

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: The Nominations Committee, Executive of the General Council

Executive Summary

The Nominations Committee is called to identify and recommend for appointment or election to committees and other groups, individuals who exemplify the values and vision of the United Church of Canada, and to bring diverse perspectives and skills to the table. In this function, the Nominations Committee plays a vital role in the spiritual and organizational health of our denomination. So far this term, the Nominations Committee has recommended over 150 appointments with at least equal that number of recommendations still to be made prior to the August session of the 45th General Council.

The Work of this Term

The dedicated group of ministers and lay people who serve as the Nominations Committee, along with superb staff support, take very seriously our charge of identifying, evaluating, and recommending individuals to serve in the various leadership and service positions within the church. The committee seeks to ensure candidates are spiritually mature, committed to the church's mission, and equipped with the necessary gifts to fulfill their roles effectively.

The Nominations Committee has met on 16 occasions including one in-person meeting in the fall of 2022, with another in-person meeting scheduled for May 2025. Over these 16 meetings, the Nominations Committee held in prayerful and appreciative consideration each person who expressed interest or was nominated to serve. In a time when so much of church life is characterized by concerns of scarcity and decline, the Nominations Committee holds each of these offerings with appreciation and as testament of God's abundance.

So far this term, the Nominations Committee has recommended 152 appointments, and reported for information an additional 40 made through other authorized bodies. These recommendations are for positions that serve on the committees, boards, commissions and task groups of the General Council (and its Executive) and the Board of Vocation, as well as the Pension Board and its committees, and representatives of The United Church of Canada to various partner organizations. Many of these recommendations were to fill mid-term vacancies arising either from resignations or positions that had been left unfilled at the start of the term.

In addition to committee appointments, the Nominations Committee recommended members for a number of new task groups this term, including:

- Task Group to Review the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary
- Total Compensation Review Task Group
- Task Group on Apology to Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Communities
- Structural Change Evaluation Steering Group

Work in Progress

At the time of writing, the calls for nominations have just closed for the over 150 positions that will take effect with the rise of the 45th General Council in August. This is the most significant recruitment of the term.

The Nominations committee will meet in May to discern recommendations for appointment and election to bring to the Board of Vocation, the General Council Executive, and the 45th General Council. The recommendations that will be brought to you will be:

- The General Council Executive
- Audit Committee
- Judicial Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee
- Board of Vocation

Discernment

The Nominations Committee is a bridge between the church's leadership needs and the God-given gifts of its members. We assess the gifts of those who are nominated or who express interest and attempt to match them with the requests received for committee members. In each situation we strive to build unified and effective teams that honor God's call to the United Church, and present a slate of nominees to you the General Council, to the Executive of the General Council or to the Board of Vocation.

In our discernment process, the Nominations Committee considers not just each individual's particular gifts and sense of call, but also seeks a variety of voices, perspectives and experiences for each area of work. Where possible, we also balance expertise with opportunities to foster new leaders, particularly of younger generations. Throughout, the Nominations Committee keeps itself open to the promptings of the Spirit.

Remember that we have to work with what we have, that is those nominations and interests that have been received. This is why that wide network of all church members who discern, encourage, and support others to express interest is so essential to the success of the whole nominations process.

Where someone is not matched with a current opportunity, we hold faith that there is somewhere else where their gifts are needed, and that God will reveal that call in time or in a new way.

Diversity and Equity

We believe that groups are strengthened and decisions are better-informed when a committee includes a variety of identities and lived experiences. In addition to ensuring that all who are recommended have the required gifts to serve effectively, the Nominations Committee gives attention to diversity of:

- geography (Regional Council and urban/rural)
- gender
- ministry personnel and laity.

We strive to ensure that each group includes diversity within each of these categories, and that across the full-range of appointments there is a significant presence of each regional council, ministry personnel of various streams, lay people and different genders.

In addition to these diversity categories, the Nominations Committee also notes other identities and lived experiences which might enrich a particular group or the broader community of elected and appointed members. The Leadership Counts project lifted up seven specific equity-seeking identities to which the church has already made commitments of full participation:

- Indigenous
- Racialized
- Francophone or active in French-Ministries
- A person whose primary language is other than English or French
- Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+
- Youth and Young Adults (aged 30 or under)
- Disabled / Person with a Disability

To align our full-participation awareness with these same commitments, the nominations committee invites nominees to note whether they hold any of these identities, as well as any other identities – beyond these seven – that they believe would strengthen the group.

Equity-identity data shows the richness of the perspectives serving on national committees. It also shows places where the presence of an identity within committees surpasses its presence in the United Church, and places where it is less. *See Appendix*

Emerging Trends

The Nominations Committee sits in a privileged position to witness trends and changes in the church. We share with the wider church some changes we are witnessing and that have been topics of our own conversations and wonderings:

Shift in the work of national committees – The most recent restructuring in 2019 significantly impacted committee opportunities. The creation of the Office of Vocation expanded the number of volunteer roles related to ministry personnel that are located at a national level from approximately 20 – 30 to now over 150. This is a substantial increase in volunteers to recruit. At the same time, there are fewer General Council elected and appointed roles focusing on more programmatic areas such as justice work, worship, global connections, and the life of communities of faith. These areas are often carried out through staff or other councils of the church. When a nominations call does seek people with interest and gifts in these other areas – such as for a task group or a representative role – we often encounter people who have not previously expressed interest or served at the General Council level. This indicates that there

are many gifted people awaiting the right match for their gifts and sense of call to respond to a national call for nominations.

Shift in meeting methods – Over the past two terms, committees have discovered new and effective ways to meet using online technology. This has greatly improved the church's ability to manage our carbon footprint and financial stewardship. It also opens up participation opportunities for those who may have been less able to travel or commit the time required for in-person meetings. The Nominations Committee has also heard that for some serving members technology creates a barriers to their participation and many comment on the loss of the in-person connections that, for many, is one of the most rewarding aspects of serving.

Decline in lay participation on committees – For several years, the Nominations Committee has noted a decrease in the number of lay people offering to serve on committees. The shifts in the focus of national committees and in meeting methods may contribute to this decrease. The Nominations Committee encourages all committees to carefully consider their meeting practices and schedules to reduce barriers that may prevent lay people from participating in the church in this way. Lay people bring a wealth of gifts, perspectives and expertise that are essential to living out the call of the United Church.

Youth and Young Adult Participation – The United Church has expressed a commitment to the full participation of youth and young adults at all levels of the church. The number of people aged 30 and under serving on national committees is comparatively low. We have heard that factors contributing to this include the schedules and commitment lengths which may be challenging for many younger adults. The number of young adults serving on committees is a part of the story, but not the full story of young adult leadership in the national church. There is robust participation of young adults in many national leadership roles outside of traditional committees, including summer internship programs, conferences and events, global and ecumenical experiences, and the anticipated presence of over 100 youth and young adults at General Council 45. These other ways in which young adults are serving the national church invite us to imagine additional ways to bring the gifts and leadership of young adults into the governance of the church, and to recognize their presence in a broader range of leadership spaces.

A Privilege to Serve – At the end of their term, each member is invited to share their reflections. The most frequently expressed sentiment is that it has been a privilege to serve. Committee members work hard and wrestle with challenging questions, but ultimately, they describe their service as a joyful and faithful experience. They speak of being inspired by their colleagues and the people they met through their group's work. They praise the expertise and guidance of the staff members who supported them and value the new relationships forged across the church. Many committee members continue to serve in elected or appointed roles at the General Council or Regional Council, with some even taking on staff positions. The Nominations Committee, in turn, expresses gratitude to each committee member.

Appreciation for those who have served

The Nominations Committee offers gratitude to those who served as members of the General Council committees, the Executive, and the Board of Vocation during this past term.

Audit Committee

Darwin Bozek (Pension Board) Randall Hobbs, Steve Lowden, Jane McDonald (GCE), Robin Pilkey (chairperson), Cathy Rushton (Finance Advisory Committee), Andrew Spears.

Executive of the 44th General Council

Mitchell Anderson, Richard Bott (Moderator), Kathy Brett, Katherine Brittain, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Michael Caveney, M Chorney, Samuel V Dansokho, Paul Douglas Walfall, Catherine Glover, Wilson Gonese, Carmen Lansdowne (Moderator), David Leyton-Brown, Alcris Limongi, Kit Loewen, Jane McDonald, Arlyce Schiebout, Thea Sheridan-Jonah. Kimberly Roy (corresponding, Indigenous Church), Leeanne Shimoda (corresponding, Indigenous Church).

Judicial Committee

James Blanchard, Sandra Brooks, David Crawford-Smith, Diana Ginn (chairperson), Leslyn Gombakomba, Lynn Maki, George Thurlow, Stuart Whitley, Chikwa Zahinda

Nominations Committee

YongSeok Baek, Richard Bott (GCE) Kathy Brett (GCE), Katherine Brittain, Allan Buckingham, Samuel V Dansokho (GCE), Lynella Reid-James (chairperson), Jessica Taylor, Pat Tooley, Norm Seli (OV liaison), Donna Kennedy (Indigenous Church).

The Manual Committee

Fred Braman, Bob Fillier, Catherine Grant, Beth Moore, Mary-Beth Moriarity (chairperson), Leigh Sinclair

Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Hyuk Cho, Deborah Elliot (acting co-chairperson), Alison Etter (chairperson), Isaac Kamta, Frances Kitson, Andrew Mills, Lloyd Nyarota, Andrew O'Neill, Michelle Owens, Lilian Patey, Ariel Siagan, Miriam Spies, Noel Sumintrado, Michelle Voss (acting co-chairperson)

Board of Vocation

Eileen Antone, Patricia Baker, Jean Bethune, Kwang Beom Cho, Mark Green, Andrew Lairenge, Grace Eun Kyung Lee, Etienne Lesage, Alwin Maben, Natasha Pearen, Norm Seli (chairperson), Murray Speer, Lee Spice, Judy Zarubick

In Remembrance

The Nominations Committee joins with the Indigenous Church in remembrance and gratitude for the lives and service of elected and appointed members who passed away during this term

- Grafton Antone – General Council 44 Commissioner, Indigenous Candidacy Board
- Alison Etter – Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, chairperson
- Jimmy Hunter-Spence – National Indigenous Elders Council
- Betty Lou McNabb – General Council 44 Commissioner
- Margaret Ann Plant - Atlantic Candidacy Board
- Tim Reaburn – The United Church of Canada Foundation Board (recent GCE member)
- Bernice Saulteaux – National Indigenous Elders Council
- Allan Sinclair – Real Property and Capital Plan Working Group

Final Words

The Nominations Committee considers it a privilege to serve in this ministry where we are able to witness the incredible gifts, expertise, diversity and commitment of the people of this United Church of ours.

Faithfully submitted, by Lynella Reid-James chairperson, on behalf of the Nominations Committee.

If you have questions regarding this report please email them to tlodge@united-church.ca

Appendix: Diversity and Equity snapshots

The precise numbers of who is serving and their identities is constantly shifting as terms end and new appointments begin. The following 'snapshots' still offer insights into who is serving on national appointed and elected roles, including those of the National Indigenous Church.

Diversity: Regional Council (September 2024 snapshot)

Regional Council	Appointments	%	Grouped %	Comparison: % of total UCC communities of faith
Pacific Mountain	71	13%	17%	7%
Chinook Winds	25	4%		4%
Northern Spirit	29	5%		5%
Living Skies	38	7%	20%	8%
Prairie to Pine	48	9%		8%
Canadian Shield	13	2%	15%	3%
Shining Waters	72	13%		7%
Horseshoe Falls	40	7%		6%
Western Ontario Waterways	27	5%	16%	6%
Antler River Watershed	21	4%		6%
Eastern Ontario Outaouais	32	6%		7%
East Central Ontario	15	3%	14%	7%
Conseil Regional Nakonha:ka	33	6%		4%
Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters	24	4%		7%
Bermuda – Nova Scotia	25	4%	11%	8%
First Dawn Eastern Edge	11	2%		7%
<i>None / Unknown</i>	38	100%	7%	

Diversity: Ministry Stream and Gender (September 2024 snapshot)

	Layperson	Designated Lay Minister	Diaconal Minister	Ordained Minister	Applicant or Candidate	Total: Gender
Female (cis or trans)	153	5	26	127	7	318 (57%)
Male (cis or trans)	75	1	7	138	7	228 (41%)
Gender Queer, Non-Binary or not listed	3	-	-	6	7	16 (3%)
Total: Ministry Stream	231 (41%)	6 (1%)	33 (6%)	271 (48%)	21 (4%)	562

Equity Commitments (September 2024 snapshot)

Leadership Counts data supplemented with nominations information

	Appointments		Comparison Benchmarks	
	Count	Percentage	Ministry Personnel	UCC membership
Indigenous identity	92	16%	2%	3.5%
Racialized identity	165	29%	10%	2.5%
Francophone OR French Ministries	55	10%	5%	-
Primary language other than English or French	77	14%	9%	-
Two Spirit LGBTQIA+ identity	108	19%	15%	3%*
Young Adult (30 and under)	21	4%	2%	11%
Disability identity	73	13%	15%	5%*
One or more equity identities	330	59%	41%	-

UCC membership statistics from Canadian 2021 census.

** denotes statistics from United Church Identities Survey.*