

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL MINUTES

Friday, March 7 to Sunday, March 9, 2025

The 44th Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada met from Friday, March 7 to Sunday, March 9, 2025. Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne, presided.

Attendance

Voting Members: Mitchell Anderson, Michael Blair, Richard Bott, Katherine Brittain, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Michael Caveney, M Chorney, Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Catherine Glover, Carmen Lansdowne, David Leyton-Brown, Kit Loewen, Jane McDonald, Arlyce Schiebout, Thea Sheridan-Jonah, Paul Douglas Walfall

Corresponding: Kimberly Roy, Leeann Shimoda

Staff: Sarah Charters, Treena Duncan, Cameron Fraser, Alan Hall, Peter Hartmans, Éric Hébert-Daly, Jennifer Henry, Springwater Hester-Meawassige, Jennifer-Janzen Ball, Mark Laird, Harry Li, Lori-Ann Livingston, Tyler Lodge, Faith March-MacCuish, Shannon McCarthy, Japhet Ndhlovu, Carol Owegi, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

Guests: Rev. Michiko Bown-Kai, Deborah Elliott, Rev. Dr. Kenji Marui, Rev. Aaron Miechkota, Rev. Michelle Owens, Rev. Norm Seli, Rev. Bruce Gregersen, Jane Thirikwa

Regrets: Wilson Gonese, Adele Halliday

Friday, March 7, 2025

Welcome

The Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne, and General Secretary, Michael Blair, welcomed those gathered for this meeting of the Executive.

Constituting the Meeting

The Moderator constituted the meeting in French and English.

"Au nom de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l'Église, et par l'autorité qui m'a été conférée par le quarante-quatrième Conseil général, I hereby declare this meeting of the Executive of the General Council to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it, to the glory of God."

Territory Acknowledgement

Kenji Marui shared a territory acknowledgement of the land this meeting that these are the traditional lands and waters of the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, Lünaapéewak, and Chonnonton. He acknowledged that our stories are deeply intertwined, and that in this season of Lent, we have an opportunity to repent, learn, and grow.

Approved motion 2025-09-25-006

Equity Aspirations

M Chorney introduced the Equity Aspirations, and asked the Executive to reflect on the question, what is the United Church's' role and purpose, at this moment of time, and how do the aspirations fall into that?

Theological Reflection and Worship

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce Michelle Owens. The General Secretary noted that Michelle serves in Ministry Leadership at White Oaks United Church in London, Ontario. White Oaks is anticipating working with Kindred Works in a redevelopment program, and Michelle is also co-chair of the Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith committee.

Michelle Owens led the Executive in a time of theological reflection and worship. She read from 2 Timothy 1, and reflected on how her family history guides her ministry. The Executive took time to reflect on their own family history and wisdom. Michelle led the Executive in a reflection on Psalm 23; embracing death and finding resurrection.

Michelle told the story of White Oaks, a story of progress, a story of buildings, a story of life. She noted the shifts of demographics in London, the shifts of collegiality among colleagues, and that new doors and opportunities are being opened ways that was not possible in years prior. Michelle invited the Executive into a time of reflection and ended by reading from 2 Timothy 1.

Meeting Process

The Moderator thanked Michelle Owens, and invited Kit Loewen, Governance Committee Chair, to present on the meeting process. Kit reminded the Executive as they look at the proposals coming before them, the Executive should be focusing on adequacy, equity, and roles and responsibilities when it comes to decision-making.

The Moderator noted that she will ask the Executive to show if they're feeling warm or cool to a discussion, to see where the Executive is at with the proposal. When it comes to the time to vote she will ask the voting members to raise their hands, and she will count the votes.

The General Secretary noted guests will join us online. For the Theology Inter-church Inter-faith report, Co-Chairs Rev. Michelle Owens and Deborah Elliott, for the Office of the Board of Vocation report, Rev. Norm Seli will join us, for the report from the Task Group reviewing the roles of the Moderator and General Secretary, Rev. Bruce Gregersen, and for the Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+, Jane Thirikwa, Rev. Michiko Bown-Kai, and Rev. Aaron Miechkota.

GS 126 Opening Procedural and Consent (Appendix II)

The Moderator invited Michael Blair, General Secretary, to introduce the opening motion. The General Secretary briefly outlined the various items contained in GS 126 Opening Procedural and Consent.

Motion: Michael Blair/ Kit Loewen**2025-03-07-165**

1. Approve the minutes of the General Council Executive meeting held November 22-23, 2024, and December 16, 2024.
2. Receive for information any correspondence to the General Council Executive received since the last meeting of the Executive (sent to the Executive by email and found online).
3. Adopt the agenda for this meeting as circulated, with any changes which may be necessary as the meeting evolves, to be made on the recommendation of the Business Committee
4. Agree to adopt the three-fold pattern of decision making for this meeting, i.e., learning and discussion sessions followed by a separate decision-making session.
5. Name as the Business Committee: the Moderator, General Secretary, Chair, Governance Committee, Senior Governance Support Lead and Administrative Assistant Governance Support.
6. Name as corresponding members to this meeting any General Council Officers, Executive Ministers, Executive Officers, and Regional Council Executive Ministers who are present; anyone else who may be named by the General Secretary to serve as resource persons to the General Council Executive
7. Name the Regional Council Executive Ministers who are present to function as discussion note-takers and as a way forward committee to prepare proposals for decision making
8. Receive for information the following reports:
 - Moderator's Accountability Report
 - General Secretary's Accountability Report
 - Operational Plan Report – Fourth Quarter 2024
 - General Council 45 Planning Committee Report
 - Board and Office of Vocation Accountability Report
 - Report From the Task Group to Review the Offices of Moderator and General Secretary
 - The United Church of Canada Risk Framework
 - Report From the Task Group on Total Compensation
 - Partner Council Report
9. Approve the following proposals:
 - ~~GOV 07 Use of In Camera Sessions~~
 - GS 129 Amendment to Section J.6.7
 - GS 130 Amendment to Sections H.3.6, H.5.2.1 and H.5.2.2
 - GS 133 Designating Orange Shirt Sunday
 - GS 135 Finance Advisory Committee – Update to Terms of Reference

- GS 138 Change to Basis of Union IV. Regional Councils
- GS 140 Terms of Reference for the Kindred Works Investment Advisory Committee
- ~~GS 143 Benefits Committee Terms of Reference~~
- BOV 01 Additional Mandatory Training for Ministry Personnel
- NOM 16 Recommendations for Appointment
- GS 144 Approval of Interim Office Location
- GOV 08 Policy 2.03 Audit Committee Updates

Carried

Small Group Proposal Review

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce the time for proposal review. The General Secretary briefly outlined the process, and Kit Loewen, Chair, Governance Committee, clarified this time and guided the groups through the process. Members were placed into small groups, which were comprised of members of the Executive, Regional Council Executive Ministers, and General Council Office staff.

TICIF 02 Revised Principles for Justice (Appendix III)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce the time with the Theology Inter-Church Inter-faith committee. He invited Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Executive Officer, Theology and Ministry Leadership, as well as Michelle Owens, and Deborah Elliott the co-chairs of the Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, to introduce TICIF 02 Revised Principles for Justice.

Deborah Elliott described the process to develop the principles and noted who was consulted. She gave an overview of each of the principles and noted that some of the changes made were for clarity and accessibility, as well as revisions to include ecological justice.

There was a time for question and comments.

The Moderator thanked Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Michelle Owens, and Deborah Elliott for their work on this.

TICIF 03 Statement on Ministry (Appendix IV)

The Moderator invited Jennifer Janzen-Ball to introduce TICIF 03 Statement on Ministry. Jennifer-Janzen Ball invited Deborah Elliott to present.

Deborah Elliott gave some background on the Theology Inter-Church Inter-faith Committee and the draft of the statement of ministry. It was noted that this was a need for the church in the 2020s. General Council 44 mandated revising the 2012 statement of ministry, and in 2024, the committee was involved in various consultations with networks, ministry personnel, and lay people.

Michelle Owens explained that this committee began to grasp that our understanding of ministry has shifted radically in the last 10-15 years. This statement on ministry locates gifts of the Spirit in the community of believers; there is a new emphasis on community. Michelle outlined the core theological foundations of the statement of ministry.

There was a time for question and comments. There were some comments about the need for plain language summaries, but there was happiness and encouragement regarding celebrating the ministry of the laity.

The Moderator thanked the committee for their work.

GS 132 Funding for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (Appendix V)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce the next two proposals GS 132 Funding for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and GS 132 Updated Apology for United Church Participation in Residential Institutions.

The General Secretary noted that the National Centre Truth and Reconciliation is currently at the university of Manitoba, and they are in the process of building a permanent place of residence and are raising funds for this. They have approached those denominations who were formerly a part of the residential school system; The United Church of Canada, The Anglican Church of Canada, and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, asking if we would be able to contribute. The three General Secretaries have had conversations and recognized we would like to contribute to the construction of this permanent place of residence. The General Secretary is asking the Executive to consider pulling some money from the reserves for this project.

There was a time for question and comments. It was noted that there was a need to act, and it was asked the Executive to hold the dollar amount in confidence.

GS 134 Updated Apology for United Church Participation in Residential Institutions (Appendix VI)

The General Secretary noted we received a request from a community in British Columbia for an updated apology, and this request has also gone to the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. The General Secretary, and Treena Dunca, Executive minister, Pacific Mountain Regional Council, gave background information to the proposal before the Executive.

There was time for discussion. There was conversation around a trauma-informed, compassionate, and timely response. There was also discussion about consultation with all communities across the country.

The business table, which includes the Governance Committee, along with some staff and Executive volunteers stayed behind at the end of the session to discuss a new proposal to bring forward to the Executive based off the conversation.

Mission and Service Moment

The Moderator invited Sarah Charters, Executive Officer, Philanthropy and President, UCC Foundation, to share a Mission and Service moment. Sarah noted one of the bright points in 2024 was the success in direct giving. Sarah noted that there was a dip in overall giving, and her team will be looking into the trends and changes in the reason for this dip; noting perhaps economic uncertainty and the Canada Post strike at the end of 2024.

Sarah noted that Mission and Service has been collaborating more with the Regional Councils with storytelling. The Centennial Legacy Campaign is also underway with the help of the Executive, it is going well, and Sarah thanked those who have been participants at the Centennial Celebration training workshops.

The Executive and the Moderator thanked Sarah her for time and hard work.

GS 139 150th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Appendix VII)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce GS 139 150th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In June, the group is celebrating 150 years in Canada, even as The United Church of Canada is celebrating the Centennial. The General Secretary remarked that it is important to acknowledge our history, and this would formalize our celebrations.

There was a time for question and comments, and the Moderator thanked the General Secretary.

GS 142 Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities by The United Church of Canada (Appendix VIII)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce GS 142 Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities by The United Church of Canada. The General Secretary noted the work that had been done up to this point in the United Church. He then invited Japhet Ndhlovu, Executive Minister, Church in Mission, to introduce Rev Michiko Bown-Kai, Rev. Aaron Miechkota, and staff member Jane Thirikwa to present.

Japhet Ndhlovu noted the history of the church is filled with exclusion, rejection, and when it comes to the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and that this apology is a step in acknowledging harm and taking responsibility. The working group shared about the work that has been happening in the Church, referencing The Iridesce: The Living Apology Project, among others.

There was considerable discussion from the Executive.

The Moderator thanked the task group and those on the call for all their hard work in crafting this apology.

GS 127 Future of Fundraising in the Church (Appendix IX)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce Sarah Charters, Executive Minister, Philanthropy, and President, UCC Foundation.

Sarah outlined the proposal, the impacts of it, and how it helps the church live into the commitments on equity.

There was a time for question and comments. There was conversation around governance, and it was noted that the average congregant member will not notice much of a difference.

The Moderator thanked Sarah Charters and those who have worked on this proposal.

Pilgrimages of Learning Global Partnership Network

The Moderator invited the Japhet Ndhlovu to present Pilgrimages of Learning Global Partnership Network.

Japhet outlined the decolonization strategies within the United Church and commented on the commitments to systemic justice, and quoted from Ofelia Ortega, *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire*. One of the goals is to engage United Church people in deepening understanding about the importance of global partnership to the life and witness of the United Church.

The Moderator thanked Japhet for his presentation.

GS 128 Amendment to Section B.7.3.1 (Appendix X)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa.

Cheryl-Ann gave some background on the proposal. She noted that this matter was before the Executive previously, and they had given recommendations back to the Manual Committee.

There was considerable discussion on this proposal around conflict of interest, ministry personnel, and lay employees.

The Moderator thanked the Manual Committee, and those who worked on the proposal.

GCE 05 Review of the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary (Appendix XI)

The Moderator invited the Catherine Glover to introduce the Review of the Roles of the Moderator and General Secretary. She gave some background to the final report during her presentation. She introduced Rev. Dr. Bruce Gregersen, and Alan Hall, Executive Minister, Shared Services.

Catherine discussed the work done since the interim report and went over the recommendations at a high level.

There was discussion around the roles of the Moderator and General Secretary. There was discussion around the ability to speak prophetically to and for the church.

The Moderator thanked Catherine, Alan, Bruce, and the entire Task Group for their hard work.

Time with the Moderator

The Moderator invited former Moderator, Richard Bott to take the chair.

The Moderator spoke about her written accountability report and noted a full longer report will be going to the General Council in August. The Moderator noted she wished she was able to have more time with folks during her visits as the Moderator. She noted there will be a reflection on the Regenerate program, and she feels this was one of the most impactful things she has done.

There was a time for questions and comments. When asked about theological themes in the church that she's noticing, the Moderator remarked on the deep faithfulness that the presence of God is with us, and it feels like the United Church is waiting for what's next.

The Moderator thanked the Executive, and Richard Bott gave the chair back to the Moderator.

GS 137 Increase Loan to Captive Insurance Entity (Appendix XII)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce GS 137 Increase Loan to Captive Insurance Entity. The General Secretary noted that Kindred Works insurance was established a few years ago, to help our Communities of Faith save on the cost of insurance. When that was set up, it was recognized that, depending on cost of claims we may need to provide more support to the company.

The General Secretary invited Harry Li, Executive Officer, Finance, to give background to the proposal. In 2022, General Council approved idea to make own insurance company; this decision was made in context of skyrocketing insurance premiums. As a result, Captive Insurance was created with the help of insurance consultants.

However, due to multiple large-scale accidents, the insurance regulator has said the Captive Insurance loan needs to be increased by \$1 million. The Captive Insurance structure has been a very effective tool to manage the risk of premium increases, but it needs to be operated as a regular insurance company.

There was time for discussion and comments. There were questions about the governance structure of Captive Insurance, and about whether this could be something shared outside our own denomination.

The Moderator thanked Harry Li for his hard work.

Review of the Next Days Agenda

The Moderator invited Kit Loewen, Chair, Governance Committee to review the agenda for the next day. Kit thanked the Executive Ministers in making notes during the discussion the Executive had. Kit discussed competing commitments and thanked the Executive for their hard work today.

The Moderator thanked Kit for her reflections.

Equity Reflections

The Moderator invited Alcris Limongi to go over the equity reflections for the day. Alcris thanked the Executive for being aware of our equity aspirations throughout today. She noted equity is something we are always working toward.

The Moderator thanked everyone, and Michael Caveney closed the meeting in prayer.

Saturday, November 23, 2024

Worship

The Moderator began the morning with worship and a reading from Joel 2:28-29. The Executive spent some time in small groups discussing what our visions and dreams are for the United Church. The Executive mentioned, hospitality, belonging, diversity, people affirmed in their calling for discipleship, and community. The Executive listened and sang along to the song *Roots and Wings* by Linea Good.

Equity Aspiration

The Moderator invited Paul Douglas Walfall to bring forward the equity aspirations for the morning. He reminded us that the root for the word aspiration is the same for breathing. He then invited the Executive to read the Equity Aspirations and breathe in deeply after each one.

Board of Vocation Report

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce Jennifer Janzen-Ball, and Norm Seli, *Chair of the Board of Vocation*, to discuss their report from the Board of Vocation.

Jennifer Janzen-Ball began the conversation and introduced Norm. He noted that folks have the report, and that the Board of Vocation as a supervisory body, and he's hopeful to bring clarity to the body.

There was a time for questions and comments, and the Moderator thanked Norm.

Total Compensation Task Group Report

The Moderator invited the Jane McDonald, Chair of the Total Compensation Task Group to present on the report.

Jane explained the work of the task group; a look at consultations, focus groups, payroll data, peer denominations (Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Anglican), as well as comparable vocations.

Key findings showed that 85% of ministers were being paid over the minimum salary, but part-time work is not sustainable for most ministers. It also appears that The United Church of Canada minimums may be 10-20% lower than peer denominations. The current model is also not compatible with remote Indigenous locations.

The next steps would be to endorse the recommendations and forward those to General Council 45.

There was a time for question and comments, and the Moderator thanked the task group for their hard work.

Looking to 2035

The Moderator invited Jennifer Henry and Cameron Fraser to present on the future of The United Church of Canada. There was discussion about a denominational-wide strategy, rooted in strategy toward a better future.

There was conversation around different data sets, and how to use this data.

There was a time for question and comments, and the Moderator thanked Jennifer Henry and Cameron Fraser.

Mission and Service Grant Recipients

The Moderator invited Mark Laird, Regional Council Executive Minister, to introduce Sarah Charters and guests Rev. Dr. Joshua Lawrence, Christina Lindsay, Nancy Howard. Joshua Lawrence gave some background information on their context and what they are doing with the Mission and Service Grants.

Nancy shared a video of the work being done at ELUCO (East London United Church Outreach), showing the change happening in communities and families.

Christina then shared a video of First St. Andrews Church, and some of the work in the life of the church.

Mark Laird thanked Joshua, Christina, Nancy, for the work they do in supporting their communities in the ways that they do it.

GS 131 Funding Vision 2035 (Appendix XIII)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce GS 131 Funding Vision 2035.

The General Secretary outlined the proposal, noted strategic operational plan and is intended to be an intentional response to some of the challenges facing the church, and gave some history to the property that was donated to the General Council Office. There were questions around stewardship and the selling of capital assets.

The General Secretary thanked the Executive for the conversation and recognized that the discussion is framed before decision-making so that the Executive looks at the whole picture instead of smaller details.

The Moderator thanked the Executive and the General Secretary.

GS 136 Funding the Strategic Growth Initiative (Appendix XIV)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce the proposal before the Executive.

The General Secretary noted that the Growth initiative has been named as a significant part of what we do, and that it is seen at every level as a priority. The goal of the Growth initiative is to help to implement effective and connected regional and national strategies that result in growth within existing ministries, and by seeding and sustaining new ministries and communities of faith.

Investment in the church's future is critical. for the triennium (2025-2028), we need to invest significantly and to be able to demonstrate our commitment to the key strategic priority of growth (renew, create, invite). We would anticipate 5% on Mission and Service givings to be used in 2026, increased to 7.5% in 2027 and 10% by 2028. We would provide annual reporting to the church on the impact of the funds.

There was considerable discussion around what this means for other areas of the General Council office, as well as what the hope is for the broader church. There was excitement around the type of future we could be building in the United Church, however some hesitancy about what this means in terms of resourcing other areas.

The Moderator thanked the General Secretary.

GS 141 Working Group on Ministry Leadership (Appendix XV)

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to introduce GS 141 Working Group on Ministry Leadership.

The General Secretary noted the 2012 statement on ministry and discussed how that statement reflected on the future of ministry in the United Church. In 2022 the task group on Ministry

Leadership to meet the needs of the Church in the 2020s, came to the conclusion that the contexts and expectations in our communities, in Canadian society, and in ministry personnel lives have changed dramatically since union, and that it is not reasonable to assume that every pastoral charge can have a pastorate without interruption as it might have been imagined or intended in 1925.

He also noted the short timeline and has asked the Executive to discern if this is something this body will approve or send it to the General Council. The General Secretary invited Jennifer Janzen-Ball to speak to this proposal. Jennifer noted the ongoing conversations with theological schools and reflected that we do not want to do this process in a piece-meal manner, but rather as a collective.

There was discussion around who would be on the working group, making sure it's a diverse group of folks, specifically including ministry vocation, both lay and ordered.

The Moderator thanked the General Secretary and Jennifer Janzen-Ball.

Time with the General Secretary

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to speak to the Executive.

The General Secretary noted the commitments we have made as a team to move into data-driven decision-making. He remarked on the dynamic between perception and reality, and while we invest in the data, we are recognizing the limits.

He mentioned the portion on Risk Management in his report. He commented on the risk tolerance of the Executive. We all have a different level of risk we are comfortable with individually but what is the risk comfort of this governing body? The General Secretary discussed risk framework and noted some of the different types of risk for the church; reputational risk, financial risk, competing values.

The General Secretary thanked the staff team that he is able to work with at the General Council Office, and the Regional Council Executive Ministers. He noted Alan Hall's retirement at the end of 2025 and wanted to acknowledge his commitment and wealth of knowledge and experience he has brought to the church.

There was time for questions and comments.

There was time to pray for the General Secretary, and the Moderator thanked the General Secretary for his hard work and commitment to the United Church.

Decision Making Time

Before releasing the Executive for dinner and the Moderator invited Kit Loewen to remind the Executive of the ways in which they will conduct business at this meeting.

The Moderator welcomed the Executive back after dinner.

TICIF02 Principles for Justice

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote on this proposal. The Executive was warm and proceeded to vote.

Motion: Samuel Vauvert Dansokho/ Teresa Burnett-Cole

2025-03-07-166

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee recommends:

- a. that the General Council Executive receives the revised principles, including the preamble, and affirms its readiness for the 45th General Council for decision-making; and
- b. that the General Council Executive encourage further conversation with the Indigenous church about ways to include Indigenous spiritual teachings into the principles for justice and to bring suggestions and revisions to a subsequent General Council.

Carried

TICIF03 Statement of Ministry

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was cool and had considerable discussion.

There was discussion on this proposal around what belongs to Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith, and what belongs to the Executive. It was noted that this is not the work of the Executive to redo the work of Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith, and the co-chairs were in the room during the fulsome conversation of the Executive. The General Secretary reminded the Executive that Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith is a committee of General Council and the Executive of General Council.

Let it be noted for the minutes that Paul Douglas Walfall does support this report in its current form for theological reasons, and objects to the process that is unfolding for justice.

Motion: Arlyce Schiebout/ Alcris Limongi

2025-03-07-167

That the General Council Executive:

- a. receives the Statement on Ministry 2025, for information and shares with Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith committee comments for consideration in finalizing the statement for General Council.

Carried

Approved motion 2025-09-25-006

One Opposed
One Abstention

GS134 Updated Apology to Residential Schools

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was cool and had considerable discussion.

Treema Duncan, Regional Council Executive Minister, Pacific Mountain, Chinook Winds, and Springwater Hester-Meawassige gave some further background to the proposal, acknowledging the work that has been done leading up to this point, and the care needs to be taken in the complexity of the continuing work.

After further discussion it was decided that Thea Sheridan-Jonah, along with Treema Duncan, Springwater Hester-Meawassige, and the business committee, take time at the end of the meeting to discuss updated wording and a way forward for this proposal.

When the Executive reconvened the following morning, they were presented alternative wording from the group that met after the meeting last night. The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote on this proposal. The Executive was warm and voted on this proposal.

Motion: Katherine Brittain/ Arlyce Schiebout

2025-03-07-168

The Executive of the General Council:

Form a task group to review the ongoing commitments and work of reconciliation that have emerged since the 1986 Apology and the 1998 Apology from The United Church of Canada to survivors of Residential Schools; explore the necessary ongoing actions including but not limited to an updated apology for the legacies of residential schools; by consulting with Indigenous communities in ways that are trauma informed, collaborative, respectful of nation-to-nation relationships, with caretaker communities and rooted in a theology of care and reparative justice.

Carried

GS142 Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was cool and had considerable discussion.

There was discussion around apologies in general made by the United Church, and the consultation and work already being done on this subject. There was also discussion about apologies to be made to the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities outside the United Church, along with a pastoral letter written by the Moderator. The Executive acknowledged the good work done by the task group in drafting the apology.

Motion: M Chorney/ Michael Caveney**2025-03-07-169**

That the General Council Executive:

- a. receives and approves the text of the Apology (Appendix 1)
- b. receives the Pastoral Letter – GS142a – for information
- c. directs the General Secretary to develop a process for offering the apology to the 2S and LGBTQ communities at the 45th General Council, August 2025
- d. directs the General Secretary to develop a plan to share and animate the apology, to communities of faith, regional councils and partner groups.

Carried

Let it be noted for the minutes that Catherine Glover has left the meeting.

Motion: Mitchell Anderson/ Jane McDonald.**2025-03-07-170**

That the Executive move to an *in camera* session with the GS Supervision Committee.

Carried

Sunday, November 24, 2024

Motion: Mitchell Anderson/Thea Sheridan-Jonah**2025-03-07-171**

That the Executive move out of an *in camera* session.

Carried**Worship**

The Moderator opened in worship with *litany for becoming* by M Jade Kaiser.

GCE05 Role of Moderator and General Secretary

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was warm and was ready to vote.

Motion: Catherine Glover/ Katherin Brittain**2025-03-07-172**

That the Executive of the General Council:

- i) receive the final report of the Task Group to Review of the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary,
- ii) endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the report and forward to the 45th General Council;
- iii) forward the report and its appendices to the 45th General Council with a recommendation for its adoption and implementation.
- iv) recommend to the 45th General Council that the Manual Committee revise the bylaws consistent with the recommendations contained within the report.

Carried

Approved motion 2025-09-25-006

GCE06 Total Compensation

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was warm and was ready to vote.

Motion: Jane McDonald/ Teresa Burnett-Cole

2025-03-07-173

That the Executive of the General Council direct the General Secretary to:

Concerning Ministry Employment

- i) apply regional cost of living compensation differentials to communities of faith providing a manse to ministry personnel;
- ii) annually adjust minimum salaries by the annualized Consumer Price Index (CPI) if 3% or less; when the CPI exceeds 3% staff gather data on wage predictions, collective agreements in not-for-profit and social service sectors, adjustments being offered by other denominations to support the Executive of the General Council, considering issues of affordability to set an adjustment;
- iii) undertake further study into the relative parity of United Church minimum salaries with the minimums of Presbyterian, Evangelical Lutheran and Anglican churches and, if necessary, develop an implementation plan to address findings;
- iv) recommend to the 2026 annual meeting of the 45th General Council bylaw revisions that provide guidance, clarity and consistency for co-operative and collaborative ministries employment;

Concerning Employment In The Indigenous Church

- v) work with the leadership and wisdom of the National Indigenous Organization to develop a compensation model, and funding for that model, that is relevant to remote Indigenous communities of faith;
- vi) explore with the Indigenous leadership additional resources and supports for Indigenous ministry personnel specific to the context of remote Indigenous ministries;
- vii) work with the Indigenous church as it discerns more appropriate compensation models and commit to removing any policy barriers to nimbleness in funding.

Concerning Employment Services And Information

- viii) annually provide regional councils with aggregate payroll data by regional cost of living groups to support them ensuring fair and equitable compensation forms at the time of appointment and call and ensuring compliance with minimum salary standards;
- ix) explore the feasibility and acceptance of centralizing payroll administration: to relieve communities of faith of this complex burden, recognizing that treasurers would still have to be the source of employment and payroll data for the payroll administrators;
- x) expand the base of participation in the Leadership Counts equity study so that equity can be evaluated more thoroughly.
- xi) identify and recommend to the 2026 45th General Council annual meeting the elimination or revision of specific by-laws that confound/complicate co-operative and collaborative ministries employment;

2. Further, the Executive of the General Council recommend to the 45th General Council that it:

- i) receive the report of the Total Compensation Task Group;
- ii) add to The Manual section I.2.1.1 a) the words "fair, just, and equitable,"
- iii) encourage regional councils to exercise oversight to limit creation of part-time positions so that the onus is on the church to, where possible, provide full-time equivalent employment opportunities rather than ministry personnel having to "cobble together" full-time equivalencies.

Carried

GS136 Funding the Growth Initiative

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was warm and was ready to vote.

It was noted that a change will be made to the proposal itself based off the notes gathered by the Executive ministers, but it does not change the recommendations of the proposals itself, this will happen before General Council.

Motion: Mitchell Anderson/ Thea Sheridan-Jonah

2025-03-07-174

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council affirm its support and commitment to the growth initiative approved in the strategic operational plan by requesting the 45th General Council to:

- a. Authorize 10% of Mission & Service givings over the course of the 2025-2028 triennium as follows - 5% in 2026, 7.5% in 2027 and 10% by 2028 - be earmarked for new, renewing and emerging ministries, and
- b. direct the General Secretary to develop and communicate the criteria and process for how the funds will be expended, and
- c. direct the General Secretary that implementation should:
 - include initiatives from all three streams of the growth initiative – *renew, create, invite*.
 - consider setting proportional targets for diverse intercultural ministry expressions;
 - consider accessibility and engagement by rural, remote and other communities;
 - Prioritize First Third Ministry
- d. invite regional councils to identify resources within their bounds (e.g., revenues from property, sales or bequests) which they can use to contribute to regional initiatives.

Carried

GS141 Working Group on Ministry

Motion: David Leyton-Brown/ Thea Sheridan-Jonah

2025-03-07-175

The Executive of the General Council could:

Approved motion 2025-09-25-006

- a. establish a working group on Ministry Leadership to continue mapping the Leadership needs of the church to 2035; identify opportunities and barriers and make recommendation to the 2026 Annual Meeting of the 45th General Council regarding any necessary change to policy and practice, and
- b. Approve the attached Terms of Reference (TOR) for the working group.

Carried

GS131 Funding Vision 2035

The Moderator tested if the Executive was warm or cool to vote this proposal. The Executive was cool and had some discussion.

After discussion around the sale of the property and designating funds, the Executive was voted on the proposal as worded below.

Motion: Mitchell Anderson/ Thea Sheridan-Jonah

2025-03-07-176

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive

- a. receive the report Vision 2035 for information and discernment and direction
- b. direct the General Secretary
 1. to work with the regional councils to develop and articulate a strategy and an implementation plan including but not limited to piloting initiatives;
 2. develop an engagement plan for a church-wide conversation on Vision 2035
- c. recommend to the 45th General Council the extension of GCE05 (2022) *Living into the Strategic Plan* (Appendix 1) for another triennium (2025-2028) and include the General Council Office as an additional venue of experimentation.
- d. authorize the sale of Pineview Lodge, Alberta (see Appendix II,) given to and held in the name of The United Church of Canada to be used to support initial initiatives identified with the percentage Northern Spirit designates for Indigenous ministries forward to Indigenous ministries

Carried

One abstention

GS139 Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Moderator tested whether the Executive was ready to vote on the proposal. The Executive was warm and voted on the proposal.

Motion: Arlyce Schiebout/ Jane McDonald

2025-03-07-177

That the Executive of the 44th General Council:

- a. formally acknowledges the history and ecumenical partnerships of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC).

Approved motion 2025-09-25-006

- b. direct the Moderator to write a letter of acknowledgement and celebration to the General Assembly of the PCC meeting in Waterloo, Ontario, in June 2025.
- c. invite Communities of Faith, communities in ecumenical shared ministry and regional councils to find ways of acknowledging this milestone with local Presbyterian communities.
- d. direct the General Secretary to identify an appropriate gift to acknowledge the anniversary, and
- e. Request that the 45th General Council take a moment to acknowledge the anniversary as the Principal Clerk will be present.

Carried

GS132 National Truth & Reconciliation Centre

The Moderator tested whether the Executive was ready to vote on the proposal. The Executive was warm and voted on the proposal.

Motion: Kit Loewen/ Michael Caveney

2025-03-07-178

The Executive of the General Council might:

- a) direct the General Secretary to identify \$500,000.00 from the United Church reserves to add to a collaborative donation to the NCTR from the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches
- b) direct the General Secretary to work with Anglican and Presbyterian partners and the NCTR to announce this gift in an appropriate manner, and to encourage support for the NCTR across the church, in keeping with the NCTR's own plans for the capital campaign.

Carried

GS143 Benefits Committee Terms of Reference (Appendix XVI)

It was noted this was pulled from the consent motion for editorial purposes in order to bring clarity.

After indicating these changes, the Moderator tested if the Executive was ready to vote on the proposal, and the Executive indicated that they were.

Motion: Kit Loewen/ Mitchell Anderson

2025-03-07-179

That the Executive of the General Council:

- adopt the attached Benefits Committee Terms of Reference.

Carried

GOV07 Use of *In Camera* Sessions (Appendix XVII)

It was noted this proposal was also pulled from the consent motion for editorial purposes to bring clarity.

After indicating these changes, the Moderator tested if the Executive was ready to vote on the proposal, and the Executive indicated that they were.

Motion: David Leyton-Brown/ Jane McDonald

2025-03-07-180

The Executive of General Council ~~might~~ agrees that:

in meetings of the Executive and Sub-Executive of General Council:

- 1) The decision to move *in camera* will be guided by the principle that the topic under consideration requires confidentiality for the protection of a particular person or the denomination as a whole. The following items may be considered *in camera*:
 - Legal matters;
 - Personnel matters, including the General Secretary's Supervision Committee report to the Executive of the General Council when the General Secretary is not present;
 - Conduct of the Executive;
 - Advice for the General Secretary on an extraordinary topic with potential implications for the denomination

This list is understood to offer guidance, not limitations or prescriptions.

- 2) The process to move *in camera* will require a motion naming who will be in attendance (i.e. voting members plus named resource people), duly seconded and passed.
- 3) The requirements for quorum must be maintained within an *in camera* session.
- 4) The matter discussed *in camera* (italics) will remain confidential among the participants in the session.
- 5) The Executive or Sub-Executive will refrain from making decisions *in camera* but may agree upon a proposed way forward.
- 6) When the Executive or Sub-Executive reconvenes after an *in camera* session, there will be a motion duly seconded and passed to move out of the *in camera* session.
- 7) Any decision (motion) on a matter discussed *in camera* will be considered in the reconvened meeting of the Executive or Sub-Executive and will be properly noted in the minutes of the meeting.

And the Executive of the General Council ~~might~~ further agrees that:

It will ask *The Manual* Committee to provide guidance on the use of *in camera* sessions for the other councils of the church.

Carried

GS128 Amendment of Section B

The Moderator reflected on the discussion the Executive had yesterday and noted that in light of this Nicole Treksler has proposed updated wording. Nicole notes the conversation yesterday, along with additional consultation with Regional Council Executive Ministers, and members of the Executive.

After discussion regarding the changes the Moderator tested if the Executive was ready to vote on the proposal. The Executive was ready to vote on the proposal before them.

Motion: Katherine Brittain/ Kit Loewen

2025-03-07-181

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

B.7.3 Membership of the Governing Body

B.7.3.1 General

The governing body has the following members:

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

Exceptions: There are two exceptions to the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (e) above:

- i) Persons who are not full members may be elected in special circumstances with approval of the regional council; and

- ii) Persons who have familial relationships with employees, or ministry personnel who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge, may be elected in special circumstances with prior approval of the regional council.

FYI: The *Conflict of Interest Policy* shall be consulted for guidance on mitigating conflicts related to governing body membership. If a Regional Council denies someone membership to the governing body, it must provide written reasons for its decision, including why this actual or perceived conflict could not be mitigated.

Note: Familial relationships refers to family members living in the same household.

Carried

Let it be noted for the minutes that Richard Bott, Arlyce Schiebout, Catherine Glover, Paul Douglas Walfall, opposed the motion.

Motion: David Leyton-Brown/ Kit Loewen

2025-03-07-182

That the Executive move to an *in camera* session.

Carried

Motion: Richard Bott/ David Leyton-Brown

2025-03-07-183

That the Executive move out of an *in camera* session.

Carried

GCE07 Regarding the General Secretary's Dissolution of the National Indigenous Council

Motion: Samuel Dansokho/ Arlyce Schiebout

2025-03-07-184

The General Council Executive:

1. Acknowledges that the General Secretary acted with the advice of Indigenous leadership, and with the responsibility to protect staff who felt unsafe, and the General Council Executive (GCE) concluded on November 8, 2024 (GOV04), that the National Indigenous Council (NIC) was unable to fulfill its responsibilities. The GCE concurred with the conclusion of the GS and the reconvening of the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering (GOV04). The GCE had the authority at the time to dissolve the NIC.
2. Owns that it did not have appropriate governance policies in place to clarify the roles and authority of the Office of the General Secretary and directs the governance committee to develop a policy on delegation of authority and management limitations.

The GCE holds respect for the trust of the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering in the National Elders Council to find a good way forward

Carried

Let it be noted for the minutes that Teresa Burnett-Cole opposed motion.

Call to Extend the Order of the Day

Motion: Katherine Brittain/ Thea Sheridan-Jonah

2025-03-07-185

Carried.

Motion: Kit Loewen/ David Leyton-Brown

2025-03-07-186

That the General Council Executive authorize its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting of the Executive and any emergent business that may arise prior to the next meeting of the General Council Executive.

Carried

Final Reflections and Thanksgiving

The Moderator thanked the outgoing members of the Executive for their years of service. Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Arlyce Schiebout, Paul Douglas Walfall, Jane McDonald, Richard Bott, Mitchell Anderson, Katherine Brittain, Teresa Burnett-Cole. She offered her personal gratitude for bringing the institutional knowledge, wisdom, and guidance that they brought to her term. The General Secretary thanked the Executive for their hard work, and thanked the Moderator for her hard work and leadership during this triennium.

Pagination

Pagination reflects that the minutes of this meeting were not finalized prior to the most immediate sub-Executive meeting, and the need to distribute those minutes.

Closing

In closing, the Moderator recognized and thanked the Executive for their hard work, and the respectful ways they engaged with material and one another. The Moderator then closed the meeting in prayer.

Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne

General Secretary, Michael Blair