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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

GENERAL SECRETARY ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: General Secretary

2 Corinthians 3:12 "Therefore, having such a hope, we are using great boldness" (DLNT)

Executive Summary

This is the third 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 the General Council Office. 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 church's 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 the strategic priority of the General Council Office. The third section offers some information about the programmatic work of the General Council around some of the strategic objectives such as *Justice, Leadership, Common Good*. *This section provides updates on Mission and Service, Finance, Ministry in French, Centennial and General Council 45.*

The fourth section offers accountability on the work from General Council 44(2022). You can find information on how work assigned is being completed here. The fifth section is an update from the Theology Inter-church Interfaith Committee. The final section identifies several risk management factors that the management team are giving its attention.

I have also included an Appendix with some highlights of the Global Partnership Program.

1. Introduction

Thinking Out Loud:

As part of the strategic operational plan, we said we wanted to bring focus to the work of the General Council Office. We identified three key justice foci – 2SLGBTQI global advocacy, racial justice and indigenous justice. We bolstered our capacity by hiring a staff person responsible for the 2SLGBTQI work. We had said all other justice initiatives would be done in partnership. The

reality is that we have not been able to as robustly attend to the three major foci. In terms of our justice advocacy, the war in Gaza has occupied a significant amount of time and attention. You have received a few requests from some members of the church asking you to take a more courageous stand. You have been asked to have conversation in your meeting about the war and to mobilize the church to act. Recently, you received a letter from Rifat Kassis, the head of Kairos Palestine, expressing his despair at the situation and his own brokenness, echoing something of the story of the Syrophoenician woman who came to Jesus, “but even the dogs get to lick up the crumbs.” (Mark 7:24-29). It is heartbreaking.

Given the framework of the principles base approach to our justice work, the clear focused justice advocacy themes identified by the strategic plan, how do you want to attend to this emerging challenge. What are the big questions we need to be asking about our justice advocacy?

2. General Council Office Priority Work

Strategic and Development Planning

Planning Completion of the [first full year annual report](#) is available in print and on the web. See also [L’appel et la vision de l’Église Unie](#) for a pdf download. Report on Year 2 Q2 of the annual plan, linked to the overall strategic plan, is available in this meeting’s materials. Overall progress on key results in Q2 was strong at 80.4% activities planned for this period being completed.

Integration with financial reporting is complete. As we move into planning for 2025, we need to continue to work towards robust, national-scale projects and programs that are tangibly moving forward the strategic objectives (as is observable through data).

The staff leadership meeting in November will be an opportunity to look at a “base case” of the church across the country in 2035, based on trends from the last 30 years. And, then to look at scenarios that might bring about better outcomes, with the hopes of coalescing around a common medium-term strategy.

Research and Development Flowing from strategic plan commitments related to data-driven decision-making, the GCO now has a fully staffed Research and Development (Data) team. The team is working to amplify our capacity to analyze, visualize and engage data in evaluation and decision-making. Some current projects include supporting the leadership planning session in November, developing a pilot regional dashboard pulled from church statistics, improving surveys used in evaluation and information collection, and the pilot phase of a “Fertile Soil” research project that supports the Growth department in its regional engagement.

Communications Connected to the recommendations of the 2022 Communications Audit, the department continues to advance goals in strengthening project management processes and engaging communications as a strategic partner. Linked to the strategic plan commitments to “strengthen invitation,” and employing the Centennial year, we are currently working actively on increasing marketing orientation, building one identity and one brand; and enhancing our capacity to engage/tell our story, adding the goal of increasing the GCO’s faith-based content.

Related to these goals and working with an external team, we are two thirds of the way towards completing a **Brand Architecture Project**, focused on strengthening United Church identity and visibility of the strategic priorities. With a set of strong icons (logos) for each strategic area, we are developing an overarching brand guideline for the GCO. The final guide will provide the instructions needed as we strive to communicate more effectively. We expect a final guide to be shared with leaders in October/November 2024.

The communications team is preparing to offer **Deep Spirituality content** on a more regular basis in E-ssentials. We are reaching out to leaders to collect material from across the church that we can use as faith-based reflective content for social media, our e-newsletters, blogs, and other places.

Harvesting insights from the Stars on Ice Campaign, which generated some new social media followers and brought unique visitors to 100UnitedYears.ca, we are currently showcasing a revised version of the video across Toronto Pearson Airport to catch summer domestic travellers.

Contracting with *Media Profile*, and working with a “A Place at the Table” theme, we are developing a **broad public outreach campaign** with the following elements:

- Fall 2024 to June 2025: Growth Animators will be working with 100 communities of faith to animate #100tables. Each table—a picnic-style table outside each of the churches-- will tap into unique community priorities (whether outreach, advocacy or engagement) and will celebrate the diversity and history of each participating church through unique design. Tables will be connected through media engagement and storytelling with a possible concluding dinner event uniting all #100tables;
- Activated in April 2025: Public relations activities that will seek to explore of inclusive theology through unconventional means and creative expressions, integrating faith into public life and societal issues.
- June 2025 – June 2026: “Finding Faith” survey and storytelling. Against the backdrop of prevailing narratives about religious decline, we will explore why people are joining religious communities today. As well as a survey about where people are finding faith, there would be a storytelling and member profile campaign to understand and amplify the voices of #100 new United Church members, thereby shaping the church's future

narrative. A further aspect of this initiative could be pop-up-pulpits where activists, and communities and leaders and others could link pressing social issues to finding faith (#preach).

- Animating Key Issues and Moments: For Black History Month, International Women’s Day, Earth Day, Pride, and World Food Day (Oct 16) in 2025, we will employ media relations, digital and social strategies, combined with vibrant elements such as a Pride “United in Song” flash mob to highlight United Church leadership, share our key commitments and invite public engagement.

The overall campaign will seek to target the public (Canadians and those Canadians who say they identify with The United Church of Canada) and influencers who can amplify the message through social media. This dual approach aims to maximize reach and engagement, appealing to a diverse audience interested in social issues and progressive theology.

Growth As well the strategies towards “invite,” connected to the Communications’ Centennial and outreach initiatives, the Growth department continues its development as an engine for renewal of existing, and the creation of new, communities of faith. In addition to the material in the Q2 report, this recent article—[Bold Advances to Strengthen Invitation](#) highlights how the initiative is shaping up, one year into development.

3. General Council Office Programmatic Work Update

Justice Engagement

War in Gaza continues to be a significant part of the church’s advocacy even though it was not one of the agreed foci for advocacy. The Church is using a multifaceted approach –

- (a) advocacy with government, both the Moderator and I have written to the government, continuing to call for a ceasefire and end to arms sale, honouring the International Court of Justice (ICJ’s) decision and calling for the release of hostages;
- (b) working in collaboration with ecumenical partners, and
- (c) solidarity support to partners.

Wendy Gichuru recently visited partners in the region along with other ecumenical colleagues from Canada and the United States. A planned Ecumenical Leaders Solidarity trip with Bp. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, USA (ELCA); Bp. Susan Johnston, the National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC); Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church in Canada (ACC) and Moderator Carmen was postponed because of cancelled flights, government directives and concerned about safety. It is hoped that this visit can take place soon.

Partners’ messages to the Canadian churches are: “Have the courage to name things as they are. Palestinians are facing genocide and apartheid. Christians aren’t called to be brokers; they

are called to be peacemakers and prophets.” Through the Canadian Churches’ Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage in Ottawa and in meetings with MPs, the Canadian government heard the call for an immediate ceasefire; the immediate release of all captives; unimpeded humanitarian access; an independent investigation into crimes against humanity and war crimes, and an immediate end to the occupation and the siege on Gaza.

Anti-Racism and Equity The work of anti-racism has continued to make shifts in recent months. The overall work is still very much tied to the United Church's national Anti-Racism Action Plan, and the activities are integrated into the church's Strategic Plan. The continued hoped-for shift in reporting, however, is to not only share *what* the work is that has been taking place—but also to share *how* the work has and is making a difference. It is a shift from focusing on naming activities to focusing on the impact that the work is making in the church and beyond. Some parts of the evaluation process for this program, and other initiatives, is being in collaboration with the new staff data team. While it can be difficult to tangibly measure change in an area such as anti-racism and equity, this kind of measurement is essential for developing programs, policies, and plans. Future reporting for this area will endeavour to continue to include naming areas of change and impact, in addition to solely focusing on what tangible work has been done.

Countering Antisemitism: The Countering Antisemitism Working Group was established soon after General Council 44 (2022), and it was composed of members from the Anti-Racism Common Table and the Theology, Inter-Church, and Interfaith Committee (TICIF). The group created educational resources—including a course on ChurchX, Round the Table blogs, a [website presence](#) on www.united-church.ca, and a Good Friday worship service— as ways of living into its mandate of challenging antisemitism in Christian theology and worship. Earlier this year, after those parts of the work were completed, the working group has completed its work. However, the work of countering antisemitism, however, is still very much needed!

Further education planning has been completed for the rest of 2024 and the first half of 2025 to engage the church in examining the ways that anti-Judaism and antisemitism show up in how we read and interpret scriptures, in our theologies, and in our hymnody. One of the live events for the 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism will feature Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, who will explore [The Texts of Advent: Finding Good News and Avoiding Antisemitism](#) on November 5, 2024 (with English-French interpretation). The plan for later 2025 and into 2026 is to develop learning opportunities to help the members of the church engage in advocacy to counter antisemitism.

Leadership investments

National Youth Event: The summer of 2024 was a productive and hopeful time in our ministry with young people. It was exciting to have 450 people attend **Rendez-vous 2024: Audacious**

Hope, which was a joint national event with the Presbyterian Church in Canada held at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON. The numbers were even between the two denominations, and there were approximately 130 UCC youth and young adults, with 94 adult leaders. The theme of Audacious Hope set a tone of positivity and anticipation. Being the first-time planning and carrying out a joint event, it was not always easy, but we learned a great deal and need to give serious consideration to further joint events.

Youth Internship As well as Rendez-vous, the General Council hosted two internship programs with funding from Canada Summer Jobs. It was the second year for the **Climate Motivators** program, and we had 12 Motivators from 6 different regional councils with 2 young adult coordinators, adding representation from another regional council. The Motivators attended Rendez-vous, with several providing leadership in workshops, worship, hospitality and tech support. They met at Five Oaks retreat centre in Paris, ON, for a week of community-building, learning and fun. Returning home, each motivator had a local project that they worked on with a mentor from their community. As well, they attended group online learning sessions and one-on-one check-in times with their coordinators. We continue to learn and improve how we can engage young people in climate advocacy, connecting with the earth, deepening our integrity as we put our own house in order, and responding to climate impact.

The Youth Leadership Animators are a group of 8 youth, with at least one from each of the networked regional councils, and 2 young adult coordinators. They are an intentionally diverse group with 4 racialized and 4 white animators, and 1 Indigenous coordinator. This group also participated in Rendez-vous 2024 and had a week together at Five Oaks. The four areas of focus for these leaders include: vocational discernment (including shadowing someone in a leadership role of interest to them), learning leadership skills and practices of good leaders, planning for Youth Forum at GC45, and planning a Centennial project in their own region. Throughout the next year, they will advocate for 100 youth and young adults under the age of 30 to attend GC45 as commissioners and delegates, with a minimum of 50% being Indigenous and Racialized (including a diverse group of leaders for Youth Forum as well). They will carry out a Centennial project of their choice and be part of a GC45 planning team. They will be paid an honorarium for their work throughout the year and will hopefully, be employed to continue their learning and leadership throughout the summer of 2025.

Ministries in French

With the interest of emerging francophone migrant communities our denomination, the face of the francophone church is changing rapidly. Working with the Responsable, I have invited La Table into a priority-setting process to help ensure our programming reflects emerging and future needs. Current projects include collaboration with other partners in a Protestant,

Francophone Theological Institute, a fall retreat for francophone youth, and continued support to both emerging and existing francophone communities. We have developed a Covenant Agreement with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) which is close to signature.

Financial Management

2024 Mid-Year Financial Update As of the end of June, Mission and Service contributions from congregations totaled \$6.7 million, which is \$600,000 lower compared to the same period last year. The total budgeted Mission & Service revenue for 2024 is \$19.5 million. It is important to note that a significant portion of congregational Mission and Service remittances are typically received in January and February of the following year. Over the last two years, we've made efforts to encourage congregations to advance their Mission and Service remittance schedules and enforce a 'deadline' to streamline year-end accounting. We've observed some improvement, and we will continue working on enhancing the year-end Mission and Service remittance timeline.

The 2024 Assessment Revenue is on track, with \$7.4 million paid and \$6 million remaining outstanding. This outstanding balance includes \$1.4 million carried over from prior years.

The investment market has been volatile in recent weeks. While the mid-year report showed a strong return of 7%, predicting future performance remains challenging in the current market environment.

On the expenses side, most infrastructure and governance expenditures are on track. Spending on the strategic plan (program budget) varies across different objectives. Some areas have experienced underspending, while others are progressing as planned. Since 2024 is the first year of implementing the new strategic plan (program) budget, the budget vs. actual variances may reflect the learning curve associated with this transition.

Recently, we achieved a significant breakthrough by integrating the financial budget and actuals for 2024 into the Strategic Plan Dashboard. This advancement consolidates planning and reporting—including budget-to-actual comparisons—into a single, real-time platform fully integrated with our accounting system.

Mission and Service

Mission and Service contributions are tracking as expected for this point in the year. With a slightly quieter summer we have focused on strategy and plans for the remainder of 2024 and into 2025. In terms of strategic directions, we are working in collaboration with the regions to increase Mission and Service presence in annual meetings and other gatherings. We are

revamping Gifts with Vision to be leaner and more focused in 2025 and have plans for engagement with donors who use Gifts with Vision to encourage increased Mission and Service givings. We are also planning to highlight the Centennial in our 2025 fundraising in several ways.

Stewardship The discipleship work of financial and resource stewardship continues with strong enrolment in the Called to Be the Church: The Journey program. Deepening the work, the new program *Delving into Discipleship* is a collaborative pilot project between the Growth team, Philanthropy & Northern Spirit Regional Council. Five United Churches from south of Edmonton are putting together teams to engage in a year of learning. It is our hope that by the end of the year together, participants will experience transformation in their personal faith life, have a better understanding of the fullness of discipleship, and make an impact on the spiritual life of their communities of faith through deep engagement with the practices of discipleship. The first gathering will be in person. After that the full cohort will meet monthly over Zoom.

Special Campaign Many of you are aware of and contributed to the special campaign to fund a retreat for Indigenous ministry personnel, particularly those serving in remote communities. The response to this campaign was phenomenal and we raised double the goal for a total of more than \$45,000. This means we will not need to draw on the Healing Fund to support this event leaving more grant monies available for other healing programs and projects. Thank you for your support of this crucial work.

Centennial Planning

Launch Event the June 9th, 2024, launch of the centennial commemoration at Metropolitan United Church, Toronto was well attended. This service was designed primarily as a celebration of the United Church and our history. The 2025 worship is being planned to profile the importance of being “united” in our faith and witness in the world. The Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches will be our guest preacher for the service to be held in St. John’s Newfoundland on June 8th, 2025. To honour the church’s commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, former Moderators and General Secretaries as well as members of the Executive, were invited to attend either the 2024 or 2025 celebration. There will again be an in-person and live streamed service as well as one for congregational use.

The Centennial Newsletter has been launched to explore the rich history of The United Church of Canada through images and video pulled from our archives. The first edition, focused on 2S and LGBTQIA+ inclusion was released on June 10, 2024, with other issues following monthly on other key themes. The newsletter currently has 1886 subscribers with a robust marketing plan being rolled out. Communities of faith are being encouraged to sponsor local centennial events

and to track them on the UCC website. Additional opportunities are in development and will be shared once finalized.

Centennial Legacy Campaign Preparations for the launch of the Centennial Legacy Campaign are well underway. We have scheduled two sessions for the Executive of the General Council which will also have the Foundation board of directors and the campaign Advisory Committee participating. The expectation is that these sessions will provide you with crucial information as well as the capacity to invite your Communities of Faith to participate. The sessions will be held virtually and staff, including the campaign consultants, will be available to answer questions and provide support. Your participation in this work will help make the campaign a success.

Common Good

General Council 45 Planning The 45th General Council (2025) will be both a hybrid meeting and an in-person meeting with an online option. The council will be constituted online on June 22nd, 2025, to allow the Council to approve its business procedures. If approved, there will be two learning and discussion sessions on June 28th. The in-person meeting will be held August 6-11th, 2024 in Calgary, Alberta. You have the report of the chair of the planning committee, Taylor Croissant, which includes a proposal for the budget for the meeting. The Planning committee recognizes that the General Council represents a substantial financial investment by the church and therefore, it is important to take advantage of the time together to focus on what is best done when people are in person. The General Council will be invited to clarify what work it wishes to tackle in person and what might be handled online along with what might be directed to the Executive for expediency. The church has grown in its ability to meet online and taking advantage of this can allow for a quicker response than the current three-year cycle provides.

We are awaiting the report of the Task Group on the role of the Moderator and General Secretary to see if there any changes to the role of Moderator and any proposals that might be forth coming. In the meantime, as members of the Executive, we want to encourage you to consider potential nominees for the role of Moderator. Additional information can be found at www.generalcouncil44.ca under Preparing for GC 45.

300 Bloor Street with the finalization of the agreement between the three denominations (Anglican, Presbyterians and ourselves) we continue to finalize the shared costs. In November, we will share the updated cost projections. At this point the occupancy date is scheduled for August 2026. Management is also working on options and scenarios related to the time gap between the ending of our lease at 3250 and the move to 300 Bloor.

Indigenous Church leadership, the National Indigenous Council (NIC) has been experiencing some growing pains. New co-chairs of the NIC were elected in April but concerns were raised by some soon afterwards about that electoral process. Also at that time, Executive Minister Murray Pruden began a period of leave on restorative care. One of the newly elected co-chairs, Kimberly Roy, resigned from her role in May although she later indicated a wish to be reinstated if the NIC agreed. Planning began on a process to support healing the divisions that had arisen among NIC members. Several conversations took place with some members of the NIC, as part of ongoing efforts to try to move forward together. In July, some NIC members filed an appeal with the United Church's Judicial Committee regarding my decision to uphold the results of the April election. In August, the judicial committee responded to the appeal to indicate that electoral concerns were within the NIC's authority and capacity to address. Unfortunately, I must inform you that this week the remaining co-chair elected in April, Wayne Monague, has resigned his position as co-chair so we are presently without an elected leader of the NIC.

In light of these developments, and aware of the divisions that remain among NIC members, I have assessed options for moving forward with Springwater Hester-Meawassige and Lori Ransom, who, as you know, have been sharing duties as acting Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries and Justice (IMJ) in Murray's absence. It is our considered view that the most helpful course of action in the circumstances is to call upon Indigenous communities of faith to send representatives to a National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering (NISG) in November 2024. As you know the NISG is the highest decision-making body in the Indigenous church, and it has become clear that we need direction from the NISG.

The NISG will be asked to review and confirm a process of elections to the National Indigenous Council and to talk about and resolve several matters related to the Council which have contributed to the current challenges faced by the NIC. The Spiritual Gathering would focus only on governance matters and will take place November 29-Dec.1, 2024, inclusive of travel dates. A location for this NISG has yet to be determined.

Foundation and Church: As reported by me in my last report. I am continuing to work with the Foundation Board to imagine the ongoing relationship between the church and the foundation. At the November meeting I will be bringing to you some possible

4. Update on Work From GC44 (2002)

Structural Change Evaluation Steering Group: The Steering Group's work is underway. Its efforts are guided by two key documents: 1) the GC42 decisions that led to structural change; and 2) the directions for the evaluation established by the General Council Executive in 2018. The summer has been devoted to tracking the actions the church took on the decisions made at

GC42. Data collection will begin the fall. The Steering Group plans to work with a consultant to design how it will gather broad input. We will provide time in our November meeting to engage this work. The Steering Group is anxious about its ability to do the work thoroughly and well by the next General Council. Every effort will be made to meet this deadline, and the Executive will be advised regularly of progress and of the need for a revised timeline if necessary.

Task Group on the Role of the Moderator and General Secretary: The Task Group has been active through the spring and summer meeting with the incumbents, previous office holders, support staff to the offices, Indigenous leadership, Advisory and Supervision committees, regional executive ministers, General Council executive ministers, and with members of the Executive of the General Council. Surveys will go out later in September to the general membership of the United Church and to Commissioners of the 44th General Council. Consultations with Canadian and global partners are being scheduled for October. The task group fully expects to bring a fulsome interim report and emerging recommendations to the November meeting of the Executive.

Task Group on Total Compensation: The task group has, to date, in addition to research and data-mining, held consultations with church treasurers and ministry personnel (a total of approximately 246 participants in the online consultations) and surveyed both groups (a total of 776 respondents) with questions of sustainability, adequacy, and annual adjustment. It has researched 2025 wage trends across employment sectors in all regions of the country as well as with Canadian Anglican, Presbyterian, and Evangelical Lutheran churches. See separate report and recommend for 2025 salary adjustments in your meeting package. The task group is currently developing “straw models” and preparing questions for focus groups this fall. An interim report will come to the November meeting of the Executive and final report to its winter 2025 meeting.

5. Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith

Discipleship: The work on engaging the church in discipleship, as mandated by the 44th General Council (2022), is beginning. A small working group from TICIF has been meeting monthly since May 2024; plans are underway to launch a social media campaign in early November. The group is developing discussion questions that can be used in a variety of ways in communities of faith and will have a webpage set up so that we can hear from across the church about the ways in which people and communities of faith are living out their discipleship. We anticipate having some discussion questions and stories connected to some of the Centennial monthly newsletters.

Justice Principles: A small group from TICIF met with General Council Office staff in early September to gather feedback about the principles for our justice work; this small group will be

working on any proposed revisions to the principles to bring to GCE later in 2024 or in 2025, so that these can then go to the 45th General Council in August 2025, as was directed by the 2023 Annual Meeting of 44th General Council (2022).

Statement on Ministry Working Group Work is progressing on revising the 2012 Statement on Ministry, which is work arising from the “Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s” report and proposal.

Theological Schools The theological schools and the national church, through the “Reimagining Theological Education” activity stream in the strategic plan, recently received a prestigious grant from the [In Trust Center](#). This grant is matched by the United Church and is intended as a seed grant for innovation. A working committee will guide a process to enable the schools and the church to reimagine theological education and collaborate around the ministry needs of the future; the focus is on the leading priority of growth with a view to renew, create and invite, and the supporting priority of invigorating leadership.

6. Risk Management

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

With the recent fires in Jasper and Kamloops we are monitoring the impact claims might have on UCC Protect. Since its inception, the captive insurance structure has successfully met its primary objective of generating financial savings for congregations by maintaining stable premiums. However, like any insurance arrangement, a series of significant claims could require additional capital injections or premium increases to ensure that reserve levels meet regulatory requirements. While the full extent of the Kamloops claim is still under assessment, it is unlikely to affect premiums for the 2024/2025 renewal cycle. However, an additional claim of similar magnitude would result in a premium increase.

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. Management is considering several options and will keep you informed.

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.

APPENDIX 1

MUTUAL RADICAL ACCOMPANIEMENT

We have shaped our global partnership program around the paradigm of mutual radical accompaniment. Here is an update of some of our global programme.

Asian Regional Program:

The Asian program is led by Won Hur (formerly Patti Talbot) and Amy Zavitz (who is currently on parental leave). The countries that are part of the Asian program are Philippines, Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, and India.

Update on Transfer of Assets to Japan Partners 2024

Reference: GCE 2020-09-26-100 “GS 63 Transfer of Capital Assets to Japanese Partners”

In September 2023, I provided an update regarding the September 2020 action (GS63) to **transfer all remaining United Church of Canada-related property holdings in Japan to Japanese partners.**¹ As noted earlier, this decision to disburse to partner organizations all remaining United Church of Canada-related funds held reflected the church’s commitment to a missiology of partnership, and recognized that the ecumenical sharing of resources involves a decisive break with residual colonial patterns of control and ownership. Funds have been distributed to **8 partner entities** in Japan based on mutually shared priorities in mission and ministry: The United Church of Christ in Japan; The Buraku Liberation Centre; The National Christian Women’s Association; The Asian Rural Institute; The Korean Christian Church in Japan;

Research and Action Institute for Koreans in Japan; Centre for Minorities in Mission; National Christian Council in Japan. In July 2024, [a special video](#) of greetings and gratitude was sent from The United Church of Canada from the Moderator and General Secretary of partner church, The United Church of Christ in Japan

The original 3-year budget plan had to be adjusted to a 5-year plan, investment and property adjustments during the pandemic. The final year of disbursements will be the 2024-25 Fiscal Year.

To date: the following amounts have been disbursed to partners in Japan*:

FY 2020/21		FY 2021/22		FY 2022/23		FY 2023/24	
JPY	~ CAD	JPY	~ CAD	JPY	~ CAD	JPY	~ CAD
¥128.6 million	\$1.46 million	¥101.7 million	\$1 million	¥96.7 million	\$929,000	¥96.7 million	\$860,000

The budgeted final year of disbursement (FY 2024/25) will bring the total to following*:

Budget FY 2024/25		5-year Total	
JPY	~ CAD	JPY	~ CAD
¥55 million	~\$490,000	¥478.7 million	~\$4.73 million

*** Yen figures are exact; conversion to CAD has been adjusted since 2023 update, and is approximate:**

- JPY/CAD Rate on 2020-07-02 1 JPY = 0.01262 CAD
 - JPY/CAD rate on 2024-07-23 1 JPY = 0.00882 CAD
1. (i.e JPY/CAD rate has decreased -30.11% (-0.003801) since July 2, 2020 which means the Japanese Yen lost value compared to the Canadian Dollar.

The process of disbursement has been monitored and guided by United Church of Canada representatives on the IBS Shadan Board of Directors, Robert Witmer and by GCO Global Partnership Program Team Lead, Patti Talbot.

Philippines The partners in the Philippines are concerned about the growing threat of the government on its people in the disguise of the war on terror. Human rights workers are “red-

tagged” i.e. labelled as communists which is a prelude to much hate, and extra-judicial killings. Human rights organizations’ such as Cordillera People’s Alliance (an umbrella group of human rights organizations) bank accounts have been frozen. In response, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines is seeking international accompaniment. They have asked for solidarity in the International Day of Prayer in the Philippines on September 1st. They have also asked for other forms of global ecumenical solidarity and advocacy work among others. They are concerned about the growing militarization of the Philippines that attempts to contain the threat of China which Canada supports.

India We are pleased to see that the National Council of Churches in India has organized “Rainbows of Faith from Around the Globe: International Webinar Series.” Our general secretary Rev. Dr. Michael Blair was one of the guest speakers who spoke about the UCC’s journey towards inclusion.

China The members of China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China will be visiting ecumenical partners in the United States. The China Christian Council has reframed themselves as a Uniting Church.

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Program

Christie Neufeldt serves as the regional program coordinator.

Cuba: the United Church is in partnership with the Cuban Council of Churches, the Christian Centre for Reflection and Dialogue (Cardenas), the Martin Luther King Memorial Centre, the Presbyterian Reform Church, and the Ecumenical Seminary of Theology (Matanzas). Cuba is experiencing its worst economic crisis in 60 years caused by a convergence of the ongoing US economic sanctions or blockade, the inclusion of Cuba on the United States' List of States Sponsoring Terrorism, the effects of COVID 19, restructuring of the economy by the Cuban government, inflation, and an increase in climate-related disasters.

The United Church of Canada is invited to continue to deepen relationships of mutual radical accompaniment of Cuban partners during this period of acute and prolonged crisis:

ii. By continuing to learn about the crisis in Cuba

- Deepening people to people connections with partners in Cuba
- Joining ongoing Canadian ecumenical and civil society efforts to advocate with the Canadian government to increase development and humanitarian assistance for Cuba
- Use its influence with the government of the US to ease sanctions and remove it from the list of States Sponsoring Terrorism

East and Central Africa

Wendy Gichuru is the Regional Program Coordinator. Thivan Hoang, Program Coordinator Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response supports the work on the food project.

From June 6 to 13, The United Church hosted Rev. Canon Chris Kinyanjui, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) in Canada. Representing one of the church's long-standing partners, it was an honour to have Canon Chris' participation in the June 9th Launch of the church's Centennial Worship Service at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto. The NCCCK and UCC are implementing two major food security projects in Kenya through the support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Chris had an opportunity to visit growing projects in Ontario and Manitoba that support CFGB programming. Wrestling with the legacies of Kenya's own experiences of colonization, Western mission, and de-colonization, the NCCCK is one of many Mission and Service partners who have accompanied the church in its journey towards truth and right relations with Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

Mutual Radical Accompaniment with the leadership of the Partner Council

On July 30th, the Partner Council of The United Church of Canada, supported by the Church's Global Partnership Team, hosted a gathering of a total of 77 Global Partners from the African, Asian, Middle East, and Latin American Regions, as well as Global Ecumenical Partners from the World Council of Churches and World Student Christian Federation. All met to discern the spirit of Mutual Radical Accompaniment—and the tangible opportunities that flow from this bold framework. Among the many key reflections made in the geographic breakout groups was that "It is difficult to imagine a new framework: We are all so colonized that it is hard to think about how to do this. We are used to 'them' telling 'us' how to get funding. We are invited to participate in assemblies, but the tables where decisions are made about resources are not participatory." This meeting was a foundational first step in a longer journey of decolonizing and shifting power in decision-making—a journey that is necessary to embody the goal of mutual radical accompaniment. We are called to be deep, bold and daring—and we believe that by trying and testing this approach, we can be part of a process of mutual transformation with partners and engage in relationships that are more equitable and just.

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

Strategic Plan 2023–2025

2024 Operational Plan Report

Quarter 2

August 1 2024



2024 Operational Plan Report: Quarter 2

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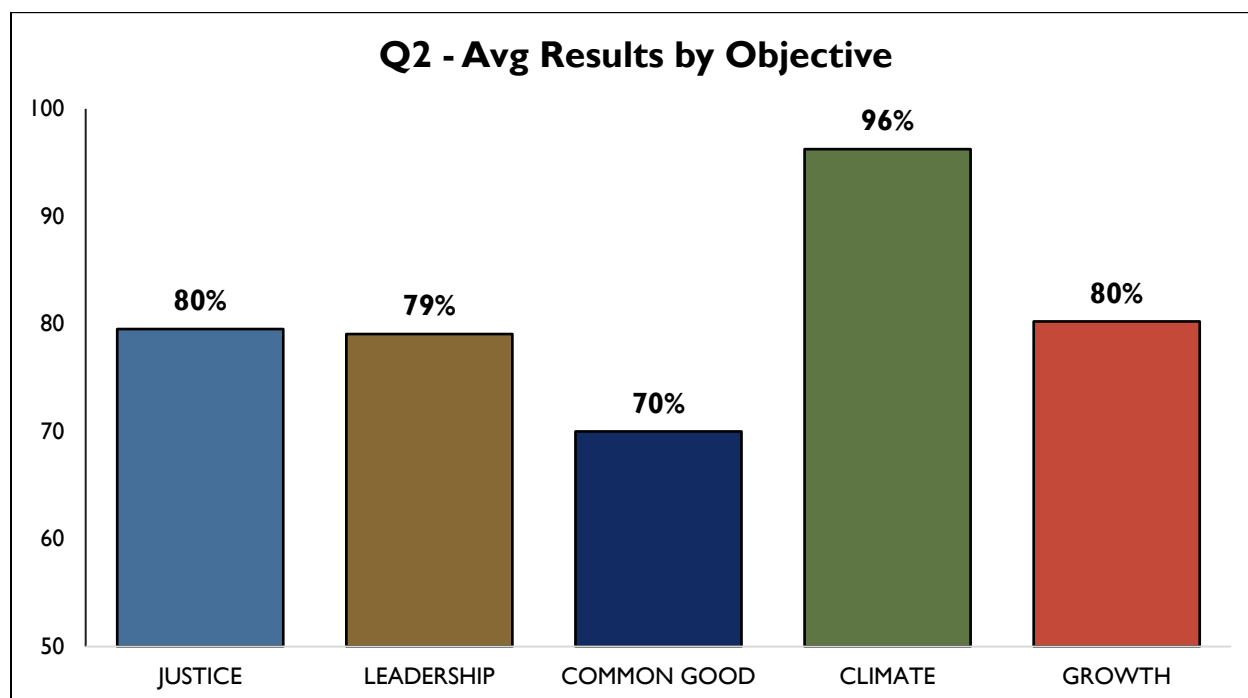
Legend:

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

Bold is for priority activities

Overall Results: Quarter 2 2024 **80.4%**

Overall Average	Colour	Number
Strengthen Invitation	Embolden Justice	Invigorate Leadership
80%	80%	79%
Nurture the Common Good	Deepen Integrity	Journeying Indigenous Pathways
70%	96%	Fair



Q2 2024 Summary Narrative

Strong Progress on Key Activities

Overall progress on key results in Q2 was strong with an 80.4% completion rate for activities planned for this period. 10 activities of 73 activities (where key results are being tracked) completed 100% of what was planned. There are very few areas of significant challenge and these are being actively managed, with key decisions about whether they get back on track or be concluded. With a range of 70%-96% for progress in Growth, Justice, Leadership, Common Good and Climate Integrity, it is clear that all tracked strategic objective areas are solidly moving forward.

“Strengthen Invitation” Moving Toward Becoming Overall Priority

Q2 is the second quarter to have full strategic plan staffing, particularly in the Growth Department where

the largest “staffing-up” took place. This is beginning to enable steps towards the original plan--that “Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith (Growth)” be the leading priority. As well as impressive numbers of engagement with existing congregations and regions by the Growth Animators with the goals of renewal, there are at least 20 new *emerging* communities, with an additional fifteen possibilities among francophone communities. Hoped for plans for communications outreach to the Canadian public have begun with key pilots. The opportunity presented by the Centennial is already showing results in increased sense of common identity by existing denominational members, and interest by those not currently part of the denomination. Other strategic objective areas are considering how their priority integrates and reinforces this leading priority on Growth.

On a broader level, there is evidence that the Call—deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice—is increasingly resonating, not only at the regional level, but through expressions within communities of faith. Two conferences this fall are picking up the Call up as the key theme.

Operational Planning Integrated into the General Council Office (GCO)

With the completion in Q2 of two major advances in the operational planning cycle, the component parts of an operational planning process at the GCO, linked to the strategic plan, are now fully in place. One of these elements was the preparation of a full year [annual report](#), reflecting progress and financials on the first year of our plan. The second element was the inclusion in our reporting system of real time financial information, pulling from our accounting systems. These two elements, and a fully functioning Research and Development (Data) Team, largely brings to completion the integration of an operational planning cycle at the GCO. There is still work needed on processes and culture but major components are in place.

Strategic Orientation Still Challenging

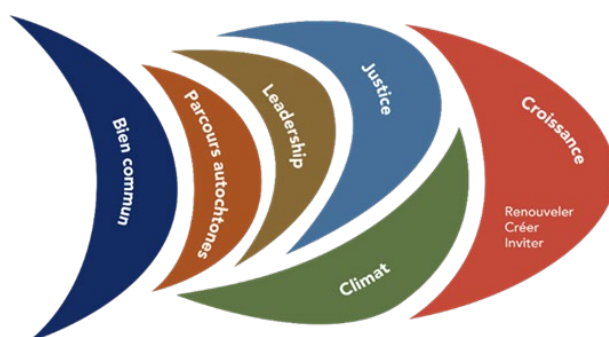
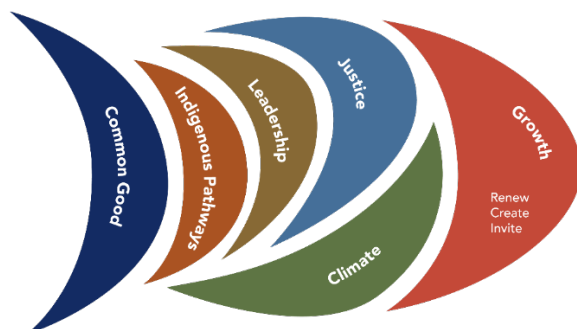
While progress is being consistently made on key activities under each strategic objective and operational planning is now largely integrated, there are still challenges in the area of strategic thinking and implementation. The pull of previously existing work is still a factor in preventing full alignment with the strategic objectives. The priority needs to be on robust, national-scale projects and programs that tangibly move forward the strategic objectives. However, there is an organizational culture of pursuing more numerous, smaller activities, and a momentum related to existing work. Over the summer, strategic objective teams are being encouraged to look carefully at their objective and the key initiatives and consider whether the activities being accomplished or proposed for 2025, will truly move forward the strategic objective. Are there pieces of work that need to be left behind or areas that could be combined for greater impact? To assist with this, we have begun identifying sources of data for the objective and initiatives that can help evaluate whether or not there is true progress in moving forward.

Today and always may we follow in the Way of Jesus, sowing seeds of grace in deep, bold, and daring ways, so that all Creation might be nourished by your love. All of this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen!

--Prayer from the Service Commemorating the Church's 99th Year

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

80%

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:

Between April-June, 6 regionally deployed Growth Animators engaged 116 ministry personnel, 139 communities of faith, and had 22 other significant engagements, including workshops and cluster gatherings. Growth Animators were present at every regional gathering held this spring and offered 22 content pieces from plenary presentations to small group workshops to pre-gathering events.

The Flourishing Project was held in Halifax/Bedford, NS with both a public event (featuring André Picard) and a congregational workshop, and then was featured as the all-day learning event in Saskatoon for the Living Skies Regional Council gathering with 200 in attendance.

Stewardship programming met the goals of the number of communities of faith engaged and also included presentations at regional gatherings. Ministères en français pastoral visits occurred in Toronto and Ottawa and La Table Rond event in Montreal was very successful. Initial ecumenical connection with the Presbyterian Church in Canada's congregational renewal program "New Beginnings" will be explored further throughout the remainder of the year.

Create:

With support from the General Council Office (GCO) a new site of Chinook Wind's Campus United program is being launched at Red Deer Polytechnique in collaboration with a local community of faith. Work continues in the Fertile Soil project in test sites of Eastern Ontario Outaouais and Northern Spirit Regional Councils. Several new spots have been identified where either Regional Council Leadership or local communities of faith are discerning the possibility of engaging in new plant or replant activities. In the area of migrant, diasporic, and intercultural emerging communities, the network of project leads continues to develop as a space for learning and support. The individual sites continue to grow in connecting with new people. The work creating new communities continues to build connection with New Leaf Church Planting Network and Disciples of Christ Canada.

Invite:

A major highlight was the launch of the Centennial Newsletter, the 100 United Years website, a 30-second spot being aired at Stars on Ice events throughout Canada, and the Centennial Launch Service itself which was held at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto and streamed live across the country on June 10, 2024. As well as the hundred in attendance at the worship service, 480 people attended online (live), with a total of 2800 views to date.

Media Profile has been selected as the public relations firm to lead the public outreach campaign that will begin in the Centennial year and initial work on concepts has been undertaken.

Both *Immersion: A Deep Dive Into Discipleship* and *Moments in Time: Sermons from The United Church of Canada 1910-2020* are moving towards publication. Francophone outreach work on Mon Credo (moncredo.org) continues with new content to be released over the summer; behind the scenes work Q2 will have the site ready for increased traffic. Work to encourage local communities of faith to hold their own Centennial events is underway.

Challenges

Overall, the need to create a deeper cultural commitment to invitation is emerging with a growing comfort around words like “growth” and “evangelism”. It is our discernment that specific initiatives around developing online communities and communities surrounding particular identities are not fitting with how the work is emerging so there is consideration to move these into key results in other areas. In particular we are ending the separate and discrete focus on “creating online communities” at the end of Q2, while exploring the concept in a crosscutting way in other activity streams.

Differing understandings of “intercultural” throughout the church can lead to confusion around ideas for potential new communities in this area. Unfamiliarity with church planting within our organizational culture is highlighting a need to offer methods of discernment and experiments as initial steps when exploring new possibilities.

The more we learn about the French-speaking African communities with whom we are engaging the more we can see that the communities are geographically dispersed in ways that European-descent United Church congregations are not, with membership living far from the site and either making occasional trips, or attending online in far greater numbers and clusters than in many United Churches who offer online engagement. This results in a single emerging community of faith existing within multiple Regional Councils. We are working on different models to support such an exciting new reality.

Looking Forward

Growth Animators are developing templates for communities of faith to create

intentional fall to Christmas Eve invitation plans. Stories of congregations with strong invitational cultures will be shared more broadly. Presentations on the Fertile Soil project will show where United Churches are located in relation to Canadian population changes. Emerging church leads will be ready to introduce their work to the broader church and Indigenous and Racialized scholars program participants will present their research. GCO supported focus groups amongst French-Speaking Quebec residents undertaken by Nakonha:ka Regional Council will inform outreach. Increased content on Mon Credo will be released. Public outreach concepts and engagement possibilities will be further developed.

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	70
	Stewardship for CoFs	98
	Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops	100
	Renewing Francophone Communities	60
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	Removed
	Regional/Identity Communities	70
	Migrant Communities	100
	Intercultural communities	100
	Francophone Communities	60
	Diverse Identity Communities	50
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	85
	Outreach: Communication Strategy	90
	Francophone Outreach	70
	Centennial Commemoration Project	90

Sunnybrook United Church is incredibly excited about their new First Third Ministry and the support that they can offer to the new Campus United ministry at Red Deer Polytechnic. This opportunity came together quickly. It felt that the Holy Spirit was guiding the process as many people said, 'Yes' to a new thing they discerned God was doing in their midst.

-- Scott Reynolds, Growth Animator

Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World 80%

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

The work of “collaborating in spaces where just relationships can flourish for abundant life in the church, Canada, and in global communities”—the mid term goal of this objective area-- has continued to grow in the period under review. We have witnessed significant movements in the three named areas: Indigenous Justice, Anti-Racism and 2SLBTGQI+ rights. There are various initiatives, events, and successes, demonstrating that the Justice pillar is creating positive change at local, national, and global levels.

Advocacy/Action:

At the global level, advocacy efforts prompted the Canadian embassy in El Salvador to show up for a court hearing of the water defenders from The Economic and Social Development “Santa Marta” Association, where defenders are currently facing trumped up charges.

At local level related to “Bringing the Children Home,” United Church archives was able to provide Lax Kw’alaams research team with baptism, burial, marriage, circuit registers and historic rolls for Grace Methodist/United Church. This is to support their work of first finding all the community names they can find, and then tracing where all the children from Lax Kw’alaams went.

The 2SLGBTQIA+ work for rights is also advancing as we find ourselves in the various networks and spaces to work collaboratively with other ecumenical and non faith organizations. Communities of faith willing to sponsor refugees from the queer community are also increasing--a sign that equity and inclusion within sponsorship is getting traction.

Education:

We have had Indigenous Strength Learning Opportunities where programs have been developed and Indigenous junior leaders have been selected and therefore giving them an opportunity to re-connect with traditional Indigenous spiritualities and connect with Indigenous United Church leadership.

Notably, educating and raising awareness through just slightly over 25 webinars took place. This was on justice issues. These were within the church and broader society and we have

made some strides as we work to advance racial equity by moving towards a shift in transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples.

Partnerships:

We have also advanced building partnerships and collaborations with other justice-seeking organizations – as seen in the active engagement in the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage and other areas of our work.

There is a bigger conversation beginning as we navigate the process of "building the new" together in shifting power is an exciting opportunity to live into the church's commitment to decolonizing. "Nothing about us without us" continues to be both a way of moving in the world of mutual radical accompaniment.

Challenges

We are learning that some planned events and activities may not take place due to a number of contributing factors. We need to go back to the drawing table and replan what may be impactful in making the broader goals achievable.

One great area we need more creative ideas is on how best to animate the work we do in order to increase engagement with Regional Councils, communities of faith, and even the general public. Sometimes a lot of time is spent on planning for webinars or workshops or indeed in writing responsive statements to share on the United Church website. We do need to go further in animating our work.

Measuring systemic change is complex. Assessing changes in policies, attitudes, and systems around Indigenous pathways, racial and queer justice can be challenging. We are learning to be patient with ourselves because ours is a long-term focus. We are aware that social justice work often requires a long-term perspective, making it challenging to assess short-term impact such as in quarterly review.

Furthermore, we also continue to learn that social justice issues intersect with various aspects of identity and systems, complicating assessment beyond just naming planned activities achieved.

Looking Forward

We look forward to the task group completing the draft apology to the 2SLGBTQIA+ persons so that it could start being shared, tested and adjusted according to feedback. We are also looking forward to data informed decisions for analysis and future planning

Meanwhile, we shall be hosting the first ever partner roundtable (with 50 Global partners confirming attendance) around mutual radical accompaniment and how it might look to shift power around resource sharing.

This summer, young Indigenous youth will have the opportunity to re-connect with traditional Indigenous spiritualities and connect with Indigenous leadership.

We are also looking forward to a meeting with some of the church's key collaborators on reparations, which will include hearing more from regional councils about land and resources being given back, and gathering best practices at congregational, regional, and national levels.

Accountable: Japhet Ndhlovu

The Mod's Book Squad now has more than 515 registrations, including 74 new ones for the first quarter and 37 new ones for Q2. An average of 36 people attend each session, but attendance numbers vary depending on the book. The book store has sold 173 books in total for the Book Club, at a profit of almost \$1500 (excluding #'s for Act/Fast, which was the 2024 Lenten study). The two top sellers are "The Wall Between" (November 2023) and "The Other Side of the River" (June 2024). Perhaps, inspired by the Moderator's Book Club, The Companions of Jerusalem and Primate Linda Nicholls of the Anglican Church of Canada, are also hosting a reading and discussion of "The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know about Each Other," by Raja Khouri and Jeffrey Wilkinson.

--Lori- Ann Livingston, Media and PR Lead

Near the end of this quarter, we took some time to reflect together on our overall goal for this multi-year initiative focused on the church: "to advance racial equity by moving towards a shift in transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized peoples." We considered if our activities were helping us move towards this overall goal, or if there was anything that needed to be shifted or changed. After some careful discernment, we named that we are definitely on the right track, and moving in the direction. Sometimes, the shift in racial equity and the overall engagement on systemic change can be slow – but it is moving! That's good news! ...We are glad that the new staff data team is in place, and look forward to working with them more closely to reflect more on how data can inform our work. It is good news that we have staff resources available..."

--Adele Halliday, Anti-Racism and Equity Lead

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	80
	Indigenous Strength Learning Opportunities	70
	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	50
	Addressing Antisemitism	80
	Anti-Racism Education	100
	Addressing White Privilege	60
2S-LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS: Enhance 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights including addressing religious-induced homophobia. Shift: Towards integrating and intersecting with other justice issues.	Refugee Sponsorship	75
	LGBTQIA+ Global and Ecumenical Advocacy	80
ECUMENISM: Increase ecumenical collaboration and effectiveness. Shift: Towards stronger impact and reduction in overlap.	Ecumenical Youth Exchange	100
	Stronger Ecumenical Partnership	80
RADICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: Strengthen accompaniment of global partners. Shift: Towards needs development.	Financial Sharing	95
	Crisis Response	100
	People to People	90
	Witness	75
	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	70
	Advocacy: Presence and Methodology	75

Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship **79%**

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

Overall, the Leadership Team is finding that there are good interconnections and integrations amongst activity streams within the strategic objective area of Leadership. This is helping advance the overall strategy as it does mean we are working collectively together, albeit through individual activity streams. In being intentional about sharing our work in team meetings and identifying the interconnections and integrations, we are able to see some interesting connecting points. For instance, First Third, recruitment, and member engagement have intentionally worked together in some areas because of the commitment to prioritizing First Third ministries (among other equity identities). Leadership Counts, Admissions, recruitment, supporting equity groups in governance, the project to track the diversity of identities of applicants for GCO staff positions, and the pastoral relations equity project all connect around understanding and addressing barriers and advancing equity commitments.

The Whole People of God continuing education links with work in the cooperative ministry stream, as training for cooperative ministries is important for lay people and ministry personnel. Interestingly, 74% of the current continuing education offerings focus on leadership development for lay people, compared to 44% for ministry personnel. This data is different than what we thought, which will help us in determining next steps.

Challenges

One challenge is that some of the multi-year initiatives and our articulation of our vision of leadership need to be revisited so that we are collectively clear about the vision of leadership we are working towards and the definitions of the terms that we are using. We are learning that this clarity is necessary as we develop and work on our activity streams and key results.

One of the consistent challenges is that some work on some of the key results, in many of the activity streams, can take longer to complete than initially thought. This is never because staff are not diligent about the work; it is due to various factors including workload, interdependencies of projects with different timelines that involve different staff, external factors beyond our control. While the Leadership Team did intentionally work on creating more realistic timelines in planning for 2024, the reality is that we can never fully predict what part of the work may take a bit longer to complete. However, in the midst of that, staff continue to work on all aspects of their activity streams and key results continue to be completed, even if later than originally intended.

Looking Forward

The Leadership Team had a meeting in June to begin some informal evaluation of our collective work on advancing the multi-year initiatives and the overall objective. Doing this evaluation has also helped us to see some of the interconnections more clearly and to identify bigger picture questions, including re-visiting our vision of leadership, thinking about the leaders the church will need five and ten years in the future. We've also started to identify the quantitative and qualitative data that we do have, and how we can use that data to help us in our current activities and 2025 planning. This suggests data that we may still need, leading to determinations on how best to gather it.

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	50
	First Third Ministry Leaders	95
	Worship Resources	100
	Statement of Ministry Review	75
MINISTRY PERSONNEL: Work to align policy and systems for recruiting, training, authorizing and overseeing ministry personnel with the new Vision. Shift: Leadership development from a program to a mentorship-model (investing in ministers in first 5 years, ministers interested in developing leadership skills, Indigenous church, First Third).	Reimagine Theological Education	90
	Cooperative Ministry and Mentorship Pilot	75
	Recruitment-Ministry Personnel	85
	Appointments for Admission Ministers	50
	Leadership Counts	80
	Moderator's Initiative: (Re)Generate	100
	Pastoral Relations Equity Animation	85
ELECTED LEADERS: Support the increased diversity and effectiveness of faithful elected leaders. Shift: Towards greater inclusivity and accountability.	Support Equity Groups in Governance	75
	Equity Training	80
	Onboarding Volunteers	100
STAFF: Strengthen equity, accountability and effectiveness in General Council staff system. Shift: Towards learning culture, alignment, and evaluation against work plans.	Performance Management System	50
	Training: Learning Strategy	54
	Equity in Recruitment and Retention	100

Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources

70%

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

Activities that were behind in Q1 have since been caught up and many of the activities have significant momentum as key resources and decisions have been allocated and/or taken. In particular, the Information Management and Data Driven Decision Making projects are now making excellent progress.

The Total Compensation Review is also progressing well with successful consultations with Ministry Personnel and treasurers. They have also reviewed equity markers for compensation, researched cost of labour and cost of living concepts, gathered data on wage trends. They will begin the compilation and assessment of all this information in Q3 and will deliver a recommendation on the Cost of Living Adjustment to the GCE in September as planned.

The asynchronous learning components for treasurers was completed in Q2 and will launch publicly in Q3 providing in-depth training on very specialized skills and expertise like payroll that will greatly improve the capacity of treasurers to support their communities of faith.

The Licensing Fix for Church Hub is complete and was delivered on-time and under budget. This was a hugely successful initiative that simplifies how congregational leaders and staff access the portal.

Conversations with donors have resulted in significant commitments for ministry and the campaign to raise funds for a retreat for Indigenous ministers has been very successful and surpassed the goal set. The Centennial Legacy Campaign is also progressing well and promotional materials will be developed in Q3, building on existing resources to help congregations successfully invite their friends and members to make gifts for the future ministry of the congregation and church.

The creation of data dashboards to help with decision making and progress tracking is progressing well. Additional reporting and refining of newly created dashboards will happen throughout Q3.

Challenges

Some of the activities continue to struggle with resourcing and participation. The Grant and Donation Portal will be pivoting significantly as finding willing beta testers for a shared platform has proven incredibly difficult. Constraints in staff time supporting activities has led to delays. For example, some Key Results in the Tech Best practices and Property Resource activities are dependent on certain units or staff groups providing input or support and the workloads for those teams are such that the collaboration takes longer than anticipated.

We have made significant strides in learning around capacity to plan and report and have plans to increase support for strategic thinking throughout the remainder of the year.

Looking Forward

In Q3, we will:

- Launch of property webinars (monthly) – open for any and all who wish to talk about property issues. Subject matter experts will be present to answer questions and provide information;
- Have a fall webinar series on technology in ministry and worship;
- Move files into archival digital preservation software which modernizes the preservation of records and in due course makes them accessible to the public;
- Deliver recommendation on the 2025 Cost of Living Adjustment to the General Council Executive in September (with supporting data and trend predictions in addition to Consumer Price Index to draw-on) to facilitate decision making;
- Deliver additional reporting for Regional Councils;
- Host pilot “Ask the Expert” on transparent communications in collaboration with the Regions in Southwestern Ontario.

Accountable: Sarah Charters

When visiting a donor, he wondered why churches do not 'market themselves' well. I mentioned that people don't like to donate to marketing initiatives so he decided to give a \$60,000 gift to the Foundation and is very excited to see which churches will be successful and what types of initiatives the churches will do to promote themselves...He is hoping this will fire the imagination of churches to reach outside the box and come up with some creative ways to reach out to God's people.

--Karen Seunarine, Individual Giving Lead

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	60
	Grant and Donation Portal	0
	Technology Best Practices	50
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	50
	Fundraising: 2025 Anniversary	75
	Major and Planned Giving	85
	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)	75
	Information Management: Marketing and Contacts	20
	Digitization	90
	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	80
	Transparency	65
	Role and Structure Review	80
	Legal Capacity	100

Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments 96%

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

One of the highlights of this past quarter has been the way in which the Climate initiative has been interwoven with other strategic objectives. At the May meeting of the General Council Executive, Faithful Footprints presented its annual report, noting it has now made contact with over 500 communities of faith. This was profiled as part of a focus on the church's commitment to the Common Good. Climate commitments impacted the support being offered to regional councils and former Moderators and Presidents for the launch of the Centennial on June 9, 2024, an activity within the Growth objective. The recruitment of Youth Climate Motivators overlaps with Leadership. Also, a new travel policy is being approved which supports using greener forms of transportation. In one way, this raises the question of whether climate needs to be a separate initiative and, in another, it highlights how having climate as an objective can impact multiple areas of our operations and strategic plan.

Challenges

One of the goals of the Climate objective is "raising our spirited voices". One of the challenges is to expand how we use the voice of the General Council Office to empower/inspire local communities of faith. What is the link we need to help them make between their faith and the climate crisis?

Looking Forward

Two interests are: 1) how do we help the church find and raise a spirited voice in local contexts? And 2) how do we integrate the projects of the Climate Motivators more widely into the life of the church as a whole. There is the possibility of engaging the season of creation more intentionally with regard to this objective but also acknowledging that in 2024 it will be upon us soon and that may limit what we can do.

Accountable: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
INTEGRITY: Put our own house in order through reducing church emissions. Shift: Towards broader engagement across the church; towards system change in key related sectors.	Faithful Footprints	95
VOICE: Raise our spirited voice. Shift: Towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United church leadership in responding.	Advocacy on Climate	90
	Youth Climate Activists	100
RECONNECT: Reconnect with the Earth Shift: Towards reawakened and strengthened love for all God's creation	Eco-Spirituality	100

[Together For the Love of Creation](#) Earth week in April 2024 inspired 106 events of praying, learning and acting for climate. Of these 89 were United Church events, including five Faithful Footprint retrofit tours. There were also events led by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Anglican Church of Canada, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, KAIROS, Mennonite Church in Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, Faith and the Common Good, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as well as joint events.

--Lori Neale, Identity and Mission Network Coordinator



Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations

FAIR

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

Accomplishments

Two ordinations were a great highlight of this period, reflecting developments in ministry leadership in the Indigenous Church. On April 27, at Kahnawake United Church Robert Ronwahaweta Patton (Mohawk) was ordained to great celebration, having been approved by the Indigenous Candidacy Board. On May 5, in Chinook Winds, Shane Goldie (Cree/ Métis), currently serving in Knox United Church in Taber and St. Paul's United Church in Milk River, Alberta was ordained, the youngest serving minister in The United Church of Canada.

The Indigenous church was also fully present in the 99th Centennial service on June 10. Joni Shawana, Anishanawbe of Wikwemikong Unceded Territory, and Sandra Campbell, Wahta Mohawk First Nation, offered welcoming and gathering songs. Samantha Pepin delivered a moving gospel reading from the Mohawk Bible. Pepin is the granddaughter of the Bible's translator, Elder Harvey Satewas Gabriel, and a sixth-generation descendant of Chief Sosé Joseph Onasakenrat (Joseph Swan), who translated the gospels in the 1880s.

The work of sustaining and growing Indigenous youth leadership continues to move forward with strength. This period saw a high level of Indigenous youth recruited for Audacious Hope. In addition, significant commitments have been made to ensure stronger representation of Indigenous (and racialized youth) for General Council 45 Youth Forum (and its development)—a goal has been set of 50%.

The Indigenous church is bringing its unique and effective spiritual perspectives and ways of knowing into work of the whole church. In June of 2024, Martha Pedoniquotte shared Indigenous Approaches to Climate Action, complementing youth work on the same topic led by Joni Shawana. In the work of Indigenous justice, also reflected in the Justice objective, dedication continues in the Search the Landfill Campaign, with an important webinar held on April 21 that heard from the family of Morgan Harris.

In this period, related to the structure and long term funding model of the Indigenous church, work is being done to assess the property needs and challenges of across the country.

Challenges

Following the positive results of Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization in Q1, the Indigenous church is experiencing some growing pains as it moves

towards developing its governance and funding model for the future. The church is attending to relationships and further action is expected later in the year.

There are particular challenges in Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba where a result of racist colonial policies, chronic under-funding and neglect from government have created huge health crises. Ministers on the front-lines are in need of respite and spiritual healing and so a number of parts of the church have come together to fund an October retreat.

Looking Forward

In the latter part of this year, developments in the governance of the Autonomous Indigenous Church are expected.

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

GENERAL COUNCIL 45 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Origin: Taylor Croissant, chair of the GC45 Planning Committee

The Planning Committee has had significant discussions about the nature of General Council meetings now that we have moved to annual recall meetings. There is a hope that the annual online recall meetings will focus on small tweaks to bureaucratic policies of the church, while the triennial in-person gatherings be oriented toward major discussion and decisions which set the direction of our denomination. Our planning, therefore, has been toward creating a gathering which achieves the latter.

We have finalized the dates for 45th General Council, with orientation on April 27, two online business sessions on June 22 and 28, and in-person at the Telus Convention Centre in Calgary, August 7-11. Regional councils have been asked to elect their commissioners by November 2024, we would also like to encourage proposals to arrive to us by that date as well for translation purposes (deadlines for proposals remains April 1 2025). In August 2024, the GC45 sub-committees received youth animator interns who were oriented to the work of the Planning Committee.

Business Committee

A draft agenda has been created, and was refined following the latest Planning Committee Meeting. With regard to our vision for this and future in-person meetings of General Council, we have been asking, “What can the General Council only do in-person?” as we plan the agenda. A Way Forward Committee will be recruited this fall, and will receive staff support from Shannon McCarthy and Adele Halliday.

Worship Committee

Following the theme, “Dreams and Visions” provided by the Moderator, the Theme Committee has structured the GC45 Worship into five parts, for each in-person day of GC45, following the quotation from the Book of Acts: Elders (connecting this to the centennial), Youth, People of all sexualities and gender expressions, Dreamers and Planners, Prophets. We have also identified the central image of the Holy Spirit being poured like water, and are thinking about designing the worship space at GC45 with this image in mind. The GC45 logo will be finalized in fall 2024.

Local Arrangements

We are continuing to work on the logistics of local exposure trips for commissioners both before and after the in-person gathering in Calgary, specifically to Banff National Park. The installation of the next Moderator shall be held on the evening of August 11 at Knox United Church, 5 blocks west of the Convention Centre. Light rail transit is free downtown to move commissioners to that location

Equity Team

Beyond the chair and staff support, the rest of this committee has not been filled in and we will seek nominations in fall 2024. There has been work with Business Committee regarding the creation of a digital speakers list during business sessions using our online platform.

Youth Forum

The chair, staff support, and youth animator interns have begun the work of planning the Youth Forum, and youth interns have also now joined as members of the other sub-committees. Our goal is to have 100 participants in Youth Forum, with half of these participants being people of colour. We request the enthusiastic cooperation of regional councils to assist in the recruitment of these youth.

Recommendations

The following motion was passed at the June 19, 2024 GC45 Planning Committee meeting:

To request up to \$2,000,000 from General Council Executive to host the 45th General Council.

We are, of course, very conscious of the financial position of the United Church. The Planning Committee is requesting this amount to give ourselves cushion to be able to host the online and in-person portions of the meeting, including the Youth Forum. We will endeavor to come in under budget wherever possible.

The Business Committee has determined that Taylor Croissant and Kenji Marui should be empowered to move any motions at General Council 45, but we do not wish to serve as commissioners during the meeting so that our attention may not be divided between debating proposals and facilitating the business. A solution we have considered for this is to be named officers of the court empowered with the ability to move motions. A proposal to this effect might be presented by GCE to the recall meeting of GC44 in fall 2024.

As we requested regional councils to nominate their commissioners to GC45, we also requested their consideration of nominees to the office of Moderator. The Planning Committee has set the absolute deadline for Moderator nominations as the end on business on June 22, however it is our strong preference for nominations to be received around the April 27 orientation date. To this point, there are no nominations for Moderator across the denomination. The General Council Executive might consider a proactive recruitment campaign for nominees to be elected from regional councils in order to meet our desired April 2024 target.

Recommendation for 2025 adjustment to minimum pastoral relations salaries and to the staff system salary grid in The United Church of Canada.

Total Compensation Review Task Group September
06, 2024

In September 2023 the Executive of the General Council de-coupled the twenty-year practice of basing the annual adjustment exclusively on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to determine the annual adjustment to General and regional councils salary schedule (staff system). It gave notice of the same for the ministry personnel in pastoral relationships minimum salary schedule in 2025.

In November 2023 the Executive of the General Council established a Total Compensation Review Task Group to look at compensation practices through lenses of equitableness, adequacy, and sustainability, reporting to the 45th General Council in 2025. This task group has, to date, in addition to research and data mining, held consultations with church treasurers and ministry personnel (a total of approximately 246 participants in the online consultations) and surveyed both groups (a total of 776 respondents) with questions of sustainability, adequacy, and annual adjustment. An interim report will come to the November meeting of the Executive and final report to its winter 2025 meeting. In the meantime, it offers guidance to the General Secretary and to the Executive from its early findings to assist in its September 2024 decision about 2025 adjustments to salaries.

Cost of Living / Cost of Labour distinctions and relevance.

One of the learnings of the task group is the distinction between “cost of living” and “cost of labour”. Our practice has been to apply an annual *cost of living* adjustment to salaries that reflects the change in costs of the Consumer Price Index basket of goods and services. This is an objective economic measure of the rate of inflation in Canada. *Cost of labour*, however, measures the “price” of a service in the marketplace, based on supply of and demand for that service. Our staff system compensation policy includes a provision for some positions to be “priced” above the established salary grid if a role is valued differently in the marketplace. An example of this is some legal, IT, and pension positions which, at different times because of market forces, are valued higher.

A cost of labour assessment of our staff system positions is done periodically to determine whether we continue to be in compliance with our compensation policy commitment to market competitiveness for administrative positions (category 1 – 7) and within ten per cent of salaries in the not-for-profit sector for program and senior management positions. This is important as none of these positions require the incumbent to be ministry personnel and, in fact, the majority of these employees are drawn from the marketplace, not the church. A recent survey shows that at the administrative level (categories 1 – 4), we compensate at the top of the market. Mid-range program level positions are competitive. As we move into senior management positions we are out of policy with most positions lagging behind by more than 10%.

It is difficult to do a cost of labour analysis of vocational ministry service because it is not a “competitively traded market service” and does thus not have ready market comparators. The practice of ministry is a unique vocation, not readily transferable to other sectors, nor competitive among “employers”, or denominations (ministers can’t readily go into teaching or move back and forth among denominations). Vocational mobility is limited.

When asked, both treasurers and ministry personnel likened the role of ministry vocation to that of teaching, social working, and nursing. Thus, for consideration of an annual adjustment to salaries, the task group looked to these professions for some inclination to both the cost of labour and how the cost of living was being reflected in that cost of labour.

General commentary about Treasurer and Ministry Personnel input in consultations

While the task group has further analysis and consultation to do, and to report on in November, to date it has heard from ministry personnel that current compensation levels make it difficult to live. The cost of housing, particularly the cost of rent, has been challenging to accommodate, often makes it difficult to accept appointments or calls to many places, and creates a reluctance on the part of some ministry personnel to leave an existing appointment or call. The cost of supplemental health care, the cost of transportation, the cost of education for ministry and for ministry personnel's children generate stresses and distresses. Ministry personnel who are single described the challenges of meeting costs on a single household income while ministry personnel who are married described the necessity of two household incomes to meet expenses. These themes, while identified by ministry personnel, are not unique to ministry personnel: they are common to all Canadians across all sectors in this post-Covid economy. Although these factors are not limited to ministry personnel, we must consider the limited vocational opportunities and options for ministry personnel, making them a more "captive labour" pool.

Treasurers described the financial constraints of increased costs of goods and services, including salaries, at a time of decreased donations and revenues. Some described having moved to part time ministry positions or anticipating having to do so. Some described forging relationships with neighbouring United Churches or ecumenical partners to preserve full time ministry positions and economize on shared services. The task group heard an openness to collaborative ministries and a desire for more resources to explore and support those potential collaborative relationships. There appears to be considerable resiliency in communities of faith as they seek cost savings and community partnerships, leverage buildings, and adopt stewardship practices.

Both ministry personnel and treasurers, when asked what should be taken into consideration when determining an annual adjustment to salaries pointed to the CPI as an important, and objective, measure to incorporate into decision-making.

Principles of call and vocation

Typically, in the marketplace, compensation is a transactional vehicle: one pays x to buy y service. Vocational ministry practice is not a commodity, good or service bought and sold. The church understands it to be a response to a divine call to the sacramental, prophetic, pastoral and teaching ministries that the church discerns God calls it to. Ministry is a dynamic relationship of call and response, inspiration and healing, challenge and charge. Some religious traditions provide fully for their vocational leaders' material and temporal needs (for example, traditions of monastic or communal living). Others refer to providing a stipend in lieu of a traditional salary that allows the minister to step away from secular work to provide for self and family and devote themselves to religious study and service. The United Church has not typically called its vocational ministers "out of the world", for example as a Catholic priest might be called. While ministry personnel are, for employment purposes, recognized as religious office holders, and thus exempt from employment standards in most jurisdictions, the United Church has sought to bring values of equity and fairness to its engagement of ministry personnel and has valued the intersection of faith leadership

integrated in the secular world. Thus, we speak in secular terms of compensation and salary recognizing that ministry personnel live in a secular mixed market world. The task group speaks in such terms while also recognizing that ministry practice is not at all a typical transactional arrangement between an employee and employer.

Presbyterian, Lutheran and Anglican church practices for determining annual adjustment

The most common factor used by our Canadian church siblings to determine the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) is the CPI. However, the way in which the CPI is used varies between denominations and regions.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada (who, like the United Church, sets minimum salaries nationally) considers the year-on-year increases in CPI from June to May.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church of Canada set their salaries at the synod and diocesan level. Examples of how the CPI is considered within these denominations are:

- Using the annual average CPI to determine COLA, but that the COLA can never go above a certain percentage (such as 3% in the Diocese of Montreal);
- Using a provincial, rather than national, CPI (such as the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and the Diocese of Montreal);
- Using the CPI from a fixed month, either August (with Dioceses then announcing in October what the January COLA will be) or December (to take effect the following year);
- An averaging of annual CPI over three years.

Other dioceses and synods take into account the parishes' ability to pay in balance with general employment market conditions. The Anglican Diocese of Toronto and the Saskatchewan Evangelical Lutheran Synod are examples.

It is important to note that the COLA relates to the stipend (base salary) portion of a minister's compensation. Therefore, for clergy who are provided housing, or who are provided a housing allowance based on fair rental value, the COLA would have less impact than those who are paid a comprehensive salary.

2025 compensation adjustment trends

The annualized CPI in July 2024 overall was 2.5% (food 2.1%; shelter 5.7%; transportation 2.0%).

The Federal Planning Bureau projects consumer price inflation at 3.2% in 2024 and 2.0% in 2025. The average growth rate of the so-called 'health price index', which is used for the price indexation of wages, social benefits and house-rent, should be 3.2% in 2024 and 2.0% in 2025.

The Canadian wage growth trend is projected to be 3.4% in 2025. This is based on a survey of more than 350 organizations.

Most Anglican and Lutheran dioceses and synods have not finalized their COLA for 2025. The Presbyterians agreed at their Assembly in June 2024 to continue following the formula agreed upon in 2007 (average monthly CPI June 2023 to May 2024). That would make their COLA for 2025 3.1%. The Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has set their COLA to be 3.4%.

A sampling of collective agreement settlements in the education and nursing sectors across the country include wage increases of 2.0 – 3.0% with some outliers (5.0% Manitoba Northern Regional Health Authority and Churchill).

There are very limited data sources on specific trends for the non-for-profit sector due to several factors which influence wage trends in this specific sector:

- Demand for Services – as demand for services increase organizations need to offer competitive wages to attract talent. ie: take nurses – high demand during COVID double the increase in wages due to demand:
- Not-for-profits are heavily informed by government-funded agencies, thus changes in government funding, grants, and donations can significantly impact salary budgets and, consequently, on wages. On the other hand, economic growth can lead to increased funding for NFP, potentially allowing increase in wages;
- Many not-for-profits are regionally based with salaries/wages specific to local and regional conditions;
- Certain roles specifically in administration, program management, fundraising, may see different wage trends based on market demand.

Collective Agreements are generally public information hence readily accessible information.

Recommended adjustment for 2025

Given these multiple factors (and given that treasurers expect an increase at least commensurate with the CPI), **the task group recommends to the General Secretary a 2025 adjustment of 2.5 – 3.0% with a strong bias towards 3.0%** given ministry personnel's experience of vulnerability in the shelter sector (which is running at a 5.7% CPI). It further recommends that the same adjustment be applied to both the pastoral relations system minimum salaries and to the General and regional councils staff system salaries. It is noted that in 2024 ministry personnel in the pastoral relations system had a 6.3% adjustment to minimum salaries and staff in the General and regional councils system 2.0%.

Data summary

CPI (July 2024)	Overall 2.5% Food 2.1% Shelter 5.7% Transportation 2.0%	While GCE 2023 “decoupled” the annual adjustments to salaries from CPI, both treasurers and ministry personnel identified it as a fair and reliable measure of cost of living that should be taken into consideration.
Federal Planning Bureau	2.0% 2025	Average consumer price inflation should be 3.2% in 2024 and 2.0% in 2025, compared to 4.06% in 2023 and 9.59% in 2022. The average growth rate of the so-called 'health price index', which is used for the price indexation of wages, social benefits and house-rent, should be 3.2% in 2024 and 2.0% in 2025, compared to 4.33% in 2023 and 9.25% in 2022. https://www.plan.be/databases/17-en-consumer-price-index-inflation-forecasts#:~:text=On%20the%20basis%20of%20these,2023%20and%209.59%25%20in%202022.

Canadian wage growth trend 2024	3.4%	https://www.plan.be/databases/17-en-consumer-price-index-inflation-forecasts
Mercer Pulse Survey forecast 2024	3.1%	https://www.imercer.com/ca/ARTICLEDETAIL/projected-salary-increase-budgets-holding-canada 2025 forecast will not be available until September 2024.
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and Secondary School Teachers' Federation	2.75% 2024-25 2.5% 2025-26	
Saskatchewan Teachers Federation	3.0% 2025 and 2026 2.0% 2027	
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association	2% each year 2022-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-time teacher recognition bonus payment of \$2,000. • Wage recognition to ensure competitiveness. • Recruitment and retention incentives for teachers in rural and remote regions of the province. •
BC Public School Employer's Association	2.0% 2025 plus up to an additional 1.0%	<p>Year 2022/23: \$427 added to each step of the grid; plus an additional 3.24% general wage increase; eliminate the bottom step of all grids</p> <p>Year 2023/24: 5.5% general wage increase; plus up to an additional 1.25% COLA, subject to specific criteria; add 0.3% to the top step of all grids</p> <p>Year 2024/25: 2% general wage increase plus up to an additional 1.0% COLA, subject to specific criteria; add 0.11% to the top step of all grids</p>
Manitoba Nurses Association	2.75% 2025	2.5 per cent in 2024, 2.75 per cent in 2025, 3 per cent in 2026, 3 per cent in 2027
Manitoba Northern Regional Health Authority and Churchill	5.0% 2024 5.0% 2025	
Ontario Nurses Association	8.5% 2024 3.0% 2025	During the two-year term of the new collective agreement, nurses will receive an 11.5-per cent salary increase (8.5 per cent in 2024 and 3 per cent in 2025)
Nova Scotia Health Authority and The Nova	2.0% 2024/2025	https://www.nshealth.ca/about-nova-scotia-health/reports-statistics-and-accountability/collective-agreements

Scotia Council of Nursing Unions		
Nova Scotia Public School Teachers	3.0%	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/tentative-contract-nova-scotia-teachers-1.7190964
Altis Recruitment	Not-for-profit 3.1% Business services 4.4% Finance and Insurance 3.9% Information Technology 3.7% Professional Services 4.2%	
Canadian church colleagues	Presbyterians: 3.1% Eastern Synod Evangelical Lutheran: 3.4%	<p>Most Anglican and Lutheran dioceses and synods have not finalized their COLA for 2025. The Presbyterians did agree at their Assembly in June to continue following the formula agreed upon in 2007 (average monthly CPI June 2023 to May 2024). That would make their COLA for 2025 3.1%. https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2024/reports-to-general-assembly/</p> <p>The Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has set their COLA to be 3.4%. https://easternsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/Compensation-Schedule-2025.pdf</p>

Consent Proposals

GCE 09 CHANGE TO BASIS OF UNION: IV. REGIONAL COUNCILS; SECTION 6.2

Origin: The Executive of the 44th General Council

1. What is the issue?

Before the restructuring in 2019, Presbyteries had the ability to appoint up to 10 lay members at large. The Conferences were also able to increase their membership with representatives of lay organizations the Conference recognized. This ability was lost during the transition to regional council structure.

The ability of a regional council to elect at-large members is important to reflect the diversity within the regional council and have the benefit of these members' input and wisdom.

2. Why is this issue important?

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

5. For People who Retired as Designated Lay Ministers
 - a. strongly encourage regional councils to review their practices under C.2.1 b) and I.2.4.1 b) of The Manual to consider, in light of the leadership roles and acquired experience of many lay members who retired as designated lay minister, granting both licences to administer the sacraments, and membership in the regional council to lay members who retired as designated lay ministers and are resident within the regional council; and
 - b. encourage regional councils to review their policies on voluntary associate ministry and eligibility to practice other functions of ministry as may apply to lay members who have retired as designated lay ministers.

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

The Manual Committee is also aware that Manual C.1.2b is ultra vires to the Basis of Union, and that the Basis of Union takes precedence

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

The Executive request that the 2024 Annual Meeting of the 44th General Council make the following changes to Section 6.2 of the Basis of Union and authorize the appropriate remit (Category 2):

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

6.2.4 ~~additional lay members elected by the Regional Council to reflect diversity; the total number not to exceed 10 percent of the number of lay members elected under section 6.2.3.~~

4. What will be the impact?

The recommendation will enable regional councils to grant membership to retired DLMs. It would also regularize efforts already made (using C.1.2b) to broaden regional council membership to reflect the equity aspirations of the church as well as authorizing and encouraging further efforts in this regard.

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

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

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

This is a follow up to GS74 (GCE November 17-18, 2023)

GS 97 46TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2028 LOCATION

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The site of the meeting of General Council has rotated from west, to central, to east to central regions of Canada. The 45th General Council 2025 was scheduled to be hosted in the central region of Canada. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the decision to host a virtual meeting for the 44th General Council, the western region would lose its turn. Chinook Winds regional council, the host of the 44th Council, expressed deep disappointment in not being able to host. The central regions requested that the General Secretary explore with Chinook Winds the possibility of being the host for the 45th General Council since they would be losing their opportunity. In consultation with Chinook Winds regional council, there was an overwhelming YES! The decision to stay in the west, means that the 46th General Council should be hosted by the central region. The General Secretary has received an offer from Horseshoe Fall regional council to host the General Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

Making the decision now provides us with an opportunity to identify the appropriate venue.

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

The General Secretary proposes: That the Executive of the General Council

- **accept the invitation of Horseshoe Falls regional council to host the 46th General Council 2028, and**
- **direct the General Secretary to work with the regional council to identify the appropriate venue, to report back to the 45th General Council**

4. For the Body Transmitting this proposal to the GCE:

N/A

Appendix III

GS 98 ANNUAL ECONOMIC MINIMUM SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2025

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

In 2024 the Executive gave notice that the 2025 Annual Economic Adjustment would no longer be calculated using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as the only factor for determining the economic increase. The Executive also decoupled the General Council Staffing System from the Pastoral Relations System.

The Executive also requested that the Task Group on Total Compensation offer an interim recommendation as to the rate for the 2025. The Task Group has now offered its recommendation. The Executive is being asked to approve the rate for 2025.

2. Why is this issue important?

Prior to 2023, the practice has been for the General Secretary to inform the Executive on the rate of the Annual Economic Adjustment based on the 2002 policy: *"the application of the last completed year's December year-end cost of living increase as the cost of living for the next year. That this figure would be determined by the Human Resources Committee and applied to the General Council/Conference staff system and the Ministry Personnel minimum with reporting for information to the Executive of the General Council."* (GCE 2002-04-26-0364)

The 2023 decision has left the process without an agreed formula. The Total Compensation Task group has been asked to offer recommendation on an interim basis until their final report in 2025. The Task group has offered a range in their recommendation. The Financial Advisory Group and the Management Team is offering the Executive option/

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

The General Secretary proposes that:

With the recommendation of the Total Compensation Task group and the advice of the Finance Advisory Group and the Management Team, the economic increase for the pastoral relations system for 2025 be 2.5%

4. For the Body Transmitting this proposal to the GCE:

This proposal is a follow up to the 2023 decision with respect to COLA.

Appendix IV

GS 102 GROUP BENEFITS PLANS 2025 PREMIUMS AND PLAN CHANGES

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

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

Each year staff review the current plan design, premium rates, claims experience and reserves with advice from the plan's benefit consultants (HUB). As is customary, staff make recommendations to the Executive of General Council for any plan design changes and premium rates for the next calendar year.

2. Why is this issue important?

To meet our fiduciary duties to the plan members and the participating employers and to ensure that the plan's benefits are relevant premium rates should be reviewed and amended regularly to respond to changes in claims experience, plan membership, salaries and other key assumptions and benefit provisions assessed against industry standards and member expectations.

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

It is recommended that

- The Executive of the General Council:
 - approve an increase to the annual dental maximum from \$1,500 to \$2,500
 - approve an increase to the lifetime maximum fertility and surrogacy benefit from \$3,500 to \$20,000
 - set 2025 active member premiums for:
 - core health, dental and life insurance at 8.33% of pensionable earnings (an increase from 7.7%) paid by the employer;
 - restorative care at 1.35% of pensionable earnings (no increase) paid by the employer;
 - employer indemnity at 0.14% of pensionable earnings (no increase) paid by the employer;
 - long term disability at 2.82% of pensionable earnings (an increase from 2.33%) paid by the employee.

4. What will be the impact?

This is a routine annual request to support the effective management of the benefit plans. The request for benefit improvements will have a positive impact:

- the increase in fertility and surrogacy coverage will show support for DEI initiatives;
- active employees will appreciate the increase in the annual dental maximum.

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

Not applicable

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

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

Appendix V

GS 100 REQUEST FROM THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada was one of the founding members of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) in 1944. The Council is celebrating 80 years this year and is engaging in a campaign to raise \$650,000. As a founding member the Council is requesting that The United Church of Canada contribute:

On this occasion we invite The United Church of Canada – even as you prepare to celebrate your own 100th anniversary - to make a special one-time 80th anniversary gift above and beyond your faithful annual member contributions.

2. Why is this issue important?

Not only has the United Church been a founding member of the Council. It had been one of its major supporters both financial and human resources. United Church of Canada members have served as Presidents (Lois Wilson, was the first woman president of the Council), General Secretaries (most recently Karen Hamilton) and members of the governing boards and working groups. In the recent review of grants from the budget, funding to several Canadian partners were reduced, in part because of the challenge with the interconnection of their work with the overall direction of the strategic plan.

This request comes at a time when we are also experiencing declining revenue, and a commitment to robustly support the strategic direction of the church. The ongoing relationship with ecumenical bodies is an unanswered question as we move forward juggling the challenges of limited financial capacity.

As a management team, we would benefit from your wisdom

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

The General Council Executive might direct the General Secretary to support or not support the campaign on behalf of the United Church by either making a designated or percentage contribution or to decline at this time

4. What will be the impact?

The Council intends to use the funds to support three initiatives till 2027 as they are working on a long-term sustainable process for the Council. They have identified these objectives:

- (a) secure support and strengthen the impact of the programs of the Council through 2027, (b) invest in connecting with over 500 young adults leading the church today, and (c) extend our active engagement to over 1000 local worshipping communities and networks across Canada.

The focus on young adults could be consistent with the commitment to leadership development which is a key part of the strategic objectives of the strategic plan, there might be some synergy with this activity.

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

The Council has been one of the spaces where the United Church has contributed to enriching the ecumenical landscape and has enabled us to work across diverse theological, cultural and economic divide.

Appendix VI

GS 99 APPROVAL OF 2025 OPERATING BUDGET

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The General Council Office of the United Church of Canada has historically relied on cost reduction and reserve funding to cover annual budgets, as Mission and Service revenues have continued to decline. This has led to “once in a triennium” multimillion-dollar expense cuts, including double-digit grant reductions and staff downsizing in 2007, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2021. As part of the implementation of a new funding model in 2019, governor guidance included a commitment to “live within our means,” which remains a key principle for ongoing annual budgeting. In 2023, a deficit budget of \$4 million was approved, which was reduced to \$2.3 million in 2024. The Finance Advisory Committee has continuously emphasized that ongoing cost containment is essential for achieving long-term financial sustainability.

In the recommended 2025 budget, the operating deficit has been reduced to \$2 million. Of this amount, \$0.5 million is proposed to be funded from the Indigenous Church’s reserve funding, with the remaining \$1.5 million to be covered by the general operating reserve. During the development of the 2025 Budget Principles and Assumptions, a thorough analysis of reserve funding was conducted, concluding that the total operating budget deficit, before transfers from reserves, must not exceed \$2 million. The recommended 2025 budget complies with the findings of the operating reserve analysis.

While Mission and Service revenues have been declining over time, assessment revenues have remained stable since the implementation of the new funding model in 2019. The 2025 assessment amounts are based on 2023 church statistics, and it is likely that these will represent the high-water mark for assessment revenue. These revenues are shared between the General Council Office and the sixteen Regional Councils and are intended to fund the broader church’s governance and decision-making structure. During the 2024 budget development process, it became evident that total assessment revenues are insufficient to fully fund the intended work. The general consensus among governors is that congregations are unable to afford an increase in assessments given the current financial challenges. The General Council Office budget has absorbed the funding deficits to date, but this approach will become increasingly unsustainable. From 2025 onwards, the financial viability of maintaining the current governance structure will require ongoing discernment.

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

This is the seventh post-restructure budget, but only the third since the ratification of an updated vision for the denomination. While ongoing cost reductions will still be required, some deferral of major cuts could allow the emerging strategic plan to gain traction.

2. Why is this issue important?

This is an annual governance action that sets the financial parameters within which staff are to operate. The annual budgeting process encompasses four stages: consultation, establishment of budgeting principles and assumptions, development of a high-level operating budget, and alignment of program spending with the strategic plan. The 2025 Operating Budget recommended in this proposal sets the financial parameters within which staff are to operate and develop 2025 work plans.

The primary objective of the 2025 budgeting process is to prioritize the allocation of financial resources in line with strategic priorities and the Church's Vision and Call while optimizing the core cost structure to ensure the Church's long-term financial health and sustainability.

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

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

The General Secretary recommends

That the General Council Executive approve the 2025 Operating Budget, as detailed at the end of this proposal, which has been developed in accordance with the budget principles and assumptions approved at the May 2024 GCE meeting. The budget includes a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Any incremental salary costs will need to be covered within the existing budget.

2025 OPERATING BUDGET PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Budget Target:

- a) Total Operating Budget Deficit before transfer from operating reserves must not exceed \$2 million.**

Budget Principles

- b) All financial and investment decisions must be evaluated through the lens of affordability and sustainability.**

- c) All financial resource allocation decisions must be evaluated through the lens of alignment with and linkage to strategic plan objectives.
- d) Budget and programming decisions must be linked to proactive communication planning and delivery.
- e) We will strive to be as transparent as possible regarding the likely future direction of our spending and the likelihood of future reductions. When known, we will provide two or more years' notice of a phased, complete cut.
- f) We are seeking to evolve to a triennial approach to budgeting. Most immediately, we are focusing on 2025 with consideration of the financial forecast for 2026-2027, but will extend that process as we gain more information about the state of the church post-COVID.
- g) Non-recurring expenditures, such as the structure review and triennial General Council meetings, are excluded from the operating budget and funded from the operating reserve directly, with close monitoring of the reserve's long-term financial health to ensure the minimum reserve policy is being followed.
- h) Annual budgeted withdrawals from operating reserve not to exceed \$2 million. The \$2 million limit excludes non-recurring expenses, such as those for General Council meetings and Centennial Celebrations, as these costs are directly funded by the operating reserve.
- i) Annual spending on strategic plan growth initiatives, funded by the Hope Bequest fund, should not exceed \$1 million.

Revenue Assumptions:

- j) Continued decline, albeit to a lesser magnitude, of \$600,000 in 2025 Mission & Service contributions using the 2023 actual Mission & Service as the baseline.
- k) The budgeted Bequest income for 2025 is set at \$1.8 million, which will be directed in its entirety towards the 2025 operating budget, continuing the practice established from 2019 to 2024. Any Bequest income exceeding \$1.8 million will be added to the operating reserve to support the church's future endeavors.
- l) Increasing the assessment rate is not recommended for 2025/2026 but could be put on the table for GC45 in 2025. The whole basis for the new financial model was for the financial capacity of the broader church to align with congregational health and ability to fund.
- m) Other revenues generated by the General Council Office, such as fees, bank account interest, and bookstore sales, etc. are to be shared between governance and Mission and Ministry.
- n) Inflation is expected to continue moderating but is not anticipated to return to pre-COVID levels soon; the current inflation rate as of February 2024 stands at 3.1%.
- o) **[New]** *The 2025 Annual Salary adjustment (COLA) for the General Council Staff system is set at 2.5%, which aligns with the recommendation from the Total Compensation task group and the financial sustainability mandate previously approved by the GCE.*
- p) In 2025, a strategic effort to enhance operational efficiencies and reduce costs will lead to the elimination of 6.5 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs). To contain severance costs

and mitigate any adverse effects on staff morale and program impact, these reductions will primarily target vacant positions resulting from terminations or retirements.

- q) The funding for Mission and Service revenue-funded grants will remain consistent with the 2024 levels. Starting from 2026, these grants will be linked to Mission and Service contributions.
- r) In 2025, assessment allotments to regional council offices will be reduced by a net total of \$150,000. This reduction will be achieved by discontinuing the contingent grant of \$150,000, which was initially created to assist with contingencies that may arise during the 2019 New Funding Model implementation process.
- s) The Indigenous church will continue to be funded for 2025, pending further discernment regarding sustainable funding and the use of the Indigenous reserves. A portion of the total budget, specifically \$500,000, will be sourced from the reserves of the Indigenous church.
- t) The Program budgets to be held constant at the 2024 level. While management continues to deliberate on the future role of the General Council Office, staff believe that safeguarding a certain level of program funding is essential. Program funding not only represents an investment in the future, but it is also a key metric followed by donors and church members.
- u) Continue to tighten control over travel and meeting expenditures and use the strategic plan to assist in prioritizing travel and meeting planning. In the 2024 budget, a target saving of 40% of pre-COVID expenditure was mandated as a cost reduction measure, implying a significant cultural shift in what we choose to participate in and how.

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

The 2025 budget proposal and the previously approved guiding principles and assumptions underlying the budget have been developed with input from the national Staff Leaders group and vetted by the Finance Advisory Committee. Finance Advisory Committee recommends this budget with moderate deficit as a necessary, but further actions need to be taken to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

The Finance Advisory Committee emphasizes that it's vital to monitor operating reserve funding on a regular basis, and the annual draw to support operating budget must not exceed the red line, \$2 million, established based on the recent reserve funding study.

The Finance Advisory Committee's support is based on a commitment to continued cost reduction in coming fiscal years, a sustained long-term focus on "living within our means", and developing a clear shared understanding by the church of what is meant by this phrase.

With regards to the budget assumption (s), the committee supports drawing down an additional \$500,000 from the operating reserves to maintain funding for the Indigenous Church. As the Indigenous Church progresses on its journey to establish an autonomous national organization, creating a sustainable financial framework is crucial. The committee also stresses the importance of the General Council Office continuing its dialogue with the

Indigenous Church to jointly explore what financial sustainability might look like for both parties.

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

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

The United Church of Canada

Operating Budget

For the fiscal year of 2025, with comparative information for 2024

(amounts in thousands of Canadian dollars)

	2024			2025		
	Operating	Shared Costs	Total	Operating	Shared Costs	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Revenues						
Mission and Service Contributions	19,500		19,500	20,220		20,220
Denominational Assessments	10,750		10,750	10,775		10,775
Interest Incomes	500		500	260		260
Bookstore Sales	350		350	400		400
Internal Investment Admin Fees	900		900	800		800
Other Revenues and Recoveries	953	4,392	5,345	865	4,503	5,270
Total Revenues	32,953	4,392	37,345	33,320	4,503	37,725
Expenses						
Salaries and Benefits	15,850	3,961	19,811	15,831	4,060	19,792
Mission and Service Grants	7,429		7,429	7,309		7,309
Denominational Assessment Grants	6,590		6,590	6,440		6,440
Infrastructure Expenditures	2,999	431	3,430	3,290	443	3,733
Governance Costs	426		426	450		450
Program Expenditures	1,959		1,959	2,000		2,000
Total Expenses	35,253	4,392	39,645	35,320	4,503	39,725
Net Deficits before Transfers	(2,300)	0	(2,300)	(2,000)	0	(2,000)

Note:

1. The Shared Costs include recoveries of operating expenses from the UCC Pension Plan, the Benefits Program, the Foundation, and other self-funded services.

Appendix VII

GS 92 CREATING SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

At the General Council Executive meeting in October 2023, updated versions of the Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Violence policy and the Sexual Misconduct policy were submitted for approval. Upon review, it was agreed that a thorough re-examination of the policies, with input from different users, would be undertaken in early 2024. An ad hoc committee was struck in January 2024, comprised of the following members:

Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson	Vocational Minister
Rev. Adam Hall	Pastoral Relations Minister
Rev. Laurie O’Leary	Complaint Response Consultant
Rev. Leith Saunders	Complaint Response Consultant, Investigator,
Reviewer Nicole Smith	Response Committee Member
Lisa Giffin	Policy Writer and HR Specialist
Karen Valley	Program Coordinator – Pastoral Relations and Remedial Processes

The following priorities were noted by the committee:

- Awareness that the policy has a wide audience including ministry personnel, General Council Office or Regional Council Office employees, communities of faith employees, volunteers and members and must be written so that all users can both understand it and apply it to their work/experience
- Increase usability of the documents, including information organization and structure
- Address repetition between the two policies to decrease confusion around which policy should apply when a complaint is brought forward
- Focus information on the policy, ensure operating procedures are straightforward, consistent and accessible

Based on this review, the working group has drafted a document that combines the two policies. Additionally, the operating procedures connected to the policy have been moved to another document. The operating procedures will continue to be available to all users so processes remain transparent and accessible. These changes have focused the information, reduced the length of the documents and have made the information more concise and easier to understand.

The draft policy has also been thoroughly vetted by Past Moderator Richard Bott.

2. Why are these issues important?

Employers have a legislative responsibility to ensure policies covering these topics are available and applicable. A shorter and more straight forward policy ensures that all users, regardless of their background or position, understand their rights, responsibilities and the consequences of violating the policy. Clear and concise information makes the policy accessible and reduces confusion and ambiguity.

As well, this revised policy provides the information users need to understand the commitment The United Church of Canada has made to reduce incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence and all forms of sexual misconduct. Stakeholders will feel empowered to report incidents they experience or observe, knowing that steps will be taken in a transparent, fair and consistent manner.

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

Adopt the proposed policy and direct the General Secretary to operationalize.

4. What will be the impact?

This revised policy provides the framework to create consistency in application of complaint reporting and resolution processes across all responsible bodies that adopt the policy. This will help to minimize risk to organizations and will build and enhance trust in complaint response mechanisms as increased understanding and awareness is created.

5. How does this proposal help us live into our commitment to upholding the legislative requirements around reducing discrimination, harassment including bullying, violence and the theological commitments made by The United Church of Canada around eradicating sexual misconduct?

This proposed version is an expansion on the current policies and is intended to deepen the operationalization of conduct expectations across Church environments. It offers a clear picture around how responsible bodies will lead the implementation of these expectations, what support mechanisms can be accessed and the commitment to consistent application of complaint response procedures across diverse environments.

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

Human Resources is committed to ensuring policies are developed to support the strategic vision of The United Church of Canada and to create procedures that embed that vision into operational systems. This revised policy will assist in meeting organizational goals that include creating safer and more respectful environments for all users.

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

N/A

Appendix VIII

GS 103 AUTHORIZING ACTION FOR A PRINCIPLE-BASED APPROACH TO JUSTICE WORK IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

General Council 44 received the following proposals:

[GCE03](#): A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada
[GCE04](#): A Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

Along with the following proposals from regional councils considered collectively

[CS01](#), [SW09](#), [FSL01](#), [PM02](#), [RC1501](#), [SW02](#) Peace in Palestine and Israel

The General Council made the following decisions in response:

[GCE03](#):

That the 44th General Council, 2022, affirm the proposal GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada.

Carried (ROP, p. 101)

[GCE04](#):

That GCE04 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel be postponed definitely until the completion of the work of GCE03 A Principle-Based Approach to Justice Work in The United Church of Canada. Carried (ROP, p.101)

With regard to [CS01](#), [SW09](#), [FSL01](#), [PM02](#), [RC1501](#), [SW02](#) Peace in Palestine and Israel, the Facilitation Team noted the following feedback from the discussion groups:

Specifically, there is strong support for maintaining solidarity with Palestinians living under occupation, and holding that in tension with the desire to be good interfaith partners with Jewish communities in Canada and abroad. The Facilitation Team heard the desire to stand in costly solidarity with Palestinians through specific tactics like BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), and promoting human rights of Palestinians as important and immediate actions. There was expressed discomfort with using the term apartheid, especially in light of the history of that system of oppression's origins in Canada's Indian Act.

An initial motion to take no action was defeated (ROP, p. 103). When the matter returned to the General Council, the following decision was made:

That the 44th General Council, 2022, in response to CS01 Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, SW09 Justice and Peace for Palestine and Israel (NEW), FSL01 Responding to our Global Partner Kairos Palestine, PM02 A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine Cry of Hope, RC1501 Responding to our

Global Partner Kairos Palestine, SW02 Raising our Voice for Human Rights postpone definitely these proposals until the implementation of GCE04.

Carried (ROP, p. 107)

At its meeting on October 21, 2023, the General Council received the Report of the Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, Draft Principles for Justice Work in The United Church of Canada, and an accompanying proposal [TICIF 02: Principles Based Justice Work](#), which included the following in the section, “Why is this important?”

The United Church has used a policy-based approach to its justice and advocacy ministry for decades. For the most part, the policies are reflective of a particular time in history and limited by the current realities of the time. Changes to policies are often slow because of our governance processes. With dynamic and evolving contexts, policy statements made in specific moments in time find us out of sync with the calls of partners and with rapidly changing global realities. Increasingly, because of changing global and political contexts and requests from partners and civil society organizations, the United Church finds it difficult to be responsive due to the limitations of its policies.

Shifting to a principles-based approach to our justice work will enable the church to respond more quickly to situations of injustice, while at the same time being guided by a consistent framework. The principles give direction and guidance to national staff and national committees in the church’s work to seek justice and fullness of life.

The principles outlined in the report

are: Anti-oppression

Truth-telling

Holistic scope

Respect for human dignity

Full participation and decolonization

Equity, Mutuality, Respect and

Reparations Costly and Prophetic

Solidarity.

with the preface that:

The principles outlined ... are intentionally interdependent and are informed by the United Church’s policies, affirmations, and commitments. The principles give direction and guidance to national staff and national committees in the church’s work to seek justice and fullness of life. Other councils, staff, lay people, and ministry personnel of the United Church may choose to draw on these principles to guide their own speaking and acting.

At the October 21, 2023 meeting, the General Council decided:

That the General Council:

- a)** adopt in principle the proposed Principles, with any necessary revisions to be brought to the 45th General Council 2025 for final adoption. Such revisions will be based on the experience

and evaluation of using these principles to respond to situations of injustice and to requests from partners, and

- b)** encourage further conversation with the Indigenous church about ways to include Indigenous spiritual teachings into the Principles document and to bring suggestions and revisions to the 45th General Council 2025.

Carried.

Both the report and the preface to the motion give direction to national staff and national committees to act on the principles without specifically authorizing that action. With the “dynamic and evolving” situation in Palestine-Israel, the benefits of a principle-based approach are clear. The issue is that:

The General Council

- a)** adopted a principle-based approach with the expectation that staff will respond to justice concerns in a timely AND ALSO
- b)** held discussions in which it named discomfort with certain responses and took action that brings this matter before it again.

If the General Council acts on the specific proposals and sets a policy on Palestine-Israel at this time, it is at odds with its own decision to employ the principles and review at General Council 45.

2. Why is this issue important?

The General Secretary, as the senior staff and administrative officer of the General Council, its executive, and its sub-executive (The Manual D.4.2.3) has received two sets of instructions:

- 1) the General Council, in receiving the report and adopting [TICIF02](#) on October 21, 2023, set in place a process that calls for the General Secretary to respond to emerging justice concerns;
- 2) at the same time, the General Council indicated its preferences through the discussion groups and summary of their input provided by the Facilitation Team in July, 2022 plus its decision to postpone certain proposals definitely until the principles were in place, suggesting the General Council’s intention to respond to the topic of these proposals itself.

The church is impatient for action (as noted by correspondence and an additional proposal on this topic received from a Commissioner in the interim: [NEW01](#) GCE May, 2024) but it is unclear whether the General Secretary is free to act based on the principles or the General Council wishes to act on the matter based on the principles.

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

The Executive of General Council might:

- a)** apprise the General Council of the dilemma posed by its two decisions that both agree on the value of applying a principle-based approach to justice work in The United Church of Canada but lack clarity as to who will apply the principles, particularly with relevance to Palestine and Israel;
- b)** update the General Council that work is underway concerning antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia; and

c) make recommendations to the General Council as it considers the proposals which have been postponed definitely.

Appendix IX

GS 101 General Council 45 Budget Proposal

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The Executive of the General Council authorizes the budget for the meeting of the General Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

The budget for the meeting of the General Council is funded from The United Church of Canada reserves. The Executive of the General Council has oversight both over the health of the reserve and the meeting of the General Council and seeks to make decisions in the best interest of both.

The budget for General Council 45 reflects insights and changes since the last in-person meeting of General Council in 2018. It also reflects what is needed to facilitate a hybrid meeting that names inclusivity and diversity as its goals and which dreams of involving youth and young adults.

Following General Council 43, it was agreed that adapting a gymnasium into a space that accommodates a comfortable in-person gathering and livestreaming equipment is challenging. A convention space is designed for such a meeting and, when the invitation from Chinook Winds to host General Council 44 was accepted, the Telus Convention Centre in Calgary was booked. The space provides well for these needs.

Plans for General Council 44 were disrupted by COVID, turning it into an online event and denying Chinook Winds the opportunity to welcome the General Council in their region. When asked, Chinook Winds indicated they would welcome that opportunity for General Council 45. Many thanks to the regional council for providing key leaders for two consecutive regional councils.

Contracts were in place from before COVID and plans continued with these providers. As with most venues, the meal provider is dictated by the site. Telus works with the Marriott resulting in a higher daily cost for meals than in the past. Additionally, accommodation was secured near the convention centre. In the period since Chinook Winds first invited the General Council, these costs have increased. General Council staff are working hard to find economies wherever possible and to encourage commissioners to share accommodation and to donate towards the expense.

The costs within our control such as the budget for worship or the business committee have remained relatively constant from our last in-person meeting with the primary increase due to the cost for attendees. Other increases reflect commitments the church has made to support the needs of Commissioners and to engage 100 youth in our centennial year. Additionally, when the General Council meets outside of central Canada, travel costs rise. A draft budget is attached for information.

Recognizing the investment that is being made in this meeting, the agenda is being designed to enable the church to do in person that which is best done in person and to recognize that items that can be managed online thanks to our increasing skill with that may be handled that way.

3. What might the Executive of General Council do?

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of General Council authorize the budget for the 45th General Council for up to \$2 million.