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT

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 and/or the Seven Sacred Teachings 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 the tools to find resolution when conflict arises
- have access to Equity Support Team member(s) and/or the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff
- receive thanks and appreciations 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 are each accountable.

As a national committee member, you are accountable for:

- applying the Seven Sacred Teachings and/or Holy Manners in your interactions with others
- not discriminating, and intentionally not engaging in deculturation or in words or behaviours that are—or can be perceived as—racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, discriminatory, or exclusionary in any way
- aiming to apply the learnings from the educational experiences on equity, diversity, and anti-oppression to the ongoing work of your committee

- remembering that everyone has a different intersection of their lived experience and lived identity
- showing up for meetings having engaged with preparatory materials and being willing to participate fully in the meeting's processes
- being aware of one's duties, the mandate of the group, and policies related to expectations of membership
- fulfilling your duties and expectations, in relation to the committee's terms of reference
- being engaged in conversation if there are concerns that one's duties or expectations are not being fulfilled
- being sensitive to differences in communications styles and preferences, including neurodiversity
- being attentive to exclusions, and the multiple ways in which people feel excluded
- notifying staff resource people or the chairperson(s) of the committee, in advance, if one is not able to attend a meeting
- maintaining confidentiality of what is discussed
- being aware of any conflicts of interest that you may have, being open to the identification of perceived conflicts of interest by others —and being willing, if necessary, to remove oneself from a particular conversation or from the committee
- aiming to participate fully: as much as possible, come to meetings with the intent of being “all there” and “fully present”
- seeking training, clarification, and advice as needed
- striving for accuracy and quality to meet agreed-upon expectations
- sharing constructively for the good of the whole
- understanding 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
- responding to processes in order to work diligently
- being aware of and upholding The United Church of Canada policies and procedures on Sexual Misconduct; Conflict of Interest; Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Response; Dispute Resolution; 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:

- the committee member 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 are conflicts between 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.

What if the covenant is broken?

If a member feels that this covenant has been broken, they shall first consult with the Chairperson of the committee to seek a resolution. If the offending person is the committee Chairperson, the member should consult the General Secretary.

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's Signed Name	Date
_____	_____
Chairperson's Signed Name	Date
_____	_____
Committee Member's Signed Name	Date
_____	_____
Committee Member's Signed Name	Date

Committee Member’s Signed Name	Date
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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

A note about Indigenous teachings: some of the Indigenous teachings used in this covenant are of those nations surrounding Toronto, the Iroquois and Anishnawbe nations. United Church committee members are encouraged to seek guidance and teachings from the nations that surround them as teachings vary between Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Communities, and Nations.

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.

Consent Proposals

GS 83 EDITORIAL CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL*, 3.4.2 DECISIONS BY E-MAIL

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

Editorial changes have been proposed for section 3.4.2 Decisions by E-mail to enhance clarity. Specifically, the proposed revisions entail allowing either the chair or secretary to circulate a proposal via email, with responses directed back to the initiator of the email. Additionally, abstentions to decisions can now be noted, a feature that was previously unavailable.

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

The General Secretary recommends that General Council Executive approve the following editorial changes to *The Manual*:

3.4.2 Decisions by E-mail

At the discretion of the chair, decisions may be made between meetings by e-mail voting in circumstances the chair considers to be **urgent and** exceptional. A congregation may not make a decision by e-mail to appoint, remove, or accept the resignation of trustees. (2023)

E-mail voting may be conducted only if every member of the voting body has already provided the voting body with an e-mail address. ~~that ensures confidentiality.~~

~~In the case of a decision to approve minutes, the draft minutes must be circulated to members and an opportunity for members to offer corrections at least one week before the vote by email is initiated. — (2021)~~

~~At the direction of the chair, t~~The **chair or** secretary circulates a proposed decision and initiates a vote by e-mail on it. The email must contain

- a) the proposed decision and sufficient background to inform the other members of the voting body; and
- b) a specified time for replying to the e-mail, allowing for at least 48 hours from the time that the e-mail is circulated.

The e-mail must be circulated to all members of the voting body, with all members' e-mail addresses visible.

Members may ask questions of clarification and offer comments by e-mail, ensuring they are visible to all members.

Members must vote by e-mail by replying to the initiator of the email secretary. (2021)

Members must vote in the affirmative or negative without any conditions or may ask that their abstentions be noted.

A member may object to making this decision by e-mail, and if any two members so object, a meeting must be held in one of the other ways set out in the bylaws.

~~Members may vote before the deadline, and may change their votes up until that time.~~

If the number of votes cast is less than the minimum number of members required to be present for a meeting, the decision is not approved and deferred to a future meeting.

Following the deadline, the initiator of the email secretary must inform all members of the voting body of the voting results by e-mail.

The secretary must include the proposed decision and the outcome of the vote in the minutes of the next regular meeting of the voting body.

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

GS 84 EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE MANUAL, B.7.3 MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

Section B.7.3.1 of *The Manual* defines the criteria for membership on the governing body. Considering the trend of declining membership in communities of faith, it has become necessary to broaden exceptions for individuals who do not typically meet the standard criteria for membership on the governing body. Specifically, individuals who are not full members may be elected with prior approval from the regional council, and individuals in familial relationships with ministry personnel who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge may participate in the governing body under special circumstances, subject to prior approval from the regional council.

2. Why is this issue important?

Under *The Manual*, the General Council Executive is responsible for dealing with routine and emergency work of the General Council between meetings of the General Council. This would include approving modifications to *The Manual* in cases where language 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 editorial changes to *The Manual*:

B.7.3 Membership of the Governing Body

B.7.3.1 General

The governing body has the following members:

- a) the full members of the congregation elected by the congregation or pastoral charge;
- b) the members of the order of ministry who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- c) the designated lay ministers who have been recognized by the regional council and appointed to the pastoral charge;
- d) the pastoral charge supervisor, if there is no such member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister; and
- e) any other full members that the congregation or pastoral charge includes in the membership of its governing body. This may include full members who hold specific positions in the congregation or pastoral charge.

Exceptions: There ~~are two~~ ~~is one~~ exceptions to the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (e) above ~~for governing body members to be full members of the congregation:~~

- i. ~~People~~ Persons who are not full members may be elected in special circumstances ~~with prior approval of the regional council; and~~
- ii. ~~Persons in familial relationships with ministry personnel who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge may not be elected except in special circumstances with prior approval of the regional council.~~

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

N/A

GS 85 EDITORIAL CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL*, C.3.2 FULFILLMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

In certain instances, responsibilities assigned to the regional council as outlined in section C.2 of the Manual have inadvertently been delegated to staff, contrary to the original intent of that section. Consequently, proposed language seeks to clarify that decision-making responsibilities under section C.2 should not be delegated to staff unless specific policy articulates criteria for such delegation.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following editorial changes to *The Manual*:

C.3.2 Fulfillment of responsibilities ~~Committees and Other Bodies~~

a) The regional council may fulfill its responsibilities with the help of officers, committees, task groups, steering groups, teams, and other bodies, as determined by the regional council.

b) The regional council does not have the authority to delegate to its staff decision-making with respect to its responsibilities under C.2 unless there is policy articulating the criteria for the decision. ~~must designate a member to fill the role of the leading Elder or presiding officer under section D.1.1 d).~~

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

N/A

GS 86 EDITORIAL CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL*, STANDARDIZATION OF TERMINOLOGY

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

Currently, various sections of *The Manual* use terms like "salary," "benefits," "compensation," and "remuneration" interchangeably.

To rectify this inconsistency, the proposed changes seek to standardize the usage of terminology. In particular, "salary" would be exclusively used to denote the monetary payment for work performed by an individual. Conversely, "remuneration" would encompass salary as well as benefits and allowances.

These clarifications in terminology aim to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout *The Manual*.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following editorial changes to *The Manual*:

H.1 Forms of Paid Accountable Ministry in the United Church

All ministers, members, and adherents in the United Church are engaged in ministry. The term "paid accountable ministry" refers to the work of a minister who

- a) is a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister;
- b) is accountable to the Office of Vocation; and
- c) receives ~~a salary or other remuneration compensation~~ from a community of faith, regional council, General Council, Office of Vocation, or other ministry recognized by a regional council.

I.3.1.6

- f) Ministry personnel entitled to advance notice of change: For all changes of pastoral relations under this section (I.3.1.4), the ministry personnel is entitled to

- i) 90 days' advance notice of the change in pastoral relations; or
- ii) 90 days' ~~salary and benefits remuneration~~ in the same amounts as payable before the change.

The ministry personnel may be given a combination of some advance notice and some ~~salary remuneration and benefits~~, as long as the total meets the 90-day requirement.

The regional council is responsible for giving the notice under section I.3.1.6 below. The community of faith is responsible for paying the remuneration. ~~salary and benefits.~~

J.7.3

- a) communicate their decisions to the ministry personnel, the governing body of the community of faith, the regional council, the Office of Vocation, and other bodies that they consider appropriate.

A ministry personnel is entitled to ~~salary remuneration and benefits~~ under the terms of the pastoral relationship while on administrative leave. The regional council is responsible for assisting the community of faith in arranging for supply needs to be met while the ministry personnel is on administrative leave.

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

N/A

GS 87 editorial changes to *The Manual*, updating language in i.2.3.1**Origin:** General Secretary, General Council**1. What is the issue?**

The language currently used in section I.2.3.1 Maternity and Parental Leave is outdated because it does not include other gender identities in its definition of parenthood. Furthermore, there have been additional proposed revisions aimed at adopting more inclusive language that accurately represents those eligible for these leaves and the range of leaves available to them.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive approve the following editorial changes to *The Manual*:

Current wording:**I.2.3.1 Maternity and Parental Leave**

Maternity leave is an unpaid leave of absence available to a biological mother on the birth of her child. Ministry personnel taking maternity leave may be entitled to benefits under a government insurance plan. Parental leave is an unpaid leave of absence available to a biological or adoptive parent while caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. Ministry personnel may be entitled to benefits under a government insurance plan.

Proposed wording:**I.2.3.1 Post-Pregnancy, Parental and Partner Leaves**

Post-Pregnancy leave is a leave of absence available to a person after the birth of a child.

Parental leave is a leave of absence available to a parent while caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. Parental leave benefits are payable either from the date of the child's birth or the date of the child's placement in the home.

The period of pregnancy or parental leave will be subject to the maximums set out by the applicable government insurance plans.

Partner leave is a paid leave of absence of 5 days when a spouse or common law partner of the ministry personnel has given birth to a child.

FYI: Ministry personnel may be entitled to benefits under a government insurance plans.

GS 88 CHANGE TO INCORPORATED MINISTRIES CATEGORY 2 ELIGIBILITY

Origin: General Secretary

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

Under the United Church's Incorporated Ministries Policy https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/incorporated-ministries-policy_nov2022.pdf, all incorporated ministries of the United Church are classified in one of four categories:

- **Category 1** - supervised incorporated ministries, with which the United Church has a close and vital relationship and that are under supervision of a church body
- **Category 2** - independent incorporated ministries, which may or may not have a close ongoing relationship with the United Church but are not under supervision of a church body
- **Category 3** - multiple participant incorporated ministries, in which the United Church is a participant
- **Category 4** - legacy incorporated ministries

At present, Category 2 is restricted to incorporated ministries specializing in senior's facilities or low-income housing, which excludes other ministries seeking to be included in this grouping.

2. What is happening now?

Under the United Church's Incorporated Ministries policy, Regional Councils have oversight of incorporated ministries within their bounds. Regional Council approval is required for many of the incorporated ministry's governance and operational decisions e.g., membership of the board, selling or purchasing property, limits on indebtedness, and changes to corporate-laws. The Regional Council Executive Minister is a corresponding member of the incorporated ministry's board of directors, entitled to attend board meetings and receive minutes. The Regional Council also receives the annual financial, insurance and operational reports from the incorporated ministry for information.

At the November 2013 meeting of the Executive of the General Council, a proposal was made to allow corporations to choose Category 2 status, excluding those dealing with church assets. The proposal passed, but the option for Category 2 was limited to ministries identified as senior's facilities and/or low-income housing.

Many ministries subject to heavy regulation see Category 2 status as desirable because it eliminates redundant reporting efforts duplicated by government bodies. Without access to Category 2, regulated ministries often choose Category 1 status or sever the relationship to become a Category 4 ministry, neither of which may be preferable.

Drawing on the experience gained over the past decade, particularly with ministries transitioning to Category 2 status, we are better equipped to assess the eligibility of other ministry types for Category 2 status. This change would apply to ministries regulated by

municipal, provincial and/or federal legislation, requiring licensing to operate and receive funding. However not all ministries may qualify for Category 2 status, as eligibility will be determined individually based on specific criteria. Those ministries that have a significant housing component but not necessarily low-income housing are an example of ministries that may qualify.

It's important to note that following ministries types will not qualify for Category 2 status because they either require ongoing church oversight and/or lack sufficient regulation by government bodies:

- Camps/outdoor ministries
- Extension councils, property development corporations and foundations; and
- Education centres and theological schools.

3. What is the recommendation?

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive amend the Incorporated Ministries Policy to allow community ministries to be eligible for Category 2 incorporated ministry if they meet established criteria. The proposed criteria is outlined in Appendix A.

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

N/A

Appendix A – Criteria for Community Ministry to be Considered for Category 2 status

The following criteria will be used in determining if a Category 1 ministry would be considered for a change to Category 2 status. Please feel free to add any additional information in the Comments that you feel may be useful in evaluating your ministry for re-categorization.

Criteria

The incorporated ministry is subject to provincial/federal legislation related specifically to its function/operation? Yes / No

If yes, please list all relevant legislation.

The incorporated ministry is subject to provincial/federal legislation to qualify for funding:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| - municipal | Yes / No |
| - provincial | Yes / No |
| - federal | Yes / No |
| - private sources | Yes / No |

The incorporated ministry is required to have a license to operate? Yes / No

The incorporated ministry is a member of a professional organization / association with guidelines and standards for operation. Yes / No

The incorporated ministry participates in accreditation program or similar external evaluation if available. Yes / No

Comments:

GS 90 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – POLICY UPDATES

Origin: the General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The policy that has guided Financial Assistance funds requires further revision.

2. Why is this issue important?

What is the history/background of this issue?

Not long after church union in 1925, the General Council established the Compassionate Assistance Fund. Over the last ninety-nine years, the seven Financial Assistance funds, now overseen by staff, have provided financial support to ministry personnel, candidates, lay employees, pension plan members and their families, along with survivors of sexual misconduct and communities of faith preparing for a ministry personnel's sabbatical.

The current Policy for the Financial Assistance Funds was last revised in April 2021. Since then, accountability reports have been shared annually with the Executive of the General Council on the number of applications for assistance approved each year, along with an update on the status of the Financial Assistance funds.

The changes to the policy are being requested now because of the transition of the staff team overseeing financial assistance funds from the Ministry and Employment Unit to the Theology and Ministry Leadership Unit. Also, with interest rates continuing to be high in Canada, it feels just for the church to arrange loans from the Compassionate Assistance Fund at an interest rate lower than the prime rate of the Bank of Canada.

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

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council make the following changes:

- 1) Updating the Policy for the Financial Assistance Funds to change responsibilities from the Executive Office Ministry and Employment to the Executive Minister Theology and Ministry Leadership;
- 2) Amending the interest rate charged on Compassionate Assistance Fund loans to half of the prime rate of the Bank of Canada;
- 3) Amending the list of providers for vocational assessments under the Ministry and Life Assessment (Vocational Assessment) Fund to remove South Island Centre for Counselling and Training because they no longer offer these assessment services; and
- 4) Confirming these changes by approving the attached updated policy document.

4. What will be the impact?

One impact of these changes will be to align the Policy for the Financial Assistance Funds with recent changes to the unit structure of the General Council Office. Another impact will be that

the amendment of the interest rate will help make loan payments easier for loan recipients because the interest portion of the payments will be lower.

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

In the last few years, many of the Compassionate Assistance Fund loans have been granted to Admission ministers who are coming to the United Church from outside of Canada. Because many of these ministers lack a Canadian credit rating, we are able to help them with a loan to buy a vehicle as they begin their first pastoral relationship in Canada.

Appendix III

Partner Council Message

It is a privilege to extend our greetings today on behalf of the Partner Council. Our mission is to connect The United Church of Canada with a global perspective, sharing wisdom and drawing upon the experiences of our worldwide partners. Presently, the Partner Council comprises members from partner organizations around the globe: Rev. Kangwa Mabuluki, Mrs. Annie Namala, Mr. Samer Laham, Mr. Marcelo Leites, and Mr. Horacio Mesones.

We wish to highlight the efforts of The United Church of Canada (UCC) in strengthening global partnerships to further the Reign of God. Working in partnership, we recognize the diverse gifts and shared resources among individuals, churches, service organizations, development and human rights organizations, educational institutions, and ecumenical bodies. This work is particularly important, given the economic challenges facing not only the UCC but the broader ecumenical community.

We appreciate the ongoing endeavors to sustain partnership work and challenge narratives of decline. Furthermore, we acknowledge the commitment of The UCCanada to bear witness to peace, equality, justice, dignity, and stewardship of our Common Home through partnership efforts in Canada and globally.

To begin, we would like to share that during these days, we have engaged in discussions on topics of shared concern between The United Church of Canada and partners from different parts of the world.

First and foremost, we addressed the impact of climate change in various contexts, particularly in terms of food insecurity, increasing poverty, migration, forced displacement, and threats to life in communities. We are concerned about governments' lack of commitment to agreements reached in multilateral meetings, particularly regarding emission levels in Canada, but we see similar situations in other contexts. We are also concerned about increasing authoritarian regimes stifling dissenting voices from affected communities.

On the other hand, we appreciate The United Church of Canada's commitment to climate justice, a theme that guides partnership work towards the future.

The Partner Council convened from May 7-9 to reflect deeper into the Roundtable proposal, building upon the work initiated in 2023 following the review of The United Church of Canada's global partnership program. During this meeting, we shared the experiences of Partner Council members, including a review of the history, principles, methodology, and learnings from Roundtable work in various contexts.

We also shared the experience of the Karibu Foundation (Norway) and its counterparts in Africa through the participatory grant-making proposal. Based on these exchanges, the Partner Council worked in developing a proposal with the following orientation:

Our focus is on shifting power in a decolonization perspective, promoting consultation processes, sharing experiences and resources, and decision-making within a framework of global participation and partnership. We recognize decolonization as a layered process addressing exclusion and discrimination within countries and communities. The concept of mutual radical accompaniment will be central to our approach. While this concept was previously included in the report, we emphasize the mutual dimension, incorporating voices from different regions, global ecumenical organizations, and Canada.

Mutual radical accompaniment entails adopting a strategic perspective that begins with a deepening of the concept, allowing us to envision coordinated actions that connect and add value to the experiences currently being developed by UCC partner organizations and others. While we adopt the Roundtable values and methodology, we believe that an appropriate name can facilitate the adoption of the process.

We reaffirm the theme of climate justice under the designation 'Mending the World,' understanding that climate justice serves as an entry point connecting with other equally significant issues such as food security, poverty, migration, gender justice, or peace promotion. It is essential to deepen the spiritual dimension and biblical foundation of the process.

In summary, our line of work can be encapsulated as follows: Shift powers through strategic design that deepens into the concept, and develops processes inspired by Roundtable methodologies, so that we can strengthen a mechanism of mutual radical accompaniment to enhance partnership from a decolonization perspective. This approach aims to promote transformations under the perspective of 'Mending the World', that includes climate justice in connection with other critical issues that affect the world today.

One crucial point to note is that, while there is historical experience and that of other churches and organizations, we understand the need to develop our own vision and work within a framework that allows us to innovate, experiment, and gather learnings to enhance the proposal over time.

As mentioned earlier, we envision the process within a framework of concentric circles starting from the experiences developed by UCCanada partners in the regions, in Canada, and global organizations, to engage and involve other stakeholders along the way. We look forward to the wider UCCanada leadership to journey with us in this process, in line with the UCCanada commitment to a whole-world approach – something to bring the larger UCCanada into the process.

Regarding the process, we identified the need to design a roadmap with specific steps to consolidate the concept and design in 2024. This includes organizing a series of informational

meetings and preliminary consultations in each global partnership region, as well as holding a gathering with participants from partner organizations across different regions worldwide, including Canada, to deepen the concept and define concrete actions with a strategic outlook that will enable us to work towards mutual radical accompaniment.

We recognize that this process entails an exercise of leadership in which the Partner Council, alongside the Global Partnership Team, is committed to working in the months ahead.

Appendix IV

NEW 01 Join the Apartheid Free Communities Movement

Origin: Keith Simmonds Pacific Mountain Region Commissioner to General Council 44

1. What is the issue?

The Government of Israel has enacted legislation creating a racist, Apartheid state that discriminates against the Arabic population of Israel and Palestine on a daily basis at every level of existence. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B'tselem and the witness of United Church of Canada Ecumenical Accompaniers testifies to the truth of that designation. Apartheid, a crime under international law, has been enacted in Israel and in Palestine by the government of Israel. Apartheid in Israel and Palestine has resulted in racialization and discrimination against Palestinians and their allies in Canada.

2. Why is this issue important?

The United Church of Canada has declared itself to be an anti-racist church, embracing Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice. Anti-'Arab' racism is official state policy in Israel and in Occupied Palestine and has spilled over into Canada, where those protesting or bringing that racism to light are targeted by supporters of the government of Israel. The Apartheid regime in Israel violates the fundamental theological principles that underly the vision and purpose statements of the United Church of Canada and are in direct support of ongoing anti-Muslim and anti-Arabic racism that exists in Israel and in Canada.

Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestine do not enjoy equal rights with their Jewish, Israeli counterparts and are regularly humiliated, abused, imprisoned, wounded and killed by direct attack and through the employment of starvation and denial of medical services. Thousands of Palestinians are imprisoned by the government of Israel while tens of thousands have been killed, and hundreds of thousands (millions since 1948) have been made homeless. In Canada, Palestinian citizens and their allies have undergone discrimination for speaking out against the Apartheid regime in Israel, have been arrested for demonstrating and protesting, have been fired from their jobs and threatened with expulsion.

Palestinians in Israel, Palestine and Canada have consistently cried out for the support of Canadians, Canadian Churches and the United Church of Canada. It is time to act decisively. Joining Apartheid Free Communities <https://apartheid-free.org> would be a step in common with one of our full communion partners – The United Church of Christ, USA - which has signed onto the accord. It would allow our denomination to make a public, intentional and explicit statement in opposition to the racist Apartheid regime in Israel and would provide time for thoughtful reflection on next steps.

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

It is suggested that the General Council Executive consider:

- A. Promoting study/discussion of the issue throughout the denomination by supplying links to existing studies already developed by communion partners and others, including the Presbyterian Church USA, the Society of Friends, the United Church of Christ USA, and by Kairos Palestine. Provide links to resources made available by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Ecumenical Accompaniers, The United Nations, B'tselem, Breaking the Silence, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, the United Network For Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, and/or other human rights based, fact sharing organizations in Israel, Palestine and the World.
- B. Acting on the issue, including:
 - GCE becoming a signatory body to the Apartheid Free Community Campaign at <https://apartheid-free.org>;
 - GCE commissioning a group including former Ecumenical Accompaniers to Israel and Palestine to recommend effective next steps as an Apartheid Free Church; and
 - GCE encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and others, asking them to become informed on the issue and to take appropriate action (signing on to the Apartheid Free Community Campaign, etc.)

4. What will be the impact?

This step (signing on to Apartheid Free Community Campaign and providing links to resources to others) aligns with our plan to become an Anti-Racist Church by acting against the racist regime in Israel and against anti-Palestinians and Islamophobic acts in Canada by refusing to be complicit with the Apartheid regime in Israel.

What is the cost? Staff time + budget – minimal, requires signing on to an online resource, issuing a news advisory on that act, sending information (links) to faith communities with respect to resources available and how to take similar actions. Making use of volunteer resources that could be coordinated through existing groups such as the United Network for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

Who will be impacted? How? Supporters of Israel's right to be an Apartheid, racist regime will protest this decision. Many others who are not aware that Israel's government is an Apartheid, racist regime will have their awareness raised and may well begin to act in ways that convince the government of Canada to withdraw support from the government of Israel unless or until it changes its legislation, ends its genocidal campaign against Palestinians and withdraws from Occupied Palestine. Canadian institutions, employers and police services departments will no longer be able to dismiss Palestinians and their allies as unlawful protestors but rather as legitimate allies of an Occupied and Racialized people.

What are the risk management issues? The United Church of Canada may be targeted by supporters of the Government of Israel. We may be accused of being anti-Semitic because we do not support a racist, Apartheid government in Israel. We may be told that the only way to control Palestinian resistance to Occupation is to support the ongoing genocide of Palestinians, or stay silent in the face of it.

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

We are committed to becoming an anti-racist church. More than that we are committed, in the cause of Justice, to hold space for and advocate for those who are targeted by wealth and power, particularly those Indigenous communities who are suffering the loss of land and life at the hands of a foreign, colonizing oppressor. We have agreed to uphold and to respond authentically to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People and Palestinians are Indigenous to Palestine.

This proposal allows the church to take a large step towards addressing the Apartheid Regime in Israel while considering how best to bring an opportunity of reflection and education to the wider church community. Our partners and other faith groups have developed study resources, Ecumenical Accompaniers have made and are ready to make presentations to United Church and community groups with respect to the reality of the situation in Israel and Palestine and many United Church members have made connections with Palestinians and their allies in Canada and can help them share the stories of their struggles with discrimination and threat.

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

Please act with all possible speed. Our faith communities are waiting for leadership on this issue. In particular from an Anti-racist, anti-Apartheid church.

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