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Appendix I

Governance as Leadership: An Introduction

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

Fiduciary (Type I)

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

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

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

Strategic (Type II)

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

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

Disposition: Foresight
Key Questions: “How...?”

Generative (Type III)

Working in the generative mode encourages cognitive processes for deciding what to pay attention to, what it means and what is possible in response. Generative thinking produces a

sense of what knowledge, information and data mean; it is a subjective process that illuminates multiple perspectives and dominant frames and allows thinkers to deliberately shift frames to take perspective and see opportunities. In the generative mode, *problem framing* precedes *problem solving*.

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

Disposition: Insight

Key Questions: "Why...?"

Appendix II

Consent Reports / Information

MODERATOR'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

General Council 45 seems to be barrelling along towards us, and as the Spirit moves us towards discerning which of the named (and maybe yet unnamed) nominees for Moderator might step into this office after me, I am also acutely aware of the fact that as of the day of writing this report I have 173 days left in office.

Flourishing

This winter/spring marks the final events for the Flourishing workshops. We held an event in Toronto February 15, and will be doing one in Stratford ON, on February 22. The first weekend in May we will be in Edmonton for Northern Spirit, and then we've incorporated the workshop as Theme at the Chinook Winds Regional Council the subsequent weekend in Calgary.

Last weekend, during our reflection time wrapping up, a lay leader shared that she belongs to a struggling community of faith where an average of 10 people come to church on a Sunday. She came to the workshop with the assumption that I would be giving examples of what other congregations were doing to flourish. Instead, through the process of the workshop, she was leaving with a bunch of her own ideas and some processes to take back to her congregation, and also knowing that they could reach out to the Growth & Ministry Development unit for support. That was about the best feedback I think I could have received.

I'm so grateful that the development of the workshop coincided with the creation and staffing of the Growth & Ministry Development unit, and that Cam and the growth animators have been through all of the workshops with me and that this work and resource will now live with them.

(Re)Generate

We have now completed four of the six residencies of the (Re)Generate leadership development program. With the support of the Theological Leadership unit, a cohort of 32 ministry personnel from across the country have forged strong bonds of support and a community of learning; fruits of the program will continue to serve them as individuals but also the church as a whole as they continue to support each other into the future. Together with facilitators from inside and outside of the church, we have spent time on strategy & faith and why there doesn't need to be a binary between the two, managerial leadership, giving & receiving feedback, financial literacy, and fundraising. We will be spending one more week on other management oversight like capital planning/development, statutory requirements for charities, and risk management in an online residency in May, followed by

presentations on their Capstone projects in their final residency at Five Oaks in June. Jennifer Janzen-Ball and I will have time with Laura Fohse this coming month to debrief, followed by a week of planning for the future of leadership development in May.

Our videographers from the comms team also came out to Five Oaks in January and so you'll see some video collateral developed out of the interviews with participants.

Life of the Church, Strategy & New Business

Over the next weeks I will be in discernment about what to report to the General Council about my term as moderator.

The church continues to struggle with narrowing down on the most impactful ways to use our general council offices, Regional Council offices, and other resources of financial budgets and people hours. As we will see in some of the proposals coming back to the church, there are ways that the regional councils continue to need to live out their oversight roles that replaced presbyteries. This includes consistency in the ways the finances of Communities of Faith are reviewed, especially before postings for ministry vacancies are made public, as well as strategic use of properties and church buildings.

One of the things I'll be working on with the theological leadership unit in my final months as moderator, is where we can provide resources to bring the institutional 'management' of the church into the 21st century. For example, how do we ensure that M&P committees are adequately equipped to act as the "supervisor" of our ministry personnel. How do we ensure Stewardship committees know how to fundraise effectively and to incorporate giving & generosity as part of our faithful formation of disciples, especially in a world that is growing more and more unaffordable for many. How do we do risk planning and analysis to ensure we have adequate insurance coverage, including ensuring (note: requiring) that rentals of our buildings are covered by the insurance of our tenants. How do we ensure that our buildings are well cared for and used to the highest and best use of the needs of our communities, and whose job is that? How do we make decisions, at all levels of the church, that are both faithful *and* strategic? I continue to ponder these questions alongside the participants in (Re)Generate and the senior leadership team and my MAC.

In the meantime, I'm looking forward to upcoming events for the church's Centennial, as well as attending the regional council meeting for Chinook Winds, and the joint Festival of Faith for Shining Waters and Canadian Shield Regional Councils this spring.

It's a short report, but also feels like it's been a short time since my fall report to GC45 – I look forward to a more fulsome report to go into the GC45 Workbook.

Travel/Meetings since November 2024 GCE Meeting:

1. November 29 – December 2: NISG Recall Meeting, Winnipeg MB
2. December 4-6: Canadian Council of Churches 80th Anniversary, Toronto ON
3. December 7-12: GC45 In-person Planning, Calgary AB
4. January 9-11: Society of Christian Ethics, Chicago IL (Study leave)

5. January 12-14: Alway Symposium, University of St. Michael's College & Emmanuel College, Toronto ON (Study leave)
6. January 18-24: (Re)Generate – 3rd In-person Residency @ Five Oaks, Paris ON
7. January 24 – February 1: DARE Conference 2025, Council for World Mission, Harare Zimbabwe
8. February 11-23: Flourishing events in Shining Waters & SW ON regions, filming videos

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: General Secretary

"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold." 2 Corinthians 3:12 (English Standard Version)

Executive Summary

This is the final General Secretary's report for the triennium. It provides some updates and progress on the work of the General Council Office, reports from bodies accountable to the General Council and some information about events. The report begins by lifting some of the risk factors being monitored and managed by the Management Team.

Introduction

As I pen this report, we are in the liturgical season of Epiphany; it is Black History (African Heritage) Month; Donald Trump has been serving as the 47th President of the United States of America for less than 30 days; there is a fragile ceasefire in the war in Gaza; a provincial election is in progress here in Ontario; Justin Trudeau has resigned as Prime Minister; the parliament of Canada is prorogued, and there is a leadership contest among the Liberals and the possibility of a federal election looming.

There is fear and anxiety, and much uncertainty about the economy, as well as increasing oppression of members of the LGBTQ community globally. It is impossible to trivialize the fear and disheartenment in these uncertain times.

When we meet in March, we will be in the early days of Lent, the time of journeying to the cross and the anticipation of the resurrection. It is important to keep our contexts in mind as we gather to do our work. Like Isaiah (6), *"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."* As we look for the presence of God in our midst.

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

As the triennium draws to a close, we have much for which to be grateful. This Executive has worked hard. We had to deal with some difficult and complex issues, but we have worked as a team and struggled to understand our governance role. We have lived into the strategic operational plan; we have sought to anchor our work around the North Star of the Call and Vision. I personally find it heartening when I visit communities of faith and see the ways they are seeking to live into the vision. Recently, I was with the folks at St. Luke's United Church in Toronto, a motley crew of faithful disciples, a significantly diverse church with a big heart and a

mandate to care for the marginalized community outside of their building – each Sunday they begin their worship by grounding themselves in the Call and Vision.

The church has not always lived up to its vision. It requires the Spirit to reorient it, helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition, challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement, for we are called to be a blessing to the earth. (Song of Faith)

As we lean into our 100th anniversary, I am hearing that many of our communities are ambivalent about commemorating/celebrating this milestone. The struggle for survival, the lingering effects of COVID, and the challenges related to the colonial project – the abuse and genocide of Indigenous peoples, the weariness of coming to terms with white privilege and racism – I think all contribute to the challenges. As I hear this, I can't help but remember the reflection of Peter Gordon White on a similar reluctance and reticence around the 65th anniversary in 1990:

“Would it be better then to let this time pass and not to speak of ourselves to ourselves? That would be to assume that the perplexities of our generation are so exceptional that we are overwhelmed by them. It would be to trap ourselves in a petulant state of mind: if we cannot be the way we were, we will not be at all, as though past problems were all minor and present one insurmountable. It would be to say that we speak only in a confident voice, in triumph not in tribulation (Peter Gordon White, Voices & Visions – 65 Years of The United Church of Canada)”

“God, propel us into your future, rooted in the richness of our past.” (Call to Purpose)

My imagination continues to be shaped by the work of Rishad Tobaccowala – *The future does not fit in the containers of the past.* In a recent [article](#), Tobaccowala identified four (4) Keys to Leading Today: Passion for Excellence, Face and Accept Reality, Empathy combined with Vulnerability and Continuous Improvement. At the November meeting of the Executive, you engaged with the framing of the emerging strategic operational plan- – Vision 2035. This is a framework that is reflective of the qualities that Tobaccowala has identified.

As we partner with God in mending the world, and as we continue to refine and operationalize Vision 2035, we hold the challenges and importance of:

- our progressive identity
- our commitment as a justice seeking/justice living church
- our solidarity and companionship with global partners
- our ecumenical DNA, and
- our unique Canadian identity.

So, as you work your way through this report and the various proposals coming before you, be aware we are engaging with a significant amount of complex and competing values, each proposal has its own impact, and we will need to figure out how we keep in mind the good of the whole. I would encourage you to use the risk factors and Vision 2035 as a framework for evaluating the proposals before you at this meeting.

Risk Management

As a management team, we continue to pay attention to the ongoing impact of COVID; the health and well-being of ministry personnel, and the tension between our polity, practices and the changing context of the church and world – including climate impacts, technological advancements, housing costs, risk of a recession, economic inflation, foreign exchange fluctuation, changing governments and policies, changes in immigration and the aging demographics of our members, to name a few. However, there are other risk factors we are observing and managing.

It is critical for the church that we, as management and governors, are intentional about using a risk-management framework for our work and decision-making. I have often identified some of the risk factors being managed by the Management Team, and I realize that, as an Executive, we have not engaged with the issues named. The Audit Committee does keep an eye on a variety of risk issues, for which we are grateful. For this report, I am identifying these issues up front and invite you to engage with them as we make decisions at this meeting and prepare for the 45th General Council. As a risk framework we seek to pay attention to political, economic, social, technology, legal/leadership and environment factors (**PESTLE**). Here is an overview of some of the factors we are attentive to:

Financial/Economic

Uncollected assessments: At the beginning of 2024, there was about \$1.5M in outstanding assessment reimbursement, which grew to \$2M at the end of 2024. We are trying to understand the reasoning for the lack of payment and determine a process for collecting.

Mission and service income is showing decline year over year.

Captive insurance: The captive insurance alleviates the premium increase pressure for congregations but doesn't eliminate the claim risk.

2026-2028 budget and the possibility of increasing assessment.

Possible Loss of Charity Tax Exemption [Commons Report](#) [cccc report](#)

United Property Resource Corporation as we continue to understand the reality of affordable housing, the expected financial return to the General Council Office will be less than expected in the immediate future.

Governance

Recommendations from the two task groups – Task Group Report Total Compensation and the Office of the Moderator and General Secretary – will have implications for the church. The work on the implementation of the governance structure of the Indigenous Church is another relational factor we are monitoring.

Advocacy

Concern for Political Activity

Israel-Palestine Advocacy

Operational

Move to 300 Bloor

Staff Demographics

Cyber security

Pension & benefits service levels

Reputational

Staff Complaint (Antisemitism)

Broadview

Strategic Operational Plan

We have now completed the second year of an annual GCO plan linked to the overall strategic objectives. Please see the 2024 Q4 Strategic Plan report for further detail. We are working on an annual report bringing forward highlights of 2024 with financial reporting. Two years in, we are seeing tangible results across the plan, including in the Growth initiative, which was both new within this strategic plan and identified as the highest priority. Some of the results include: new attendees from invite plans developed by congregations; new ministries within existing congregations; 25 emerging migrant and diaspora communities of faith, and new donors and subscribers from denominational outreach strategies.

With the presence of a research and development team (data), there has been significant advance in the use of data in decision-making, particularly by making retrieval and analysis more accessible, not only in the GCO but also with regions. This has not only helped facilitate better decision-making in the Growth initiative, but also in other aspects of the plan.

In a critically important advance, staff were able to develop the annual plan for 2025, with budget, for approval prior to the end of 2024. It is hoped that 2026-2028 might offer the opportunity for more denomination-wide coordination and sharper focus in furthering strategic directions in significant continuity to the existing plan. Increased capacity with data is providing deeper and wider denomination-wide analysis of both the current and future trends in the church. The emerging picture makes clear the need for greater national-regional strategic collaboration to sustain and increase the resilience, diversity and inspiration of communities of faith across the country.

New initiative: 100 Tables This initiative will form a cornerstone of the “A Place at the Table” campaign celebrating the church’s Centennial in 2025. In this campaign, we extend an inclusive welcome to all to participate in the church’s continued Call and Vision. The campaign's key platforms will be national and local media, united-church.ca, and our social media channels. The “A Place at the Table” kick-off event and launch are expected at Easter.

The Growth Animators, working with feedback from regional colleagues and others have compiled a list of 134 promising participating Communities of Faith (COFs) of the 100 Tables Project. As of February 11, 2025, 77 of them have received invitations, responding with excitement at being invited and many have responded that they are taking this idea to their governing body with 10 having already confirmed their desire to participate.

In this project, 100 tables will be set up outside of United Church buildings; each table will be used to express each community’s unique incarnation of Jesus’ invitation to the Table, and together they will form a nationwide symbol of the church’s commitment to justice and the thriving neighbourhoods we call home.

Indigenous Church

The National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering (NISG) was held at the end of November 2024 in Winnipeg. The National Indigenous Elders Council has committed to offering leadership for the time being, as they engage with the communities to determine the future of the National Indigenous Council. You can find the Elders’ statement [here](#). I will not be replacing the Executive Minister position until we have some clarity from the Elders.

Financial Management

2024 Financial Preview: As we finalize the fiscal year of 2024, it's still too early to provide a complete year-end financial update. However, I'm delighted to share some preliminary insights. The UCC's treasury investment portfolio has performed exceptionally well, achieving a double-digit return of 14.32% for 2024, with a total market value of \$87.5 million; approximately \$30M+ of that is designated as operating reserve, and the rest is earmarked for various designated purposes, such as the group benefit plan, property fund and annuity fund. This outstanding performance is a testament to the investment committee's good work. It is worth noting that this follows the excellent return in 2023 of 11.73%. The strong performance translates to healthy financial reserves, strengthening the General Council Office's financial resilience and providing a greater buffer for budget planning in the next triennial.

The 2024 Mission and Service contributions totaled \$19.4 million, only \$80,000 less than the budgeted target. While meeting the budget is excellent news, it represents a year-over-year decrease of \$1.4 million, which is not surprising but continues to increase pressure on future assumptions about budget revenue. Included in the total received Mission and Service contributions of \$19.4 million, \$15 million is from congregations, which represents a \$700,000 decrease compared to 2023.

The unpaid balances for 2024 assessments have increased by another \$500k, bringing the total to more than \$2 million. A priority for 2025 will be to work with regional councils to establish a protocol focused on collecting unpaid assessments from congregations.

The expenditure figures are still being finalized, and the year-end audit is scheduled to commence in the last week of March. The two biggest expense categories, salaries and grants, are tracking very close to the budgeted figures, which demonstrates good financial accountability.

Finance Team Transformation: Over the last four years, the finance team has undergone significant changes, including five retirements and five new hires. Succession planning has been a top priority to ensure seamless transitions and minimize business interruption risks. Effective January 1, 2025, the finance team has implemented a renewed structure that will enable the financial function to mitigate transition and succession risks, further enhance efficiency, and help the church make better-informed financial decisions.

2024 Interim Audit: The interim audit was conducted from November 11, 2024, over a three-week period. During this time, auditors reviewed the financial records of GCO and KAIROS as of September 30, 2024. Their work included control testing over key accounting processes such as cash, investments, donations, payroll, and expenses. Additionally, KPMG selected samples from both revenue and expense transactions for substantive testing. Our finance team collaborated

closely with the auditors, providing all required supporting documents in a timely manner. As a result, all scheduled work was completed within the established timeline, with no delays or issues encountered. The auditors have not identified any material deficiencies or areas of concern that could impact the year-end audit.

UCC Protect United Insurance Program (Kindred Insurance): The 2024/2025 renewal cycle has been successfully and smoothly completed, thanks to the hard work of Erik Mathiesen, and the HUB team. We achieved significant service-level improvements during this renewal cycle. Regarding the financial health of the captive insurance company, it has been a year of mixed news. The two catastrophic fire claims in 2024 severely impacted the claim reserve level, which is closely monitored by insurance regulators. Despite this negative impact, the captive managed to keep the premium increase to a minimum. Unfortunately, the interest payment on the \$3 million loan to the Common Good Foundation will need to be postponed until next year when the insurance company can rebuild its claim reserve. The two fire claims essentially wiped out the reserve buildup since the program's launch. On a positive note, the captive insurance continues to deliver the anticipated savings in premiums for all participating congregations.

Changes to end-of-month community of faith payroll run dates: Currently about 500 pastoral charges run a once-a-month payroll at the end of month. When this pay date falls on a banking holiday and the treasurer has not adjusted the payroll schedule to pay early, it means that their employee(s) are not paid on time and there are no pension contributions or benefits premiums submitted that month.

This creates three problems. First, they are out of compliance with the Employment Standards Act regarding timely pay. Second, they are out of compliance with the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) requirement for timely contribution of pension moneys. This can result in penalties against the employer and the Fund as the administrator. Third, it results in the termination of health benefits for employee(s). While benefits are restored when premiums renew, it does mean a four-to-six-week period when the employees do not have access to their benefits. This is often a hardship, and inconvenience, for plan members.

To remedy this problem, staff have instructed ADP to adjust the pay date to the 25th of the month, starting in June. Affected communities of faith have received notice from the General Council Office and directly from ADP, the payroll service provider. If a pastoral charge's cash flow will be impacted, the Pastoral Charge Payroll team at the General Council Office will assist in managing the transition.

Mission and Service

While the overall results for Mission and Service met budget, we were hoping for closer tracking on prior years. A bright point was great success in increasing direct giving, particularly through major gifts. Several factors may have played into year-over-year decrease, including economic uncertainty and the postal strike. One of the challenges with Mission and Service continues to be visibility in the life of the church.

A number of initiatives in 2025 are intended to highlight the role of Mission and Service in the life of the church including: increased presence at governance meetings (GCE, Regional Councils); increased promotion of when Mission and Service is funding programming (e.g. badges for online presenters that note the program is funded by Mission and Service); changing “Mission Support Grants” administered by regions to “Mission and Service Grants” for improved clarity and recognition, and increased collaboration with regions to share and showcase regional Mission and Service grant recipients to highlight Mission and Service “close to home,” etc.

A significant point of risk for Mission and Service over the next two years will be the economy. With the uncertainties created by US policy and tactics, if there is a downturn in markets, donors, particularly those whose income is reliant on investments, may need to shift resources to cover necessities as compared to donations. There’s not much we can do to address this risk except to continue sharing the impact of Mission and Service and focusing on best practices.

Continued focus on supporting Communities of Faith in their stewardship initiatives will also be increasingly important as we strive to improve congregational health across the country. We know that the support provided through the Called to Be the Church program is critical in giving leaders the resources and knowledge to undertake the work well. For example, on average 96% of Communities of Faith that did Stewardship Best Practices or Set Up Your Giving Program in 2024 created a plan and acted on it, which resulted in improved communication, transparency, and morale within the community of faith. We also saw positive change in at least three key financial indicators for 90% of participants in those courses from 2023-2024 and expect similar results for the 2024 cohorts.

The Centennial Legacy campaign is gathering momentum with additional congregations coming on board and frontline volunteer training taking place. We are gradually increasing promotion of the campaign, and you’ll begin to see campaign ads and materials in more locations both online and at events like regional meetings. Thank you to everyone who has been in touch about inviting Communities of Faith to participate – your work has been instrumental in getting to where we are today.

Follow-Up on Work Assigned

This section of the report provided updates to various pieces of work that has been assigned by the General Council and decisions you have made as an Executive.

a. General Council

Total Compensation Review Task Group: will have a report for this meeting with recommendations for the consideration of the Executive. Some may be acted on by the Executive while others will be for the Executive to decide whether to recommend to the General Council.

Structural Change Evaluation Steering Committee: is beta testing the surveys that will be widely distributed after Easter. In addition to this, there will be a series of focal group conversations and interviews with those who have been most involved with structural change. These will continue into the fall so the final report will not be ready until then. However, by General Council, there will be some feedback to share.

b. The Executive of General Council

The Review of the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary Task Group: will have a report for this meeting with recommendations for the consideration of the Executive. Some may be acted on by the Executive while others will be for the Executive to decide whether to recommend to the General Council. A small group of staff developed the process and parameters for implementing the recommendation endorsed by the Executive in November to undertake background reviews of nominees. The process and parameters were circulated to you prior to consideration by the Sub-executive on February 3, 2025. The Sub-executive adopted the process, and it has been communicated to nominees. I am currently engaging a third party to undertake the reviews.

United Property Resource Corporation/Kindred Works: as per your direction (GS118) we have completed the negotiations of a satisfactory agreement on the governance structure. You will have in this meeting a proposal to authorize me to sign the Unanimous Shareholder Agreement (USA). A fuller report is found later in this report

Request for support from the Canadian Council of Churches: in response the GS100 we contributed \$10,000 to the campaign.

Office relocation: Because the current office space is significantly underutilized, the high rent, the inflexibility of the Landlord around the renewal term, and most importantly, the uncertainty around the occupancy date of 300 Bloor West, you approved GS107 at the November 2024 Executive meeting. The motion directing staff to explore and assess interim office location options and develop a project plan that is operationally and financially viable, and b) provided

that an operational and financially viable space was found, terminate the current office lease at the end of its term on February 28, 2026.

After preliminary searches, two options were identified: the Presbyterian Church office at 50 Wynford Drive, North York, Ontario, and the Anglican Church office at 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario. A staff survey was also conducted in December 2024 to gather data on staff commute patterns to be included in the office location selection criteria.

After site visits, cost analyses, and moving plan feasibility assessments, staff is recommending The Presbyterian Church of Canada offices at 50 Wynford Drive, North York, Ontario, as the interim office location. The selection was based on criteria including accessibility, cost, size, layout, and staff commute survey data. The staff survey revealed that, among the 68 staff who participated, 39.68% were coming from the west and 38.10% from the east, with most using cars for their commute. The survey also asked about the modes of transportation used by staff, finding that 32% used cars, 25% used a combination of bus and train, and 13% used a combination of car, bus, and train.

The move to the interim location is expected to deliver at least \$500,000 in one-time savings on office rental costs in 2026, with manageable interruption to operations, as most staff are working remotely most of the time. However, it does add pressure on the moving planning team, especially the IT team. To mitigate this pressure, temporary contracts will be utilized to assist with the move. The next steps include preparing communication to the staff about the interim office location decision and establish a detailed project plan ensuring a smooth transition to the interim office location.

Proposals on Essential Agreement referred to TICIF:

Motion: *Kit Loewen/M Chorney 2022-11-18-015 That the General Council Executive forward proposal WF13: CS02, CW01, WOW01 Essential Agreement and the notes from the General Council 44 discussion groups to the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) and the Office of Vocation for discernment and direction, and report back to the Executive for action. Carried*

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee reviewed the regional council proposals and the Way Forward proposal, as well as the notes from the General Council 44 discussion groups. The committee recommends to the Executive of General Council that no action be taken on these proposals.

Additional Mandatory Training for Ministry Personnel: The Board of Vocation has a proposal before the General Council Executive, offering a way forward for mandatory trainings for ministry personnel, as passed by the 43rd General Council.

Programmatic Updates

Anti-Racism Common Table ends its mandate with the rise of General Council 45, and we have decided to look to the new General Council Executive for decisions on how a reference group for the Anti-Racism and Equity focus moves forward. The Common Table will continue to meet through May, with an eye to providing learnings from its three-year term and suggestions for moving forward.

Apologies Research Project is part of the initial work on reparations. The Rev. Dr. Miriam Spies has been hired on a research contract to gain a picture of how apologies offered on behalf of The United Church of Canada came to be through both asks from individuals and responses from church governance. Looking at timelines of motions, actions, and responses as well as archival interviews helps us have a fuller sense of each apology. As well, examination of how each apology has/has not been and is/is not being lived out within the church has started. Out of this research, we will compile a summary of recommendations for making truthful and meaningful Apologies. We expect to provide an interim report to GC45.

The apologies under research are:

- The 1986 Apology to Indigenous Peoples for the church's role in colonization and attempts to destroy language, culture, and spirituality
- The 1998 Apology for Residential Schools
- The 2006 Apology to Women who were Disjoined
- The 2009 BC Conference Apology regarding the treatment of Vancouver Japanese United Church during World War II
- The 2020 Apology for Forced Adoptions
- The 2023 process towards an Apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities

The Pilgrims of Learning program will unite four delegations of 4-5 individuals from diverse backgrounds across Canada's United Church regions. From May to September 2025, these delegations will embark on a transformative 10-12 day in-person journey to global partner contexts, culminating in virtual debrief sessions in September 2025. Through immersive experiential learning and witness to global partners' priorities, the program seeks to deepen

understanding of global partnerships and decolonizing approaches. *Ultimately, this initiative aims to harvest key learnings, informing a paradigm shift within the Church towards decolonized partnership ministries.*

A Response to Cuba's Crisis: Cuba is facing its worst economic crisis in over 60 years, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and decades-long sanctions. Inflation is soaring to 31% and average monthly salaries barely cover basic necessities. The United Church of Canada works with its partner, The Martin Luther King Memorial Centre (CMMLK), as part of an ecumenical collaboration with Alongside Hope (formerly the Primates' World Relief and Development Fund), Presbyterian World Service and Development, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Together, they are providing a shipment of food to assist about 2,000 vulnerable individuals in care centres across five communities. These centres support seniors, people living with disabilities, children, and pregnant women who have little to no family support. We're grateful for the support of our partners and donors, including The United Church Foundation and a designated donation to the church.

Humanitarian Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo): The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) is facing an escalating humanitarian crisis, with violence intensifying since the start of 2025. According to the UN World Food Programme, over 700,000 people have been displaced this year, adding to the 4.6 million already seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The crisis has resulted in an estimated 3,000 deaths and left more than 25 million people facing acute food insecurity, disproportionately affecting women and children. The situation on the ground is dire. The suspension of USAID funding has further exacerbated the crisis, with humanitarian agencies facing staff and program cuts. This has severely impacted their capacity to provide life-saving support to those in need. We are working closely with our global partner, Église du Christ au Congo (ECC), to respond to the appeal as part of the ACT appeal. We have made an initial gift of \$25,000.

Overview – Advocacy and Partner Solidarity: Throughout 2024, GCO staff have continued to accompany partners in Palestine and Israel as violence persists, with impacts extending to Lebanon and Syria. Advocacy efforts have focused on calling for a permanent and just ceasefire, increased humanitarian aid to Gaza, and an end to arms sales to Israel. GCO has actively been engaged through various actions, including:

- Issuing a letter (August 13, 2024) urging the Prime Minister to suspend relations with Israel until it complies with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion issued on July 19, 2024.
- Co-drafting and signing an ecumenical letter (March 2024) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, supporting the government's decision to reinstate funding to UNRWA.

- Collaborating with Act Alliance Canada Forum in a March 2024 letter urging Canada to take decisive action to end suffering in the region.
- Partnering with KAIROS Canada and other ecumenical groups to organize the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage to Ottawa (May 22, 2024), attended by the Moderator and including meetings with MPs.
- Signing a Food Security Policy Working Group letter addressing the use of food as a weapon of war in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and DR Congo.

The challenges around this advocacy work are multifaceted and pressing. The temporary ceasefire in Gaza has created a critical window for humanitarian aid to reach previously inaccessible communities, and we are proud to be supporting these efforts alongside our partners. Staff will continue to help the church in applying the principles to its advocacy work as we continue to navigate the transition from policies to principles.

Upcoming Events

Centennial Celebration: By now you will have received your invitation to the Centennial celebration in St. John's, NL. Gower St. United Church is excited to be hosting the event and First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council is helping us connect with United Church ministries in the area. Many thanks to the worship planners who are finalizing the service that will be used that day and available to congregations. We look forward to welcoming the *Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay*, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, as our preacher, as well as several ecumenical and interfaith guests.

General Council 45: Planning is well underway. Insights from the governance coach, Dan Hotchkiss, are being employed in the development of the agenda. Previously, work was often organized according to the source, i.e. regional council or General Council. If the proposed agenda is adopted by the General Council, the work will be organized around a question that is tied to the theme of Visions and Dreams, such as "What is the Vision/Dream for Daring Justice?" The goal is to ensure that the General Council has the time and opportunity to consider the overarching questions facing the church, and to chart a course for the future and provide guidance for day-to-day decisions.

Registration invitations have been sent, and regular newsletters are being delivered. *The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson*, General Minister and President of The United Church of Christ, U.S.A., has kindly agreed to be our theme speaker and is scheduled to make three presentations. Our guest list for global and ecumenical partners slightly exceeds the number authorized at the November meeting of the GCE and we beg the GCE's indulgence, trusting that our guests' wisdom will enrich our experience.

Leadership Recruitment:

The Member Engagement team (Diane Bosman and Jamie Wilder) oversees the policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection, and support of more than 500 elected and appointed roles within the General Council structure, including the Office of Vocation and the National Indigenous Church. This spring, the church launches the triennium's largest call for nominations (affectionately referred to as "the BIG Recruit") seeking more than 200 people to serve on the committees of the General Council, the General Council Executive, the Board of Vocation and its committees following the 45th General Council.

The Nominations Committee maintains a high commitment to ensuring that those appointed to these leadership roles reflect the full diversity of the United Church, with particular attention paid to its equity commitments and the presence of both lay people and ministry personnel from across the geography of the church. The Leadership Counts end-term report, to be released this summer, will provide a snapshot of the current diversity within these leadership roles.

Member Engagement is working with colleagues across the General Council Office to prepare for the effective onboarding of these 200+ appointed members to the policies and commitments of the United Church, including the new Behavioral Covenant.

In recognition of National Volunteer Week, April 27 to May 3, 2025 Member Engagement has coordinated with the Moderator and staff in the Communications unit to launch a church-wide thank-you to the thousands of volunteers – all across the church and in its many ministries – who are essential to living out the call and ministry of the United Church.

Reports:

Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee: There are two proposals before you at this meeting, representing significant work on the part of the committee: revisions to the principles for justice; a new Statement on Ministry.

The 44th General Council (2022) also tasked TICIF with engaging the church in a study of discipleship. TICIF recognizes there are many ways in which the wider church is engaged in thinking about and living out discipleship and so is inviting United Church communities and individuals to share their discipleship stories with the committee, through a variety of media (word, music, art, video, etc.). The [discipleship campaign](#) was launched a few weeks ago. The committee particularly encourages GCE members to submit discipleship stories from their own communities of faith/ministry sites.

Board of Vocation: The yearly accountability report and appendix from the Board of Vocation are before you for this meeting.

United Property Resource Corporation: In 2019, the United Church created the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) to assist communities of faith and regional councils in making faithful property decisions. The original mandate anticipated the redevelopment of church properties for rental housing, including affordable units. A partnership with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) was key to this goal. Since then, there have been significant changes in the property development sector, among them increased construction costs. We also understand the challenges of redevelopment better and have greater insight into the property needs of communities of faith, beyond redevelopment.

Since 2019, and more intensely over the last year, we have applied these insights to adapt UPRC to the changing context. Under the leadership of Executive Director, Rev. Miriam Bowlby, UPRC is available to work with faith communities as they reimagine their property assets to strengthen their financial and social health, and the common good of their neighbourhoods.

UPRC is wholly owned by The United Church of Canada and works closely with the General Council Office Growth team and with regional councils. UPRC is actively developing the services they offer to communities of faith, in order to respond to the varied needs across the country – urban, suburban and rural.

Kindred Works is now a separate company sharply focused on redeveloping properties for rental housing, resulting in community gathering spaces and mixed income homes. The need to sustain private equity flows and a continued partnership with CMHC have required some changes in governance. The United Church continues in a critical role as a majority investor and key strategic partner.

Kindred Works is a Certified B Corporation, meeting high standards in social and environmental performance, as well as accountability and transparency. Through the United Church majority investment, the denomination furthers its commitments to emissions reduction and equity; Kindred Works builds carbon-neutral homes (30% of which will be fully accessible), with an 80% commitment to local labour and businesses, including 10% labour hours with equity-seeking groups.

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

Strategic Plan 2023—2025

2024 Operational Plan Report

Quarter 4

February 1, 2025



2024 Operational Plan Report: Quarter 4

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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

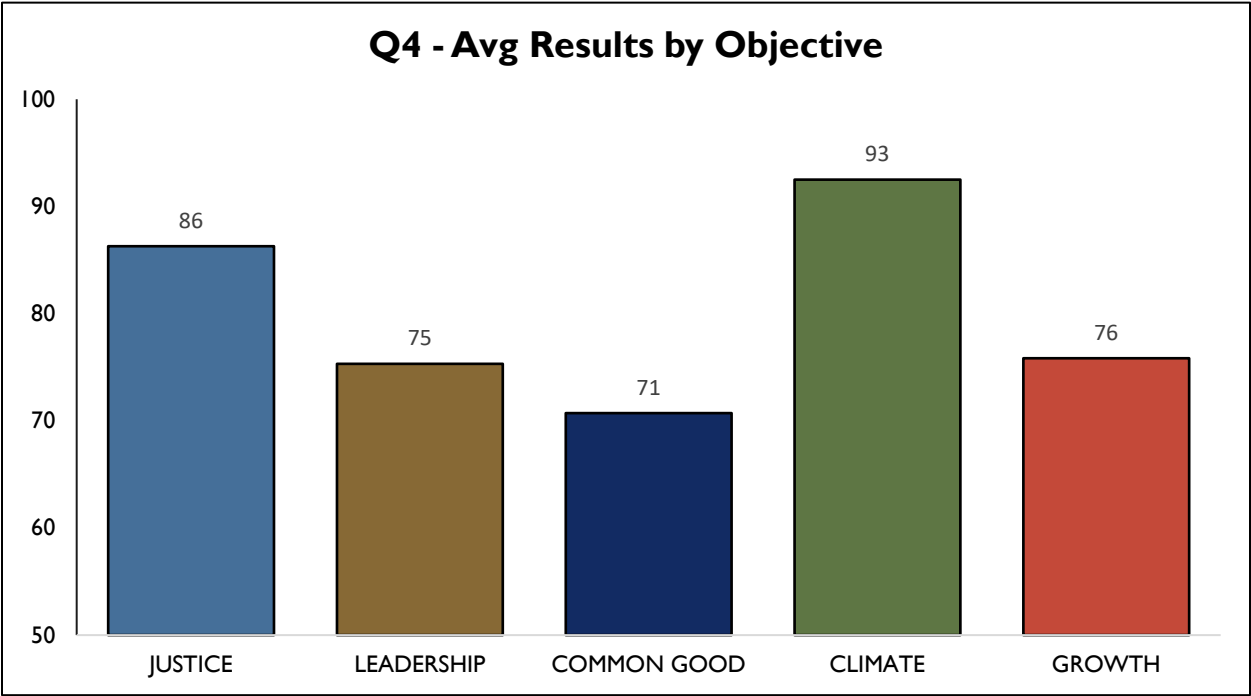
Overall Results:

Chart



Strategic Objective	Progress on Key Results
Strengthen Invitation	76%
Embolden Justice	86%
Nurture the Common Good	71%
Invigorate Leadership	75%
Deepen Climate Integrity	93%
Journeying Indigenous Pathways	Good

Graph



Narrative Summary

Our overall progress on key results is holding strong this quarter (Q4 79%), consistent with progress earlier in the year (Q1 76%; Q2 80%; Q3 77%). One of the additional challenges of this quarter, particularly for management, was that while implementation of Q4 was still unfolding, significant work was being done to revise and approve the annual plan for 2025. In the first situation in recent memory, the full annual plan, including budget, was approved by the General Secretary in December, prior to the year of implementation having begun.

An emerging theme both from the implementation of Strategic Plan activities, and from research commissioned by the General Secretary and engaged with by Staff Leaders from across the denomination in Q4, is the growing need to intensify and increase the impact of Community of Faith supports. This requires deepening coordination across the General Council Office and with regions so that supports are known, highly beneficial, and easily accessible by Communities of Faith. A key element in next year's planning will be a clear assessment of existing services and supports and work to coordinate and streamline for ease of access. Technological solutions, advanced over the past two years under the Common Good banner, are key components in enabling Community of Faith supports.

As the Strengthening Invitation (or Growth) initiative, introduced in this Strategic Plan as a key priority, completes its second year of implementation, we are seeing tangible results such as:

- **Renew:** Congregational invitation plans implemented by existing communities working with Growth animators are resulting in new attendees;
- **Create:** 25 emerging migrant and diaspora communities of faith have begun and are developing with supports;
- **Invite:** Denominational outreach strategies, such as Centennial initiatives, are resulting in new subscribers

The use of data, to observe trends, map context, plan interventions, and assess impact is becoming more consistent particularly in the Growth initiative but also more broadly across the organization. We continue to work to develop effective use of data, and increased capacity to sharpen focus and strategy.

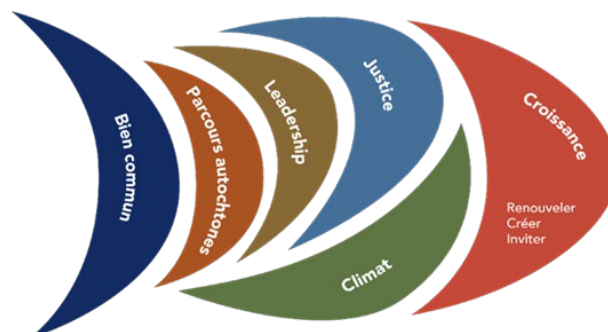
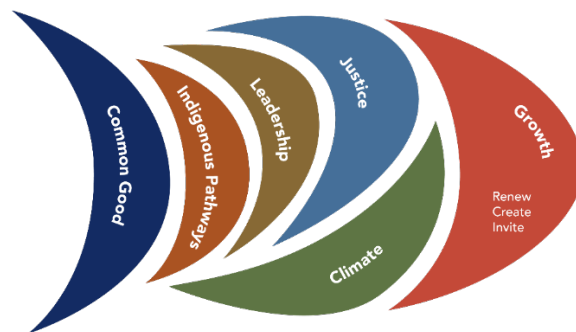
Good News

As part of the Growth's renewal work, Tori Mullin, Growth Animator, in collaboration with GIS Specialist Sharon Buttrey, hosted two workshops at regional council gatherings on how to use the Neighbourhood Profile tool developed by the GCO Research and Development Team. 68 profiles were provided to participating congregations. Congregations were invited to connect the data to the church's call and get curious about the neighbours they are not currently in relationship with. These workshops received some good feedback, with many benefits including tangible national support of CoFs and introduction of the Growth Animator to the regions, and developed presentation material that can be continually improved and used in other regions moving forward.

--Rev Cameron Fraser, Director of Growth and Ministry Development

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 76%

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: In October and November, regionally deployed Growth Animators engaged with 185 Ministry Personnel and 422 Communities of Faith. 17 Communities of Faith and 63 individuals were engaged in the *Called to be the Church* Stewardship course. In Northern Spirit, *Delving into Discipleship*, a pilot project in which Stewardship Coach and Growth Animator lead a year-long cohort of Communities of Faith identified by Regional Council Staff around proactive community growth, launched with five congregations. 100 participants joined a national retreat for francophone youth, *La rencontre nationale des jeunes francophones du Canada (Ré-unis)*. The Flourishing Workshop was offered in St. John's and Moncton. An Advent invitation resource was developed and launched via the *Advent Unwrapped* including a downloadable, adjustable invitation card and a video offering examples of person-to-person invitation to Christmas Eve Worship. Growth staff resourced the Rural Ministry Gathering hosted by Leadershift offering keynote speaking, workshop leadership, and anti-racism education.

Create: The number of migrant and diasporic communities receiving support from the United Church of Canada rose to 25, with 2 possibilities identified for discernment in early 2025. The Growth Initiative made investments in the Pacific Mountain Regional Council Church Planting Program, Hillhurst United Church (Calgary) satellite site at the Living Spirit Centre, Cowan Heights United Church (St. John's) Home Harbour new ministry initiative, and Francophone new ministry in Moncton with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council. The Fertile Soil mapping project has been completed in its test location Eastern Ottawa Outaouais Regional Council.

Invite: There was slightly more than a 10% increase in subscriber base to the Centennial Newsletter. The strategy for the *Place at the Table* Public Outreach Campaign was reconfigured this quarter ready to be implemented in 2025. Also in development is a dynamic photo reinterpretation of the Last Supper, contributing to denominational reflection on a *Place at the Table* at Easter 2025. [MonCredo](#) supported the national francophone youth event and completed the drafting of three sponsored video messages working with a French Speaking online influencer. Worship leaders are planning the June 10, 2025 Centennial Service.

Challenges

The high number of national and regional offerings geared towards Communities of Faith across the denomination is in many ways wonderful. But with so many options available there is also a level of challenge in regards to clarity, alignment, focus and coordination. Given the fatigue experienced at

the Community of Faith level, a more strategic approach to interventions and supports feels necessary. Q1 of 2025 will begin to address this through an initial assessment.

Looking Forward

Substantive strategy development was done for the *Place at the Table* public outreach campaign, facilitating major pieces that will come to fruition in 2025. The experience of creating a downloadable resource around Strengthen Invitation has provided valuable learnings that will support the creation of a suite of resources in 2025. A new Activity Stream dedicating additional focus and resources to Supporting Renewal in Rural Contexts was developed and will launch at the beginning of 2025.

Accountable: Rev. 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	100
	Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops	80
	Renewing Francophone Communities	100
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	Ended
	Regional/Identity Communities	50
	Migrant Communities	100
	Intercultural communities	100
	Francophone Communities	100
	Diverse Identity Communities	Ended
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	50
	Outreach: Communication Strategy	30
	Francophone Outreach	50
	Centennial Commemoration Project	80

Good News

A participant in the Stewardship Best Practices course from Harmony United, Saint John, NB, said "I wish I had done this a long time ago! This course has been eye opening and fills me with hope for the future of my community of faith.

--Rev. Dave Jagger, Community of Faith Stewardship Lead

Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World 86%

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

Over the past quarter, the Justice Team has made significant strides in advancing our advocacy efforts, particularly in the areas of 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, anti-racism, and Indigenous justice. These efforts are part of our broader strategy to collaborate in spaces where just relationships can flourish, fostering abundant life in the church, Canada, and global communities.

Anti-Racism: The [40 Days of Engagement of Anti-Racism](#) initiative was a notable success, attracting high participation rates and new attendees. This initiative has played a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting anti-racism within the community. We have also provided support to communities addressing white privilege through workshops, preaching, and follow-up resources, fostering inclusivity and awareness.

Efforts to reinvigorate justice networks have been successful, with the launch of a "Succeed in Advocacy" webinar series aimed at mobilizing United Church members and supporters around national policy priorities, including anti-racism. However, ongoing governance challenges have diverted staff resources, impacting our ability to focus on these initiatives. Limited funding has also restricted progress, underscoring the importance of securing sustainable funding sources.

LGBTQIA+ Global Commitments: The past quarter has seen advancement in LGBTQIA+ rights and social justice. We have strengthened global partnerships, particularly in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Africa, and deepened connections with organizations focused on LGBTQIA+ rights. Our commitment to decolonizing partnerships and becoming an anti-racist church has been affirmed, with interest from several organizations for closer collaboration. Despite challenges posed by global crises and restrictions on public messaging, we have continued advocacy efforts, adapted refugee support resources, and planned engagements with organizations to promote LGBTQIA+ rights and support refugees.

Indigenous Justice: Progress has been made in the Reparations and Apologies Project, with a researcher hired and an initial report expected in March 2025. Bringing the Children Home transferred \$200,000 to Stó:lō Nation for their work of commemoration and recovery at the Coqualeetza institution. These funds will be used to support the Stó:lō Shxweli Language Program, which operates on the Coqualeetza grounds and focusses on developing teaching resources to promote an immersion language learning program, teaching Halq'eméylem in Halq'eméylem. The Stó:lō Chiefs have said that "promoting and encouraging Halq'eméylem use, and supporting Halq'eméylem teachers and learners as we aim towards reestablishing fluency is an essential element

of reconciliation and redress of harms resulting from Residential Schools and colonial institutions.”

Archival work has continued, enhancing transparency and preserving historical data. However, challenges persist, including stalled Covenant of Reconciliation work, delays in projects like "Spiritual Violence," and resource allocation issues, highlighting the need for improved project management and prioritization.

Radical Accompaniment: Recent initiatives have yielded promising results, strengthening relationships with ecumenical partners through in-person visits, participation in the ACT Alliance General Assembly, and key appointments such as partners serving on the Act Alliance governance. Decolonizing partnerships have been affirmed, with interest from organizations like Finn Church Aid, and regional conversations have emphasized mutual radical accompaniment and meaningful consultation. A \$50,000 funding grant is supported these efforts.

The implementation of global partnership initiatives has yielded several successes, including strengthened relationships with global partners and ecumenical organizations, recognition of decolonizing efforts, and enhanced contextual understanding. However, potential challenges may arise in sustaining momentum, particularly in replicating the success of regional conversations in Asia across other regions. Additionally, navigating power dynamics to ensure effective collaboration and securing sustainable funding sources may require careful consideration. Key lessons learned include the importance of relationship building, contextual understanding, and consultation and adaptation to partner needs, highlighting the value of mutual radical accompaniment and decolonizing partnerships in fostering global partnerships and promoting justice.

Challenges

The past quarter has underscored several key principles. Internal coordination and clear processes are essential for effective and impactful work, as evidenced by the success of monthly meetings and draft advocacy processes. Flexible communication strategies and contingency plans are crucial for maintaining momentum amidst challenges, such as public messaging restrictions. Securing sustainable funding sources and re-prioritizing projects based on available resources is vital for overcoming funding limitations. Integrated planning and cross-functional collaboration can significantly amplify impact, as seen in the intersection of anti-racism initiatives and community engagement. Thorough vetting and alignment of stakeholders with strategic goals are necessary for meaningful partnerships. Continuous evaluation and feedback, as demonstrated by the *40 Days of Engagement* initiative, are essential for informing and adjusting strategies to ensure they remain effective and responsive to community needs.

Looking Forward

By addressing these challenges and incorporating these lessons, we can enhance our efforts, achieve greater alignment with our goals, and drive meaningful progress in 2SLGBTQIA+, anti-racism, and Indigenous justice advocacy. Our interconnected efforts have collectively advanced our overarching strategy of justice, reconciliation, and community engagement, with evaluation data and ongoing collaborations indicating a meaningful impact. As we move forward, we remain committed to

fostering global partnerships, promoting justice, and supporting decolonizing efforts, ensuring that our advocacy work continues to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Accountable: Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
INDIGENOUS JUSTICE: Address anti-Indigenous racism and White supremacy and make the church and Canada safer and more equitable for Indigenous peoples. Shift: Towards decolonization and increased justice.	TRC Calls to Action	70
	Indigenous Strength Learning Opportunities	100
	Reparations	75
	Bringing the Children Home	75
RACIAL EQUITY: Advance racial equity. Shift: Towards transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized people.	Self-defined Healing	100
	Racial Equity in Housing Advocacy	75
	Addressing Antisemitism	100
	Anti-Racism Education	90
	Addressing White Privilege	25
2S-LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS: Enhance 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights including addressing religious-induced homophobia. Shift: Towards integrating and intersecting with other justice issues.	Refugee Sponsorship	90
	LGBTQIA+ Global and Ecumenical Advocacy	90
ECUMENISM: Increase ecumenical collaboration and effectiveness. Shift: Towards stronger impact and reduction in overlap.	Ecumenical Youth Exchange	90
	Stronger Ecumenical Partnership	100
RADICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: Strengthen accompaniment of global partners. Shift: Towards needs development.	Financial Sharing	80
	Crisis Response	97
	People to People	100
	Witness	90
	Visits and Meetings	95
	Roundtables	100
PUBLIC WITNESS: Strengthen presence in the public sphere and effectiveness in advocacy as a	Moderator's Initiative: Public Events and Book Clubs	90

denomination. Shift: Towards greater public presence, clearer principles and processes of response.	Advocacy: Presence and Methodology	80
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Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship 75%

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

Youth and Young Adult/First Third Ministry: The Vision Fund Seed grants were fully subscribed, which is a good indicator that program for, with, and by youth and young adults is being strengthened.

Ministry Development and Reimagining Theological Education: The *Statement on Ministry* draft was favourably reviewed by the Task Group with only small editorial changes to make in preparation for presentation to Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF) and the Board of Vocation (BOV) in early February 2025. The work is on track to present to General Council Executive (GCE) in March.

The anti-racism faculty network met in-person in December and created action items for 2025. For the overall work on reimagining theological education, the consultant has had initial conversations with the heads of each school and has submitted an interim report outlining early-stage possibilities for collaborative work amongst the schools and the church.

Cooperative Ministry: The planned results for Q3 suggest a sort of wrap up of the learnings on co-operative ministry, but this has proven to be ongoing. We have learned a great deal already (thus the 60%) but are poised to learn more as conversation deepens and widens and pilots are implemented these results will become more defined.

Leadership Counts: This quarter we met with many equity groups (ethnocultural network leads, Filipino network, Chinese Association, Disabilities Network, Western Intercultural Network) and their responses will help shape part of the 2025 end of triennium report. Both the GCE and the Board of Vocation engaged in conversations on diversity among elected members.

Equity & Governance: The Full Participation Audit launched this quarter and received over 200 responses (over 60%). The responses indicate that committees are very successfully integrating the full-participation and equity commitments into their committee life. Further cross-tabulated analysis in 2025 will provide additional direction for any areas to strengthen.

Onboarding Volunteers: We have a draft of the content for the one-page document about the online platforms that committee members use regularly. We still need to review it and make adjustments and further develop the templates. The key finding we had with the survey needs to be reviewed with staff that intersect with the work and will move into operational scope for 2025.

Human Resources Information System (HRIS): The Performance Management component and its implementation is now complete with a rise in annual reviews submitted to HR. We will continue to

monitor collection of performance data in our HRIS system to enable the development of skills and/or competencies training for employees, while focusing on rolling out other elements in 2025.

Challenges

Whole People of God: While a comprehensive continuing education program has not been developed, as was the original intent, the research and assessment of current offerings has been important to develop a baseline. Programs have been assessed related to the Call, which has helped to identify both potential gaps in program offerings and programs that are of clear interest to the wider church. This is invaluable information. The use of the Call as a framework for assessing proposed continuing education programs will continue in 2025.

Admissions: With 50 ministers already onboarded who still need to find an admission appointment, the Admission Board and Board of Vocation maintained the pause on the intake of anyone else, which has postponed the testing of a cohort model at this time.

Looking Forward

Equity and Governance: Plans are set for GC45 equity, including the appointment of the equity support team. Equity Diversity and Anti-Oppression (EDA) training for commissioners will be delivered in 2025 at the decision of the GC45 Planning Committee.

Cooperative Ministry: 6 cooperative ministry Supervised Ministry Education sites have been funded and appointments were made through Q3 & Q4, continuing into 2025. As this part of the work is just beginning, we anticipate significant learning from these candidates who are engaged in the practice.

Whole People of God: Two key programs are being prepared for 2025: a series of archives educational videos for ministry personnel in partnership with two regional council archivists, and, in partnership with Affirm United, a training for ministry personnel on queer theology and anti-transphobia.

Reimagining Theological Education: Consultations with wider groups from each school will happen early in 2025. This will give us a big picture of the entire ecosystem of theological education within the United Church as well as the unique charisms of each school, situating the schools and the church well for next steps. News of a significant grant opportunity (\$10 million US) for collaborative work amongst a group of schools and their denomination came in November and so the Theological Schools Circle, the grant writer, and the consultant are working towards submitting a concept paper for March 2025.

Recruitment: There is a plan to launch a program for young people curious about ministry in Q1 2025.

Accountable: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball

Good News

The (Re)Generate Training program content has been amazing - practical and essential skills for ministry leadership. However, the most powerful blessing has been space created for ministers to support, encourage, strategize and collaborate with each other. The strength of this community knows no bounds.

--Rev. Laura Fohse, Office of Vocation Minister Northern Spirit Regional Council

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD: Reinvalidate our commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God. Shift: To better coordinated support and resources.	Whole People of God Training	0
	First Third Ministry Leaders	100
	Worship Resources	100
	Statement of Ministry Review	90
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	60
	Recruitment-Ministry Personnel	85
	Appointments for Admission Ministers	65
	Leadership Counts	90
	Moderator's Initiative: (Re)Generate	100
	Pastoral Relations Equity Animation	50
ELECTED LEADERS: Support the increased diversity and effectiveness of faithful elected leaders. Shift: Towards greater inclusivity and accountability.	Support Equity Groups in Governance	90
	Equity and Anti-Oppression Training	80
	Onboarding Volunteers	35
STAFF: Strengthen equity, accountability and effectiveness in General Council staff system. Shift: Towards learning culture, alignment, and evaluation against work plans.	Performance Management System	100
	Training: Learning Strategy	70
	Equity in Recruitment and Retention	Postponed

Good News

Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources 71%

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

Strengthening Financial Health: Over the past two years, efforts to build communities of practice and offer support for key roles (e.g., treasurers) in faith communities have begun to show positive results. Participation levels have increased, and new resources have been developed, which will be fully deployed in 2025. Metrics will be in place to assess their relevance and effectiveness, providing data to track progress and impact as well as identifying areas for improvement.

Collective Decision-Making and Resource Management: Activities have focused on helping faith communities navigate critical decisions regarding property use and raising Mission and Service gifts for denominational work. New resources to support communities in discerning the best use of their buildings will be available in early 2025. These resources, developed through consultations with regional partners and United Property Resource Corp., are designed to address key challenges.

Despite the postal strike affecting year-end donations, generosity was strong in 2025. Progress on the Centennial Legacy Campaign is on track, with a number of congregations set to implement the program in early 2025, enhancing their capacity to receive bequests and planned gifts.

Shared Services and Administrative Efficiency: A significant achievement has been the completion of a project ensuring timely and easy access to the Church Hub. In addition, the solution implemented is more cost effective than the previous system. Further, two major projects—the shared office collaboration with the Presbyterian and Anglican churches and the digitization project—are near completion and will greatly enhance the General Council Office's (GCO) ability to provide services efficiently as well as ensure broad access to archival materials.

Accountability and Strategic Measurement: Efforts in accountability have focused on measuring the impact of our work and clearly defining outcomes. We have made notable progress on governance reviews mandated by General Council and its Executive, and we have significantly improved our ability to report on the strategic plan. This includes enhanced capacity for integrated budgeting, which will support more effective long-term planning and resource allocation.

Challenges and Looking Forward

As in prior quarters, resources continue to be a barrier. Many activities rely on the same staff to complete them and ambitious timelines for projects mean that progress falls behind expectations. A

consideration going forward will need to be budgeting for necessary additional staff resources in addition to hard costs related to a project (e.g., software, consultants).

The first half of 2025 will be the deployment of many of the resources created in 2024. A number of activities that have been on-going will wrap up and the staffing resources can be reallocated. An encouraging sign is that some of these initiatives have addressed long-term issues, particularly related to technology. It is very gratifying to see a number of those pieces of work coming to a close thanks to the focused work of the Strategic Plan.

Accountable: Sarah Charters

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names	Progress on Key Results
FINANCIAL HEALTH: Remove barriers to congregational financial health. Shift: Towards financial viability and administrative effectiveness.	Support to CoFs: Treasurers Plus	25
	Grant and Donation Portal	Ended
	Technology Best Practices	100
COLLECTIVE DECISIONS: Strengthen decision making and management of property and resources. Shift: Towards decisions that reflect the ministry needs of the whole church.	Optimize Asset Retention	80
	Fundraising: 2025 Anniversary	80
	Major and Planned Giving	85
	Mission and Service Support	50
SHARED SERVICES: Reduce costs and improve capacity through shared service structures. Shift: Towards administrative efficiencies and effectiveness.	Shared Space (300 Bloor Street West)	80
	Information Management: Marketing	20
	Digitization	100
	Licensing Fix	Ended
	Improve PAR	Postponed
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	100
	Transparency	70
	Role and Structure Review	35
	Legal Capacity	75

Good News

We held our first Cross-Country Check-In, inviting United Church people from across the country to engage with the General Council Executive. Just over 330 people registered to attend, indicating a desire to connect with leadership, and confirming that transparency efforts are appreciated. We were prepared for a testy, possibly combative session, but it passed with geniality, gratitude and genuine interest. About 170 actually attended, and robust conversation continued after in a forum on CHURCHx. Two more English and a French session are planned for 2025.

–Lori-Ann Livingston, Press and Public Relations Lead

Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments 93%

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

The rhythm of the climate activities mirrors the rhythm of the growing season with Q4 being primarily a time of review and planning. Videos of the projects undertaken by the young people who were climate motivators during the summer of are now available. Funding applications have been submitted to continue this program in 2025. The framework for the “For the Love of Creation” program for Earth Week was established. One of the exciting initiatives was the Communications team’s offer to assist with the preparation and publication of the 2023-2024 Sustainability Report. Initial planning meetings have been held and material is now being collected. The challenge will be to determine what submissions are included and how those not in the report will still be shared!

Challenges and Looking Forward

The lead staff on the climate objective, Lori Neale, is currently on sabbatical. In her absence, it has become apparent how much the climate team relies on her as the link between the different elements of the work and as the primary communication channel among team members. Lori laid out matters needing attention in her absence.

However, despite the growing attention to climate across the Strategic Plan, the energy driving this objective still rests largely with one portfolio. This invites us to consider how we integrate the different objectives of the Strategic Plan and ongoing operations to support one another.

The focus for this quarter is preparation for the *Sustainability Report* and *Earth Week* in 2025.

Accountable: Rev. 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 sectors.	Faithful Footprints	100
VOICE: Raise our spirited voice. Shift: Towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United church leadership in responding.	Advocacy on Climate	70
	Youth Climate Activists	100
RECONNECT: Reconnect with the Earth Shift: Towards reawakened and strengthened love for all God's creation	Eco-Spirituality	100

Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations**

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

Accomplishments and Challenges

In this quarter the focus was on planning and holding a National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. This took place in Winnipeg from November 29 through December 2, 2024 and offered a time of discussion, reflection, and prayer. At the end of the gathering, the Elders present set aside some time for healing and established a path forward for the Indigenous church.

The Elders issued the following statement: “The Elders have set a path forward for the Indigenous Church, saying that we will allow time for healing and we will come back together and do the following:

- Expand the National Indigenous Elders Council to ensure better representation from all regions of the Indigenous church;
- Plan for a dreaming/visioning group that includes multi-generational participation from all communities;
- Refine the roles and responsibilities of the Elders Council;
- Seek a better understanding of the work of Indigenous Ministries and Justice;
- Gather and study documentation from all past iterations of the Indigenous Church, in order to guide the current process;
- Connect with relevant resource people to help bring clarity to the process;
- Involve the Community Capacity Development Coordinators in supporting planning and ongoing healing work.

We honour all that has come before this moment as we move forward into this new beginning.”

Looking Forward

In the first quarter of 2025, planning will resume related to Indigenous Pathways.

Accountable: Springwater Hester-Meawassige and Lori Ransom (Acting)

***Indigenous pathways is using another process other than key results methodology for 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. 2024 began with 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 Report

Origin: Taylor Croissant, Chair of the GC45 Planning Committee

The GC45 Planning Committee met in-person in Calgary in December 2024 with the goal of drafting a complete version of the GC45 schedule and assessing the needs of each sub-committee to complete its role in the new year. Though holding this in-person meeting ate into our budget, all involved felt the expense was worthwhile as we faced many complications in drafting the schedule.

The new unified General Council website (generalcouncil.ca) has launched, and registration has opened for commissioners. Newsletters are also being sent to commissioners with information they require as we approach the launch date. We anticipate a few more proposals to arrive to us, and possibly another candidate for Moderator.

We are attempting to be restrained in our spending, though we have found our tech expenses were on the high end of our projections. Therefore, unbudgeted expenses are now being declined by Cheryl-Ann and myself. The Planning Committee has no urgent difficulties to address at this point, and with God's grace, all will go according to our plan in the remaining six months.

Business Committee

The Way Forward Committee is now finalized. We are working with Regional Council Executive Ministers to identify within their commissioners those who would possess the skills to serve as table group hosts, discussion group facilitators, and notetakers. There is some concern about receiving proposals and reports in a timely manner to accommodate French translation. Our current work is focussing on creating orientations to our 3-phase business process, Holy Manners, and parliamentary procedure.

Worship Committee

The [logo has been finalized](#). Design of the space in Calgary will centralize on the image of the Holy Spirit being poured out inspired by the narrative in Acts from which the theme is derived. From the Acts text we have identified five sub-themes, one for each day in Calgary: Elders (connecting this to the centennial), Youth, People of all sexualities and gender expressions, Dreamers and Planners, Prophets. Connections have been made with musicians from the Stoney Nakota nation who will participate in our worship time.

Equity Team

The Equity Team is now fully constituted. We are working on an equity orientation for commissioners in addition to the business orientations.

Youth Forum

Youth Forum delegates are being named within their Regional Councils. Our goal continues to be 100 participants in Youth Forum, with half of these participants being people of colour. In addition to planning Youth Forum the youth animators are also serving on each of the sub-committees and

have made excellent contributions to that work. A children's program is being developed for the children of commissioners ages 6 to 12.

Local Arrangements

Our current concern is filling volunteer roles during our time in Calgary, we have had a good initial uptake, but we require another push within Chinook Winds to fill out the remaining spots. Calgary Tourism has been very helpful for the arrangement for local exposure trips for commissioners both before and after the in-person gathering in Calgary, specifically to Banff National Park.

Commissioners will book and pay for these themselves, though we will prepare a special program for our visiting global partners. We are continuing to make the necessary preparations for the installation of the next Moderator at Knox United Church the evening of August 11, specifically our audio/visual needs.

Recommendations

I'll thank you in advance for the timely preparation of General Council Executive's report to GC45 for translation purposes. I would, humbly, suggest once the General Council elects a new Moderator and new membership to the General Council Executive, that the GCE's report be re-visited by the newly constituted executive in your first meeting so that all your good work maintains continuation with the Executive's new membership.

For the GC46 Planning committee, I would recommend from the start a plan to have two in-person planning meetings. I think it would be very challenging to complete the work we did in Calgary in December 2024 if we were to meet online only.

Title: BOARD AND OFFICE OF VOCATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

**Origin: The Reverend Norm Seli, chair of the Board of Vocation, and
the Reverend Marlene Britton, Director, Policy and Programs for Ministry Personnel**

Date: January 30, 2025

INTRODUCTION

"If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives." 2Cor. 4:7 (Msg version)

For the past 100 years the United Church of Canada has been served by faithful, committed and responsive ministry personnel. Over that period of time, changes have occurred in terms of the numbers of theological schools offering training, the requirements for testamur, the terms of service, and compensation models for ministry personnel.

Working within this context, the Office of Vocation strives to ensure that the Church in this present age, is served by faithful, well-equipped, effective ministry personnel. This is the "precious message" that undergirds all that happens as standards are set, people are credentialed to varying expressions of ministry, candidates move along their path, and oversight situations are managed.

We are humbled and gratified when there are positive responses to the efforts of the Office, and share a few examples where thanks were returned, all quotes being used with permission.

1. One minister offered the following (excerpts) at the end of their Directed Program ordered by the Remedial Committee:

"I am eternally grateful to this committee that, at the end of my interview with you, you asked the question of my need. Was there anything I needed from the Committee and The Church moving forward. At that time I was able to share with you ... As a result ... I am living a healthier life, emotionally, spiritually and physically."

2. This was received after a Boundaries webinar:

"This was a good webinar. Very informative. I appreciated hearing experiences similar to mine from my colleagues and learning together how to navigate the often messiness of boundaries in pastoral ministry."

3. Received from a member of the public who interacted with the Response Committee:

"Thank you for this update, and for the important work you do – I know it isn't easy, but so vital to the health of the church and its leadership."

STAFF

"We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually

terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken." 2Cor. 4:9-10 (Msg version).

The team was 'battered' and definitely 'thrown down' by the devastating news of the death of our beloved team member and friend, under horrific circumstances. Rev. Brenda Fawkes was appointed as the Vocational Minister for the Pacific Mountain and Chinook Winds Regional Councils in January 2019. She served her Regional Councils with diligence, and made invaluable contributions to the overall development of the Office of Vocation. Her passion for theological education, the vocation of ministry and the work of the church were undeniable. She was excited about the burgeoning work related to mentorship, a role she embraced as part of the strategic plan. Her sense of humour and deep compassion for others are part of the cherished memories we hold. May she rest in peace.

We are extremely grateful for the Revd. Lillian Roberts, who accepted the call to fill the role of interim Vocational Minister. She started her work in October and offered to continue through to the hiring of a new Vocational Minister, including assisting in the onboarding process.

In November there was a two day, in person, retreat for the Theology & Ministry Leadership Unit, in which the Office of Vocation is housed. That time offered opportunities for grieving together as a team, for renewing old connections, and forging new ones.

One of our program coordinators resigned early in the calendar year, and that led to a review of what was actually needed for the work. This resulted in the hiring of a lawyer, who will share responsibilities for policy development and management between the Office of Vocation and the GCO Human Resources Department.

BOARD OF VOCATION

Three meetings of the Board of Vocation were held during this year, and they were all 2-day, virtual events. The Board was excited to have our member who was ill return to active participation.

The Board was kept busy as there were two appeals to the Board, querying decisions of the Response Committee, with due process being followed and the appeals heard and managed.

A Formal Hearing Committee was also struck to consider placing a minister on the Discontinued Service List – Disciplinary. All three of these (appeals and Formal Hearing) have resulted in a heavy call on the time of the dedicated Board members.

In addition, one member of the Board was asked to sit on the Standards Committee, and one on the Nominations Committee, to ensure the concerns and direction of the Board were considered as various decisions were being made.

INDIGENOUS OFFICE OF VOCATION

Participants within the Indigenous Candidacy Pathway

Currently we have the majority (11) of our folks doing their theological training at Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre, and a couple within the Indigenous MDiv. Program at Vancouver school of Theology. We anticipate 3 Candidates, possibly 4 to be approved for Ordination in 2025.

Promise stage- 4 people that are from Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta

Candidacy Stage- 6 people from Ontario, Manitoba, BC.

The Indigenous Vocational Minister currently is supporting 4 applicants from BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In 2024, The Indigenous Candidacy Board approved 2 candidates for Ordination, one in Ontario and the other in Quebec.

Indigenous Candidacy Pathway

This year, the Indigenous Candidacy board met at least once a month to work over several months to develop and review the Indigenous Candidacy Pathway document with the support of both Janet Gear and Tim Hackborn. While it is understood what the Indigenous Pathway is, it should be noted that results of the many hours of discussion focused on addressing the cultural complexity and multiple approaches to how to support the Churches commitments to self-determination and Indigenous spirituality.

In addition to the conversations with the Indigenous Candidacy Board, the IOV also consulted with members of the Grandmothers circle in order to determine appropriate consultation key documents which include the following:

- a. **Parallel Path** has been a known principle within the Indigenous Church that describes our spiritual relationships to the United Church since the 1970's when the Very Rev. Stan McKay introduced it as part of the curriculum at Dr. Jesse Sauteaux Theological School. Over the last 50 years, it has been a principle that has included the Two-Row Wampum of the Haudenosaunee teachings, that were determined as been only relevant to Eastern Canada First nations. This past year, consultation was held at Five Oaks with members from Haudenosaunee and Anishnabwe nations with the support of Grandmother Eileen Antone. A similar consultation held at Cape Mudge, near Vancouver Island with the Pacific Mountain Indigenous Ministries members with the support of Grandmother Doreen Angus. A final draft is attached.
- b. **Identity Wheel** is a form of the Medicine wheel that is based on Haudenosaunee

pedagogy of learning with teachings that speak to the movement of growth that is expected for candidates to include in their spiritual formation. This wheel also is tool for assessment:

- a. For Candidates to help articulate their story of discernment and growth.
- b. For the Board, a tool that helps focus their assessment on the areas of critical growth and identify the weaknesses and strengths in all aspects of Mind, body, and Spirit.

This wheel was also included in the consultation process.

Learning of the relationships within the Candidacy Pathway

In this past year, one of the Candidates that Ordained is a person who joined the Indigenous Candidacy Pathway based upon their sense of calling to reconciliation and the fact that they were joined to an Indigenous family. After 4 years in the process, the Indigenous Candidacy Board approved their readiness for Ministry to the non-Indigenous church and the Motion was accepted by a Regional Council as opposed to being sent to the National Indigenous Council. From this experience, the following learnings were understood.

- a. Indigenous Pathway is not meant to train non-Indigenous people to be our voice
- b. Participants must be called to the healing Ministry and leadership of the Indigenous Church. While reconciliation is important, it is in fact the work of the non-Indigenous Church.
- c. The work of personal healing is critical to Indigenous Leadership, as the legacy of trauma remains part of our collective. Our pathways of healing are informed by our stories and teachings.
- d. Affirmation of the role of community being critical to spiritual formation. To explain, while this experience included a hybrid-approach between the two pathways, there was only a non-Indigenous community voice present in the experience that did deepen the values of the overall Church within the candidate as part of their core identity, but there was a clear absence of Indigenous pathways of learning and understanding.

The implications of these learnings are quite significant in their complexities as they represent the collective challenges that exist between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationship of how we are able co-exist within our shared faith. It was also expressed by the members of the candidacy board that there may not necessarily be answers for these challenges, but we must be committed to always a process that is about doing things in a good way. As our relationships with each other, our communities and with Creator continues to change, so will our processes.

The Appendix to this report contains other details related to the Indigenous Pathway.

CANDIDACY PATHWAY

Ministry Formation

The work in support of ministry formation within the Office of Vocation falls into three main areas:

1. support to candidacy boards and their mandate,
2. relationship with Theological Schools, and
3. supervised ministry

1. Candidacy Boards: resourcing a denominational team

Members of Candidacy Boards are responsible for:

- a) approving an individual for candidacy for ministry in the United Church;
- b) terminating candidacy if necessary;
- c) determining an individual's readiness for accreditation for ordination, for commissioning, and for recognition as a designated lay minister; and
- d) overseeing the Candidacy Pathway process. (Candidacy Pathway Policy, 2024, p 5)

Board members are resourced in this work through the Office of Vocation by the Coordinator of Ministry Vocations, administrative staff, and the Vocational Ministers.

Support and resourcing in 2024 included:

1. Continuation of online denominational gatherings of Vocational Ministers and Candidacy Board Chairs and members continued into spring 2024, building a **denominational team** across Regionally-oriented Boards.
2. A workshop on EQi assessments served as orientation to the revision of the Candidacy Pathway policy on vocational assessments, passed by the Board of Vocation in February 2024. The change in practice from mandatory vocational assessments to required engagement in **development of self-knowledge for practice of leadership** allows Candidacy Boards and Vocational Ministers to guide applicants and candidates in the professional standards of lifelong leadership development.
3. A virtual gathering of Vocational Ministers and Candidacy Board Chairs and their members to which United Church formation faculty were invited led to the revision of means of **communication between schools and the candidacy boards**, including interview schedules and style and content of school reports. School reports were updated and successfully and appreciatively utilized this spring. The relationship between the schools and the OV continues to be constructive and collaborative.
4. **Handbooks** to support Candidacy Boards were reviewed, edited, and updated based on five years of reflective practice since 2019's launch of the new candidacy process. Communications published all ten handbooks and three French translations by July 31, 2024. All texts are in the queue for translation.
 - Candidacy Board Resources Vol 1 Orientation
 - Candidacy Board Resources Vol 2 Interviews
 - Candidacy Pathway Policy (2024)

- Candidacy Pathway Roadmap (2024)

A major revision was made to the resources prepared for Supervised Ministry Education lay teams. Post-pandemic capacity for lay people to support SME is significantly diminished and expectations for both role and reporting needed adjusting. Lay teams now focus on offering feedback about how they experience the candidate's ministry (based on Standards of Practice for Ministry), while SME Supervisors focus on the candidate's capacity to learn and reflect on practice while in ministry (based on Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership).

- SME Community of Faith Connection Handbook
 - SME Feedback and Communication
 - SME Learning Covenant and Learning Goals
 - SME Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting
 - SME Supervisor Handbook (2024)
 - SME Theological Reflection Resource
5. Our program assistant's skills and scope of practice in data collection and translation means that information provided by applicants and candidates in the candidacy pathway is appropriately tagged for data collection which will provide the Office of Vocation with the capacity for analysis of long and short-term trends in ministry vocations.

2. Theological Schools: formation for ministry leadership

Schools continue to work with us to create programs and communicate opportunities for United Church of Canada students to complete the testamur in various residential and on-line modes of delivery. Additionally, the schools work with us to meet emerging needs of church leaders in practice of ministry, including mentorship.

United Church Theological schools are working with us through Executive Minister for Theology and Ministry Leadership, Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball, to collaborate on a major grant application to fund new approaches to theological education in cooperation with the church and its ministry formation and program delivery needs.

3. Supervised Ministry:

1. Cooperative ministry pilot

In 2024, three salary grants were continued. In addition, six cooperative ministry SME sites were approved, and five were funded with the appointment of candidates. These pilot cooperative SMEs are located in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Sackville/Moncton, and Scarborough. Cooperative models look different from place to place; for example, partnering with chaplaincies, camps, justice ministries, and other ecumenical, social agencies, and arts communities, or sharing a single ministry leader among several communities of faith, including ecumenical partnerships.

Equipping and encouraging various models of cooperative ministry is a priority of the church in a time of changing patterns of leadership, partnerships and configurations within and across

communities of faith. In a cooperative model of ministry, the clergy and lay people of one or more communities of faith work together, as Christian ministers, each in their own right, being

2. Educational Supervisors: Community of Practice

Vocational Ministers host monthly denominationl-wide community of practice sessions for Educational Supervisors currently offering supervision to candidates (approximately 20-25). These sessions meet two objectives: to offer supervisors opportunity for reflective practice and practical support/sharing, and for Office of Vocation staff to learn what issues, concerns and challenges supervised ministry education presents for candidates, supervisors and communities of faith in order that these might be addressed.

3. SME and Pastoral Relations

The split episcopate divides the SME into two parts (formation in the OV, and pastoral relations in the Region), calling both bodies to high levels of communication and cooperation in oversight and assignment of the various roles and responsibilities. This relationship is facilitated regionally through the Vocational Ministers and their Regional Pastoral Relations colleagues, and denominationally through the Pastoral Relations Circle and OV Staff.

Several challenges to on-site learning continue in the post-COVID period, including fewer communities of faith meeting the criteria for optimal learning sites, fewer candidates able to move to serve an approved SME site, educational supervision taking place virtually, and (mentioned above) less capacity for lay support and feedback.

Work is on-going to address this changed landscape for on-site learning, supervision and pastoral relations.

The reports which follow in the appendix give a numerical synopsis of the work of the Vocational Ministers and their Candidacy Boards, as well as a brief commentary summarizing trends which they have noticed over the last year.

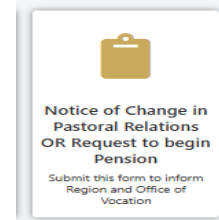
CHURCHHUB

ChurchHub.ca is now 7 years old and it continues to evolve and improve.

In 2024 there was a significant change to the login process for all ChurchHub users. The change was necessary to deal with limits to Microsoft (non-profit) licenses and to improve security. The new login process took effect May 21 2024 following several months of analysis, planning, programming and communications. The main difference for ChurchHub users is that they now receive a one-time passcode (sent to their email inbox) each time they log into ChurchHub. There is no longer a need to remember passwords.

Additional changes to ChurchHub (and its related entities Dynamics and Sharepoint) in 2024 include:

1. An update to the “Notice of Change of Pastoral Relations” tile – incorporating aspects of the previous PR443 (Request to begin pension) form. This update was suggested from Pensions & Benefits. The PR443 is no longer used – ministers now can make this request through ChurchHub and when requests to begin pension are received, the information is forwarded to Pensions unit and to the minister’s Regional Council.



2. A “DLM Testamur” tile was added to ChurchHub for all Designated Lay Ministers. This tile opened a page that displayed their assignment history, and invited them to make a request for assessment for Testamur. These requests were available to OVPR staff who then scheduled interviews in Feb/March 2024.

Designated Lay Ministers - Testamur

Full Name: Deb Kigar
Minister Entry Date: 2011-05-28
Regional Council Membership: Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

Assignment Name	Start Date	End Date	Type	Hours per W...
General Council Office	2023-01-01		Covenant to ...	21
General Council	2022-01-01	2022-12-31	Covenant to ...	21
General Council	2021-01-01	2021-12-31	Covenant to ...	21
General Council	2020-01-01	2020-12-31	Covenant to ...	21
General Council	2019-07-01	2019-12-31	Covenant to ...	28
General Council Office	2019-01-01	2019-06-30	Covenant to ...	18
Hamilton Presbytery	2016-10-01	2018-12-31	Retained on t...	
Quebec Presbytery	2016-07-01	2016-09-30	Retained on t...	

☐ I certify that I have a certificate/diploma/letter signifying completion of a program of study or prior learning assessment that led to recognition as a DLM

Submit Request for Assessment

3. Prior to the new login process, many Treasurers would use the

Admin username for ChurchHub to complete the Record of Call/Appointment form for their ministers. But once the “verification code” method was required, Treasurers could only access the Record of

Call/Appointment form if they also had access to the Community of Faith email inbox. Therefore, this tile is now available on Treasurer’s ChurchHub pages so that they can access the form using their email address (rather than Admin username).



Record of Call/Appointment
Review/Approve covenant between ministry personnel and a community of faith in your regional council.

4. Additional steps have been added to the automated processes that occur when a minister (or layperson) is marked as deceased in Dynamics. One of the new steps includes adding an end date to their committee appointments automatically (previously this had to be done manually by Member Engagement staff).

In 2024 additional users were invited to ChurchHub – these included Administrators for several of the UCC Incorporated Ministries (Camps, Financial Institutions). More Incorporated Ministries will be added in the coming year.

Ministers who accessed ChurchHub at least once in 2024	2372
Ministers requested to be approved for search	551
Ministers on the Available Ministers list as of December	222
Total number of ministers in Calls	974
Number of ministers in appointments as of December	431
Communities of Faith Submitted Positions new in 2024	244

Available Positions list as of December	240
Record of Call/Appointment Approved by Regional Councils	761
Annual Declarations completed by June 30th deadline	1982
Annual Declarations completed after June 30th deadline	142
Number of ChurchHub users (ministers, candidates, applicants, treasurers, search teams, administrators)	10109
Number of visits to ChurchHub by all users (many users visit multiple times)	49406

CONCLUSION

The Board of Vocation is grateful to the staff of the Office of Vocation, and to all the elected members across the country who have enabled this work to continue in this way. The Board appreciates that this work is holy, and hard, and commits, along with the Holy Spirit, to being partners in the journey.

TASK GROUP TO REVIEW THE ROLES OF MODERATOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY FINAL REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Origin: The Task Group to Review the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary

The offices of Moderator and General Secretary are the two most senior offices in The United Church of Canada. In September 2022, the Executive of the General Council established a task group to examine the church's needs in relation to the role of the office of Moderator, the responsibilities of the Moderator, and the opportunity a Moderator has to pursue themes and initiatives (*The Manual* D.4.1.6). The last time a review happened was in 1997. The 37th General Council in 2000 made Manual changes to the role of the Moderator and General Secretary. (Resolution 38 – GC37, 2000)

The Manual does not require a review of the office of the General Secretary, however given 9. the restructuring of The United Church of Canada in 2018, 2) the current financial reality that faces the church in the coming years, 3) the staff cuts that were necessary over the past few years, and 4) the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is reasonable that a review of the expectations of the office of the General Secretary, given the needs of the church, should also be conducted at this time. Furthermore, the fiduciary responsibility of the General Council Executive to the United Church dictates that the Executive evaluate and respond to the need to establish performance standards for the two most senior executive roles in the denomination.

This is the task group's final report to the Executive. It is proposed that it be forwarded to the General Council with the attached recommendations.

Methodology:

The task group adopted the methodology to gather feedback from the church both deeply and widely. The task group reviewed the history of the roles and structural changes in the church that have served to establish the roles as we recognize them in 2025. The task group interviewed past office holders, General Council Executive members, ecumenical partners, General Council and regional council executive ministers and officers, and an executive coach with experience in the church. The task group sought through surveys the input of the Commissioners to the 44th General Council and current regional council governing body chairs. An invitation to participate in a survey also went to United Church members. After each interview and survey, the group convened and summarized the themes of the interviews and surveys. Recommendations were formed based on these themes.

Conclusions of the Task Group:

The Offices of Moderator and General Secretary are highly valued and are seen as distinct. The people who have served in them are greatly respected for their faith, their wisdom, and their leadership. Current and past office holders spoke of the richness of relationship between the two, how closely they worked together, consulted, and supported each other. While both are demanding roles, demanding of body and soul, each spoke about how personally and spiritually transformative the roles have been for them.

The task group has concluded:

1. **Retain separate roles:** The task group explored extensively the question of whether to combine the two roles of Moderator and General Secretary and concluded that the distinctive roles are integral both to the polity and ethos of the church. However, this does not mean that the way these roles function and interact should remain the same.
2. **Retain current terms of office:** There is consensus that the term of Office for Moderator should continue to be aligned with the triennial General Council cycle. Longer would make it even more difficult to return to their roles and positions prior to election and would test the physical mettle of the incumbent.

It is strongly recommended that the Office of General Secretary remain without term, providing critical continuity of leadership over length and breadth of horizon-view of the denomination, rather than limited to a fixed period with, thus, a limited horizon-view.

3. **Pastoral, inspirational presence, instrument of unity:** The Office of Moderator is seen as holding the highest profile and highest regard. There is a strong sense that the Moderator's leading role needs to offer a pastoral, caring, prayerful presence in this time of rapid social change, disruption, and disparagement. The role needs to inspire, to have the ability to demonstrate and articulate the journey, and to amplify the spirit moving the church. It needs to be an instrument of unity.
4. **Moderator focused on advancement of Call and Vision:** The United Church is at a time of significant constraint where the viability of the denomination is being tested. Limitations in resources mean that the capacity to support, with every new term, a Moderator's "project" is not possible both in allocation of staff time and in dollars. But more crucial, this approach diverts the church from an overall strategic focusing of limited resources on a long-term vision of where the church needs to be into the future.

Taphe task group rejects the assumption that the movement of the Spirit calling the church into new life is found in the election of a moderator every three years. Instead, the task group believes that the moving of the spirit is found in an emerging vision discerned in the church, given detail and content in careful planning and allocation of resources, in other words, in a strategic plan. A plan, expressed in the Call and Vision, that itself is alive and open to discerning and following God's leading. A plan carefully and prayerfully discerned, in which the Spirit flows and leads the church into an uncertain future. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* Jeremiah 29:11

It would be deeply dysfunctional if the long-term direction of the church played itself out in competing visions of candidates for Moderator every three years. Instead, the election of Moderator, the task group concludes, should be focused on who is the right person, at this time, to best translate the Call and Vision into the life of the church, and who can best motivate and inspire in its members a sense of how God is present and active through it. In this respect, the task group believes, the Moderator serves as the primary instrument of unity in the church.

- 5. A single accountability committee to replace the current Moderator's Advisory and the General Secretary's Supervision committees:** The task group proposes that the Moderator and General Secretary function together intentionally as a team, each with overlapping and distinctive responsibilities.

For the denomination to be best served by its two most senior positions, the expectation must be for an integrated high level of performance accountable to and supported by the Executive of General Council through an accountability committee that itself is staffed and supported to serve the role it is given. Because this accountability relates both to the distinctive roles of each position and to their functioning as a team, the task group believes there must be a single joint committee working with both positions.

The task group believes that everyone in the church must be accountable and under the expectation of accountability. This awareness in the church has emerged through painful experience in the failed oversight of abusive employees. But it is also experienced in the lost potential of employees who have not been effectively supervised in assisting them to function at their best. Accountability in this form is about gaining a wider perspective both on oneself and on the work for which one has responsibility (super-vision). It is this purpose of this oversight that must be demonstrated at the most senior level of the church. *"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."* 1 Corinthians 12:26-27

Therefore, the role of an accountability committee for both the Moderator and General Secretary must itself be high functioning with access to the resources and support it needs to do its task. The task group believes that the best form of oversight found through clarity on performance-based outcomes and therefore is proposing a list of these outcomes ([Appendix 1](#)). It is also incumbent on the Executive of the General Council to ensure that both the Moderator and General Secretary are supported in gaining the skills that are needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

- 6. The Executive of the General Council accountable to performance-based outcomes:** The task group believes that this is also true for the Executive of the General Council itself which should also be accountable to performance-based outcomes that can challenge and continuously improve its functioning. This however is not within the scope of the task group's mandate.
- 7. Continue to Moderate Meetings:** A key outcome for the Moderator is the effective moderating (chairing) of the meetings of the General Council and its Executive. The task group believes that this role is important to continue as it represents a distinctive component of our ecclesial identity. Moderators have significant support in performing this role (General Secretary, Legal and Polity Advisors) and should have access to coaching in chairing as necessary. The task group also believes that the practice of the Moderator being able to step out of the chair to speak to an issue (in doing so for the duration of debate on a particular motion) should be affirmed. And so also should the Moderator be able to step out of the chair in situations of complex debate or conflict of interest, where the Moderator feels a former moderator might better handle the complexity. This is a decision that can be anticipated and supported in effective accountability.

- 8. Moderator visits to Regional Councils:** For several terms prior to the covid pandemic, moderators undertook formal “Conference Visits”. These were the primary points of contact between the Moderator and Conferences, presbyteries, and communities of faith. They were resource intensive for Conferences. Post-pandemic, regional councils, while welcoming the Moderator’s presence, have expressed less appetite for the formal staged visit in favour of multiple events or community of faith engagements. It is recommended that there be more intentional and strategic deployment of the Moderator by the General Council Office, in consultation with regional councils, to maximize exposure to members of the church and to ministry personnel leadership. The task group sees wisdom in a three- year strategic frame/map/schedule for exposure/visits/meetings to and in regional councils and with ecumenical partners laid out in advance of a Moderator’s term and based on the denomination’s strategic plan and the emerging needs of the church. Thus written, it would need to be able to pivot and adjust in response to global, national, and communities of faith emergent events.
- 9. Speaking *TO* and *FOR* the Church:** The task group recommends that the Bylaws be amended to make the distinction that the Moderator primarily speaks *TO* the church: pastorally, spiritually, translating the Call and Vision into the language of communities of faith, and calling the church to prophetic action in the world. The General Secretary primarily speaks *FOR* the church, communicating to the church and to the secular society, the decisions, positions, and faith perspectives adopted by the church. This would consolidate in one Office the responsibilities for speaking to the rationale for, the implementation of, and impact of decisions of the General Council and remove a potential or perceived conflict of interest for the Moderator in having to represent, particularly, controversial decisions.
- 10. Ecumenical and Global Engagement:** There is value in both senior officers being present in global and ecumenical spheres. It is recommended, however, that there be more intentional and strategic coordination of engagements and commitments by the accountability committee and the appropriate General Council Office units. The objective would be to ensure strategic, time-efficient, economical, and environmentally responsible use of the offices in the advancement of The United Church of Canada presence and leadership.
- 11. Operational and organizational decision-making:** The General Secretary needs to be able to make operational and procedural decisions in timely and efficient ways. Currently the Executive has responsibility for deciding the structure of the General Council Office and the appointment of senior leaders. It is also responsible, on behalf of the General Council, for setting Human Resources policies of the General and regional council offices.

The General Secretary is responsible to the General Council and its Executive for the implementation of the Call and Vision articulated by the Council. In most organizations, the senior officer would have full latitude to determine how this is then done. It is recommended that these be responsibilities of the General Secretary, or their delegate, so that they can respond quickly and efficiently to needs to pivot and change in response to ever evolving needs of the church. It has been emphasized to the task group that in most instances decision-making at this level cannot be subject to a three- or five-year decision and implementation processes, or even to four to six months delays between meetings of the Executive of the General Council.

12. . Relationships with the Indigenous United Church: The Indigenous church's immediate priority is the discernment of both its structure of governance and its leadership

13. Support to the Offices of Moderator and General Secretary: Cost considerations over the last decade and a half have led to a reduction in resources available to the Moderator and General Secretary. There is a strong sense that the leadership has been compromised by budget and staff cuts around the Office of General Secretary in particular. It is imperative that both have the administrative, governance, and research supports necessary to fulfill their roles.

It is recommended that priority be given in budgetary considerations to ensuring that the Offices are adequately resourced and supported.

Executive coaching, spiritual and emotional counsel, and solid time management would be advantageous to the health and well-being of the incumbents, and worthwhile investments in their leadership.

14. Intentional Transitions: At the beginning of the Moderator's term, there will be an intentional orientation/transition into the role of Moderator before engaging with the wider church and with partners. This will be a month or two focused exclusively on meeting with the immediate past Moderator, senior staff and regional council executive ministers, time with former Moderators, formation of and time with the accountability committee, all for discerning how best and strategically the newly elected Moderator can advance the Call and Vision of the church.

While the provision of up to four months of salary continuance for the Moderator at the end of term has been very important, each former office holder spoke about the challenges of abrupt discontinuation of duties. Exit interviews would be helpful and welcomed. Continued provision of transition coaching and spiritual and emotional counseling would be healthy additions to caring for these people who give so much to the leadership of our church.

At the conclusion of a both the Moderator's and the General Secretary's terms, professional transition and spiritual counsel should be provided for up to one year to support them in healthy conclusions and new beginnings.

Based on the feedback that the task group received, it does not recommend a formalized post-office role for either Moderators or General Secretaries other than the continuation of the immediate past-Moderator's membership on the Executive of the General Council and their informal and ad hoc role as wise elders.

15. Revision of Manual Sections D.4 responsibilities: It is proposed that the General Council authorize The Manual Committee to revise the Manual section that describes the responsibilities of the Moderator and the General Secretary to reflect the outcomes described in [Appendix 1](#).

Epilogue:

The task group has had the opportunity to hear from many wise and thoughtful individuals across the church. We have also heard the wisdom of ecumenical partners. Throughout all our interviews, we have been impressed to hear about the importance of these two roles and how valued they are. Together, these roles lead us to live into Christ's vision in our world to be Deep, Bold and Daring.

A prayer by Catherine Glover, chair of the task group, inspiring this work:

Creator God, we give thanks for the traditions and faithfulness of all who have gone before us, that provide good soil for us to grow deep roots.

We give thanks for the creative energy of new ideas and unfamiliar ways, that push us to grow in unexpected (and sometimes uncomfortable!) directions. We thank you today for the many blessings and deep Service [of those whom you have called into these Offices].

As we lean into Deep Spirituality; step into Bold Discipleship, seeking to follow Jesus' invitation to go and share the good news, and as we strive toward Daring Justice, may we listen to your guidance as we reflect on the important roles of Moderator and General Secretary in our beloved United Church of Canada.

May it be so. Amen.

We respectfully submit our report the General Council and its Executive.
Catherine Glover, Chair

Members:

Evelyn Day
The Reverend Doctor Bruce Gregersen
Kelsi James
Ray Jones
Colin Phillips
Kimberly Roy
Leeann Shimoda

Staff Support:

The Reverend Alan Hall
The Reverend Mary Royal-Duczek
Stefanie Uyesugi-Cooper

Appendix 1: Towards Performance-based Outcomes for Moderator and General Secretary

Joint Outcomes

The Moderator and General Secretary will work together as a high-performance integrated team in strategic partnership, transforming the narrative of the church and delivering on the possibilities of deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice toward 2035. The positions function in support of the Strategic Plan with, and under the oversight of, the Executive of the General Council.

Together, the Moderator and the General Secretary will:

- Support each other's distinctive transformative roles.
- Advance the Call and Vision set by the General Council.
- Discern and articulate what is happening in the church.
- Foster relationship with the Indigenous church in respectful ways that live out and deepen the meaning of the apologies.
- Strategically partner in maintaining connections, national, global, and ecumenical partners (connexionality).
- Ensure a consistent voice in prophetic and controversial statements and actions of the General Council and its Executive.
- Strategically partner in articulating and clarifying the rationale for the existence of the United Church as a distinctive faith community in Canada.
- Together hold and build a memory of the future for the whole of The United Church of Canada.

Moderator Outcomes:

The Moderator serves as the spiritual head of the church, quickening the hearts of the members and ministering to and inspiring the church in this time.

The Moderator will:

- Speak **to** the church, translating and bringing alive in its members' hearts the church's Call and Vision.
- Be a pastoral, caring, prayerful presence to the church, assuring communities of faith that they are not alone in these times of significant transitions and opportunities.
- Be an instrument of unity for the United Church.
- Be in humble and respectful relationship with the Indigenous Church.
- Articulate for the church, and for the nation, the unique transformative witness of The United Church of Canada.
- Visit regionally and with global and ecumenical partners as requested to offer the accompaniment of the United Church in response to identified needs and purposes (on an intentional and strategic basis on a planned three-year cycle).
- Support and promote the work of the Philanthropy Unit and the United Church Foundation accentuating the priority of faithful, generous stewardship.
- Chair the meetings of the General Council and its Executive.

General Secretary:

The General Secretary serves as the senior executive officer of the church, responsible for the effective implementation of the Call and Vision, providing continuity of leadership enabling the church to be faithful in its prophetic vision and presence.

The General Secretary will:

- Hold the longest horizon of vision of the church.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the strategic plan to accomplish the Call and Vision of the church.
- Serve as the Senior Executive Officer of the denomination, leading a high performing executive team of General and regional councils executive ministers/officers.
- Be responsible for the direction, alignment and commitment of staff towards the Call and Vision.
- Support, facilitate and oversee collaborative work among and between regional councils and General Council executive ministers/officers.
- Make operational and procedural decisions to ensure that the General Council functions effectively and efficiently, including the organization of the General Council Office, the appointment of executive ministers/officers, and the establishment of human resource policies.
- Speak **for** the church as its primary spokesperson.
- Ensure that the prophetic voice of the denomination is credible and faithful.
- Prepare the agenda for and maintain accurate minutes (the historic memory) of the meetings of the General Council and its Executive.
- Ensure the effective implementation of decisions of the General Council and its Executive.
- Make formal rulings and interpret the bylaws (The Manual) of the church.
- Facilitate the process of electing the Moderator.
- Ensure that the Moderator is briefed and prepared for speaking to the church.
- Engage ongoing sustained support and presence with national, global and ecumenical partners in a manner consistent with the strategic direction of the church.

Accountability and Oversight:

The Executive of the General Council will provide accountability and oversight of both the Moderator and the General Secretary through an Accountability Committee made up of at least two members of the Executive, two members named by the Indigenous church, two members at large named by the Executive through the nominations process. Members will be experienced with executive leadership oversight and have experience with developing and evaluating performance-based outcomes. The Committee will develop performance-based measures for the outcomes described here for setting benchmark standards, identifying areas for improvement, and aligning actions toward achieving strategic objectives.

Appendix 2: Summary of Review of the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary Task Group March 2025

The Task Group to Review the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary of The United Church of Canada has presented its final report, focusing on the distinct and complementary roles of these offices and offering recommendations for their future functioning.

- **Review Purpose:** The task group was established to review the roles of Moderator and General Secretary, considering the church's needs and the impact of recent changes such as restructuring, financial challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Methodology:** The group gathered feedback through interviews, surveys, and consultations with various stakeholders, including past office holders, church members, and ecumenical partners.
- **Conclusion on Roles:** The roles of Moderator and General Secretary are highly valued and distinct, with both seen as transformative and spiritually significant.
- **Separate Roles Retained:** The task group recommends retaining separate roles for Moderator and General Secretary, emphasizing their integral nature to the church's polity and ethos.
- **Terms of Office:** The term of office for the Moderator should align with the triennial General Council cycle, while the General Secretary should remain without term for continuity.
- **Moderator's Role:** The Moderator should focus on pastoral care, inspiration, and unity, avoiding individual projects to support the church's long-term strategic vision.
- **Supervision Committee:** A single supervision committee should replace the current separate committees for the Moderator and General Secretary to ensure integrated and effective oversight.
- **Operational Decision-Making:** The General Secretary should have the authority to make operational and procedural decisions to respond quickly to the church's evolving needs.
- **Support and Resources:** Both offices need adequate administrative, governance, and research support to fulfill their roles effectively, with priority given in budgetary considerations.
- **Intentional Transitions:** Transition periods and ongoing support should be provided for Moderators and General Secretaries at the beginning and end of their terms to ensure smooth transitions and ongoing well-being.
- **Revision of Manual:** General Council authorize revisions to the Manual section that describes the responsibilities of the Moderator and the General Secretary to reflect the outcomes described in [Appendix 1](#).

Appendix 3: Stakeholders engaged

Interviews via Zoom:

- Carmen Lansdowne, current Moderator, 44th General Council (2022 – present)
- Michael Blair, current General Secretary
- Peter Short, Former Moderator, 38th General Council (2003 – 2006)
- Ginny Coleman, Former General Secretary
- Jim Sinclair, Former General Secretary
- Jordan Cantwell, Former Moderator, 42nd General Council (2015 – 2018)
- Marion Parry, Former Moderator, 37th General Council (2000 – 2003)
- Nora Sanders, Former General Secretary
- Richard Bott, Former Moderator, 43rd General Council (2018 – 2022)
- Gary Paterson, Former Moderator, 41st General Council (2012 – 2015)
- National Indigenous Elders Council (NIEC)
- Moderator's Advisory Committee (MAC)
- General Secretary's Supervision Committee (GSSC)
- Executive of the 44th General Council (GCE)
- General Council Office Senior Leaders
- Regional Council Executive Ministers
- Danielle Ayana James, Executive Coach for the General Secretary
- Sue Fortner, Former Executive Assistant to the Moderator and General Secretary
- Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ
- Rev. Charissa Suli, President, and Rev. Lindsay Cullen, Interim General Secretary of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Rev. Victor Kim, Principal Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Canada
- *The Disciples of Christ General Minister and President has not responded to invitation to meet*
- *Stan McKay, Former Moderator, 34th General Council (1992 – 1994) declined the invitation to participate*

Written submissions received from:

- Lois Wilson, Former Moderator, 28th General Council (1980 – 1982)
- Mardi Tindal, Former Moderator, 40th General Council (2009 – 2012)
- David Giuliano, Former Moderator, 39th General Council (2006 – 2009)
- Jim Sinclair (in addition to his Zoom interview)

Surveys:

- Regional Council Presidents and Leading Elders
- General membership via invitation in October 29 edition of E-ssentials, and November 19 edition of Infolettre
- Commissioners of the 44th General Council commissioners by direct e-mail

Appendix 4: Task Group Questions

1. How do you describe the value add to our denomination of the roles of:
 - Moderator?
 - General Secretary?
2. What specific qualities or characteristics do you value most in the role of:
 - Moderator?
 - General Secretary?
3. How do you think these two senior offices of our denomination could support and advance the call and vision our church in your local setting?
4. In your opinion, what would improve the visibility and appreciation of these roles?
5. How do you think these roles can foster a sense of community, inclusion, and belonging within our communities of faith?
6. Prior to 2003 there were multiple general secretaries, most with a governance body (Division), working as peers. We moved to a model with a single General Secretary to whom a senior leadership team is accountable.
 - Is this model serving the church well twenty years later and after the move from four courts to three councils?
 - What changes to this model would make the senior leadership of our church more effective in supporting our call and vision to deep, bold and daring leadership?
7. We've heard it said that the Moderator should speak "to" the church and the General Secretary "for" the church. This is different than our current polity which identifies the Moderator as the chief spokesperson for the church.
 - What do you think?
8. In current practice the Moderator identifies a theme or focus for their term and resources are rallied to support this theme.
 - How effective do you experience this to be?
 - If, instead, the Moderator was focused on supporting and advancing the call and vision of the denomination as set out by the General Council, what might be gained or lost?
9. It has been suggested that relieving the Moderator of the responsibility for chairing meetings of the Council and its Executive and placing this with purpose-elected/appointed chair would relieve the Moderator of the need to be seen to be objective or non-affiliated with specific viewpoints and ensure that the chair was skilled in this singular role.
 - Your thoughts?
10. Are there other models of senior church leadership that should be explored? Like a single "head of church" model combining the roles of Moderator and General Secretary or some other model?
11. Should Moderators/General Secretaries have a more defined role in the life of the church after their term or period of service? What might that look like?

12. Name two things about the roles that you would change if you could.
13. What would you like to share with the committee that you think we should know as we do this review of these roles?

Appendix 5: Survey

SURVEY INTRO:

The Task Group on the Review of the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary is evaluating these offices to meet the current and future needs of The United Church of Canada. This survey focuses on the roles, not the individuals currently holding these positions.

Section 1: The Moderator:

The Moderator may be a lay person or a member of the Order of Ministry. They serve as the senior spiritual leader of the denomination. The Moderator is elected by the General Council to a three-year term to provide leadership, pastoral care, and inspiration to the members of the United Church. Typically, they visit extensively through the church and with global partners, lead a theme study or focus to stimulate and inspire members, and chair meetings of the General Council and its Executive. ***Please note, we are focusing on the role, and not the current person holding the position.***

1. Are you familiar with the role of the Moderator?
 - Yes
 - No

If no: Skip to GS questions.

If yes:

2. Have you interacted with the Moderator in the last 12 months?
 - Yes
 - No

If no: Skip to question 4.

If yes:

3. In what type of setting was this engagement? Select all that apply.
 - In-person event
 - Virtual event
 - Direct communication
 - Social media
 - Other (please specify):
4. What specific qualities or characteristics do you value most in the role of the Moderator?
Choose all that apply:
 - Spiritual Leadership
 - Governance Knowledge
 - Public Representation
 - Pastoral Care
 - Denominational Unity
 - Other (please specify):
5. How do you think the role of Moderator could be more impactful in advancing the call and vision of our church in your local setting? Choose all that apply:
 - Community Engagement
 - Youth Programs
 - Advocacy and Social Justice
 - Pastoral Care and Support
 - Innovative Worship Practices

- Other (please specify):
6. In your opinion, what would improve the visibility of the role of Moderator?
 - Enhanced communication channels
 - In-person local visits and events
 - Media engagement
 - Educational workshops and seminars
 - Collaborative projects
 - Recognition programs
 - Other (please specify):
 7. In what ways can the role of Moderator demonstrate a commitment to bold discipleship, daring justice and deep spirituality? Choose all that apply.
 - Inspirational Leadership
 - Interfaith and Ecumenical relations
 - Advocacy for social justice
 - Pastoral care and support
 - Visionary guidance
 - Other (please specify):
 8. In what ways can the Moderator foster a sense of denominational unity and shared Call and Vision across our communities of faith?
 9. How do you envision the role of Moderator evolving to meet the needs of the church in 2024 and beyond?

Section 2: The General Secretary

The General Secretary is the senior administrative officer of the denomination, responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the General Council, overseeing the staff of the General Council Office, and managing the budget of the Council. The General Secretary is selected through a hiring process and appointed by the Executive of the General Council. **Reminder: we are focusing on the role, and not the current person holding the position.**

1. Are you familiar with the role of the General Secretary?
 - Yes
 - No

If no: Skip to end.

If yes:

2. Have you interacted with the General Secretary in the last 12 months?
 - Yes
 - No

If no: Skip to question 4.

If yes:

3. In what type of setting was this engagement?
 - In-person event
 - Virtual event

- Direct communication
 - Social media
 - Other (please specify):
4. What specific qualities or characteristics do you value most in the role of the General Secretary?
Choose all that apply:
- Spiritual Leadership
 - Governance knowledge
 - Public Representation
 - Pastoral Care
 - Denominational unity
 - Other (please specify):
5. How do you think the role of General Secretary could be more impactful in advancing the call and vision of our church in your local setting? Choose all that apply:
- Community engagement
 - Youth programs
 - Advocacy and Social Justice
 - Pastoral Care and Support
 - Innovative Worship Practices
 - Other (please specify):
6. In your opinion, what would improve the visibility of the role of General Secretary?
- Enhanced communication channels
 - In-person local visits and events
 - Media engagement
 - Educational workshops and seminars
 - Collaborative projects
 - Recognition programs
 - Other (please specify):
7. In what ways can the role of General Secretary demonstrate a commitment to bold discipleship, daring justice and deep spirituality? Choose all that apply.
- Inspirational leadership
 - Interfaith and Ecumenical relations
 - Advocacy for social justice
 - Pastoral care and support
 - Visionary guidance
 - Other (please specify):
8. In what ways can the General Secretary foster a sense of denominational unity and shared Call and Vision across our communities of faith?
9. How do you envision the role of General Secretary evolving to meet the needs of the church in 2024 and beyond?

The United Church of Canada**Executive Leadership & General Council Risk Management Framework**

RISK CATEGORY	RISK NAME	RISK RATING	RISK RESPONSE/PLANNING	CONTROLS & MITIGATION	PROBABILITY	IMPACT
FINANCIAL	Inflation & Foreign Exchange fluctuation	Moderate	Accept		High	Minor
	Uncollected Assessments	Low	Mitigate		Medium	Major
	Captive Insurance	Moderate	Contingency Plan		Medium	Major
	Mission & Service Income	High	Mitigate		Medium	Significant
	Loss of Charity Exception	Low	Avoidance		Low	Significant
	Change in UPRC Kindred Works income	High	Mitigate		Medium	Major
OPERATIONAL	Cybersecurity	Moderate	Mitigate		High	Significant
	Move to 300 Bloor Street	Low	Mitigate		High	Major
	Staff Demographics	Moderate	Mitigate		Low	Major
	Pension & Benefits Service Levels		Mitigate		Medium	Moderate
REPUTATIONAL	Staff Complaint	High			Medium	Moderate
	Broadview					
	Palestine- Israel Advocacy	Moderate				
	Political Activities	Low				

TOTAL COMPENSATION REVIEW TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT MARCH 2025 EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Origin: Total Compensation Review Task Group

CONFIDENTIAL: NOT FOR CIRCULATION

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, in addition to extensive research and payroll and equity data analysis, 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 780 respondents) with questions of sustainability, adequacy, and annual adjustment. Focus groups to test responses to specific models being explored by the task group were held in November 2024. There was a total of 40 participants. The task group met with staff of the Indigenous Ministries and Justice unit and Office of Vocation, members of the Indigenous Mission Support Working Group, Pastoral Relations Ministers, Human Resources staff, Program Coordinator for Ministry Personnel Vitality, and present and past Leadership and Development Leads. Over 1,100 ministry personnel, church members and staff provided input to this work. The task group is grateful for the time and careful thought that these people brought to this work.

In November 2024, the Executive of the General Council received an interim report on findings and a number of concepts being considered. The Executive's sense was that the data suggested that the current model is working relatively efficiently and effectively, with limited inequities evident, thus major changes to the current compensation practices were not warranted at a time when the church is navigating other major challenges and changes. The task group then focused on refinements to the current practices and identifying areas for further consideration and study.

Summary of conclusions from data, research and consultations:

- **Ministry is a unique vocation:** infused with Spirit and the mutual calling of God and community. Fair, equitable, and adequate compensation allows one called to the vocation of ministry to engage that vocation while also providing for oneself and family.
- **Current model of established minimum salaries working:** from the payroll data perspective, our current system of minimums with negotiation above minimum is working relatively well, allowing for the particularities of site/economy/ministry personnel to be reflected in the compensation terms of appointments and calls.
- **Majority of ministers are paid above the minimum levels:** from the data available, 11/15% (to be confirmed in April) of ministry personnel are paid at minimum, though the perception is that most ministers are paid at minimum and that there may be a trend towards new appointments and calls being held at minimum. This will require ongoing monitoring.
- **Statistically significant inequities in compensation:** are limited to members who identify as disabled and racialized. In both instances, closer oversight of terms at the time of establishing the pastoral relationship would be more effective at mitigating this than a major rebuild of our compensation practices. The task group qualifies this analysis of limited inequities with the caveat that only about one third of ministry personnel have participated in the Leadership Counts equity study, thus results may not be completely accurate.

- **Part-time positions are increasing:** as communities of faith downsize in both membership and resources, fewer can offer full-time pastoral ministry positions. This is likely to increase. Most ministry personnel, on the other hand, cannot afford to live on only part-time income.
- **Ministry personnel living in manses:** are paid a base salary plus the provision of housing. Because the regional cost of living groups originally reflected only housing costs, communities of faith providing a manse were excluded from the regional cost of living groups assignments. Now that regional cost of living groups are based on a basket of goods and services, including housing, it is appropriate to assign communities of faith providing a manse to a regional cost of living group.
- **Seniority Category F (14 years+):** has the highest number of ministry personnel, with more experience generally recognized through negotiations above minimum.
- **Non-cash benefits comparable to other denominations:** while benefits differ in how they are administered and from one category of benefits (mental health, dental, complimentary treatments, drug coverage, etc.) to another, taken holistically, the United Church fares well and offers comparable health and dental benefits to other denominations.
- **United Church appears to lag behind minimum salary levels of peer denominations:** because of the differing compensation practices, it is not a clear apples-to-apples comparison. Further research is warranted.
- **Compared to similar job sectors, compensation is comparable:** traditionally, comparable jobs groups identified were teachers, social workers, and nurses reflecting social status in the community. Today's reality of ministry is that the "job" might be closer to that of senior manager or executive director of a non-profit organization with broader responsibilities for strategic direction and organizational oversight.
- **Current compensation model is not compatible with realities of remote Indigenous communities:** the circumstances of remote Indigenous communities are not reflected in the current practice and the constraints of Mission Support grants.

Key recommendations:

- **Add to The Manual section I.2.1.1 a) the words "fair, just, equitable,"** to read, "The community of faith is responsible for a) paying *fair, just, equitable*, and adequate remuneration to all ministry personnel called or appointed to it".
- **Provide regional councils with aggregate payroll data:** annually to support them in ensuring fair and equitable compensation terms at the time of appointment and call and ensuring compliance with minimum salary standards.
- **Pair part-time positions to create full-time equivalents:** recognizing that for most ministry personnel part-time employment does not yield an adequate income, it is incumbent upon communities of faith and regional councils to do what they can to ensure that full-time equivalent employment, whether in one pastoral charge or in a co-operative/collaborative arrangement with more than one part-time position, is available.
- **Eliminate by-laws that confound/complicate co-operative and collaborative ministries employment:** revise by-laws to facilitate and encourage co-operative and collaborative ministries.
- **Compensation for ministry personnel in manses:** be assigned regional cost of living differentials.
- **Work with the leadership and wisdom of the National Indigenous Council:** to develop a compensation model, and funding for that model, that is relevant to remote Indigenous communities of faith.
- **Explore with the Indigenous leadership additional resources and supports for Indigenous Ministry Personnel specific to the context of remote Indigenous ministries.**

- **Annual economic adjustment (COLA):** automatically set at 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.
- **Further study be undertaken into relative parity of United Church minimum salaries** with the minimums of Presbyterian, Evangelical Lutheran and Anglican churches.
- **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.
- **Expand the base of participation in the Leadership Counts equity study:** so that equity can be evaluated more thoroughly.

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Principles of call, vocation and employment

Ministry is a unique vocation. It is a sacred vocation in and with the community of hopeful believers. It calls much of those who are entrusted with this vocation: much of spirit, of body, of mind, of heart. Typically, in the labour market, compensation is a transactional vehicle: one pays x in exchange for y services. Vocational ministry practice is not a commodity, good or service, bought or sold.

The church understands vocational ministry to be a response to a divine call to the sacramental, prophetic, pastoral and teaching ministries that the church discerns God calling it to. Ministry is a dynamic relationship of call and response, inspiration and healing, challenge and change. 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 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. Nor is ministry governed by supply and demand principles as is common in many other employment sectors. While ministry personnel are, for employment purposes, recognized as religious office holders in many provincial jurisdictions in Canada, and thus exempt from employment standards in these jurisdictions, and for secular purposes considered "employees" of the community of faith, the United Church seeks to bring values of equity and fairness to its engagement of ministry personnel through the terms of appointment and call to the particular ministry, and values the intersection of faith leadership integrated with 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.

The General and regional councils' office staff system is a more traditional employment context. Most employees are lay people, many are not United Church members, nor Christian. No positions require the incumbent to be ministry personnel. They are employed under a set of human resource policies set by the Executive of the General Council rather than bylaws in The Manual. There is a single employer. While benefiting from pastoral and theological perspectives, many of the skills required are not ministry based. And while for some the work that they do is vocation and grounded in call, many would not primarily think of it as one does in the pastoral relations system. Here the church competes in the secular labour market for the skills and talents that are required.

Current Human Resources policy commits to providing “fair and equitable compensation to all employees by ensuring that salaries are internally equitable and externally competitive with medium-sized business (except in the case of senior management in categories 10 and higher, whose salaries will not lag by more than 10 percent with those of non-profit organizations)”.

As noted in the compensation report to the 34th General Council in 2006, scriptures abound with rich images of bread. In the desert God provides for people manna sufficient for each day. Through a child, with only enough for himself, Jesus provides bread for all who are gathered. At table, with those closest, Jesus breaks bread and shares it. Bread is symbol of that which sustains our bodies. And so much more.

While one does not live by bread alone, one cannot live without bread. When the church affirms a Call to ministry and then appoints or calls a minister to a paid accountable position, it commits to a covenant to provide compensation which affirms their call, acknowledges their gifts, permits them to meet their financial obligations, and allows them to secure satisfying food, shelter, and tools to sustain themselves and those in their care. The church commits to fair, equitable, and sustainable compensation policies and practices in both the pastoral relations and the staff systems and, in section I.2.1.1 of *The Manual*, to “paying adequate remuneration.”

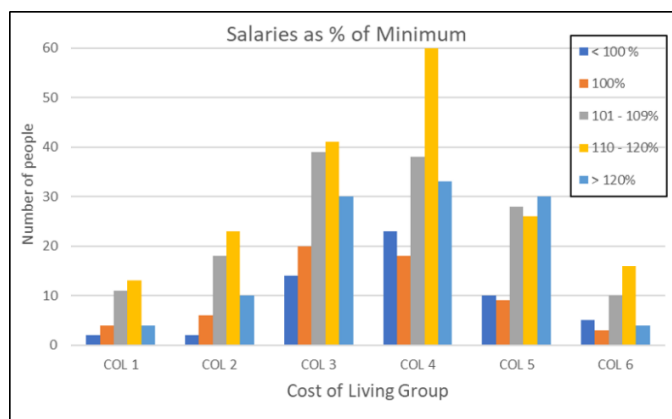
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The Landscape of Current Compensation

The current model of established minimum salaries is, for the most part, working. Payroll data for 2023 and 2024¹ was analyzed to sketch a picture of what our current compensation levels and patterns are. The analysis shows that:

- 11% of ministers are paid at the minimum salary for their seniority category and regional cost of living group.
- 79% are compensated above the minimum, with:
 - 26% earning up to 10% above minimum
 - 32.5% earning 10-20% above minimum
 - 20% earning more than 20% above minimum

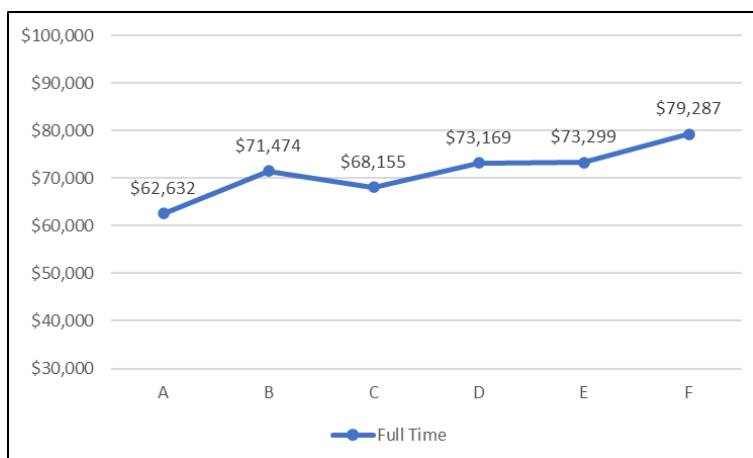
The graph below illustrates the correlation of actual paid salaries with minimum salaries by regional cost of living groups.²



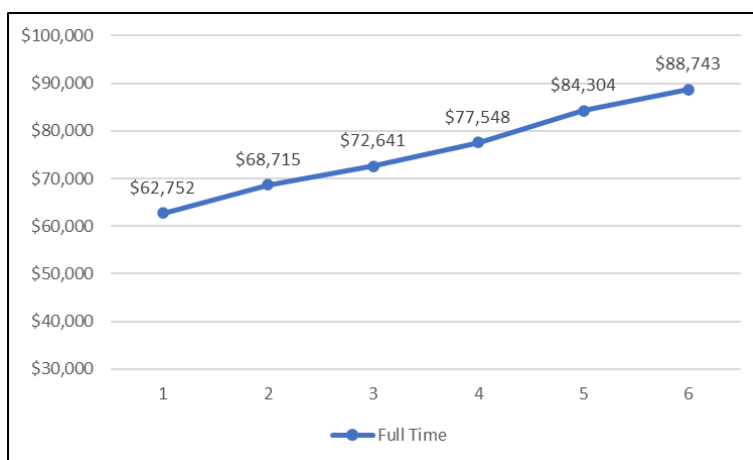
¹ Please note that 2024 data will not be analyzed until April of 2025 due to staff capacity. Once analyzed, any disparities will be noted in the final report to the General Council.

² This chart will be updated from the 2024 data without <100%.

Average salaries by seniority category look like this:



Here are average salaries by regional cost of living group:



It is noted that category F, 14+ years of service, captures the majority of ministry personnel, some with 30, 40-and more years of service. In effect, one tops the compensation seniority grid at 14 years. While this is a minimum, the data confirms that many ministry personnel in this category are negotiating salaries commensurate with their experience. The task group considered proposing additional seniority categories after F but concluded that doing so might have the unintended consequence of “pricing” more experienced ministers out of many positions.

While we see that 85% of ministry personnel are negotiating salaries above minimum, the task group heard that many are anxious about negotiating and feel that they lack skills for negotiating well. Other studies have noted that some equity identifying ministers, and ministers coming to the United Church through Admissions, feel disadvantaged, sometimes bullied, and demeaned when negotiating. Greater support by regional councils in the establishment of terms of appointment or call would help to mitigate the opportunities for this, as would increased awareness by communities of faith that minimum levels are a starting point in negotiations.

Continued monitoring of payroll data and the expansion of participation of ministry personnel in the Leadership Counts equity study will help to bring greater clarity and certainty to the data picture (quantitative) as compared to the experience (qualitative) pictures.

Equity Landscape of Current Compensation

Staff with access to the confidential Leadership Counts Identity Survey data analyzed payroll data against the collected equity data. Equity markers include gender (only binary gender identities provided enough comparators), racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, disability, and Indigenous. It is noted that this is an imperfect analysis because there are only 603 matches between the two sets of data, which represents approximately 30-33% of the actual ministry personnel. Some equity markers, particularly people who identify as Indigenous and as non-binary, have such a small number of matches that conclusions are tenuous.

Based on the 2023 and 2024 payroll data compared with the Leadership Counts equity data, there are only two significant compensation inequities in compensation across the identified equity groups. On median full-time salaries, we see that:

- the average full-time salary for women in category D is higher than the average full-time salary for men in category D;
- the average full-time salary for women in category F is lower than the average full-time salary for men in category F
- overall, men are paid 2.45% more than women, though when the top-paid 15 are removed, there is no statistically significant difference (it is notable that 13 of the 15 are men but this is more of a pastoral relations equity issue than a compensation issue: if salaries were fixed, these communities of faith would not likely appoint or call women instead of men).
- racialized ministers are paid 4.7% less than non-racialized ministers;
- 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying ministers are paid 3.7% more than non-2SLGBTQIA+ ministers;
- women identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+ are paid 7.5% more than men identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+;
- ministers identifying as disabled are paid 6% less than those identifying as not disabled;

The disparities are relatively small in all but ministers who identify with disabilities and as racialized. Short of adopting compensation policy that sets salaries at fixed levels, this would be better mitigated through pastoral relations oversight of compensation levels at the time of appointment and call.

The task group considered several alternative models of compensation that might potentially mitigate opportunities for inequities:

- Fixed salaries, with no local negotiation, would flatten compensation and mitigate the impacts of the inequities that are apparent. This, however, would not likely be popular with ministry personnel and would not address inequitable access to positions.
- A salary grid, much like is used in the General and regional councils staff system, in which positions are assessed based on a number of factors, categorized, and paid in a graduated range for that category. For there to be consistency in assessment the regional council would likely need to do this, for which they have limited capacity. There would be no negotiating a higher salary in this model. This might ensure that gender, orientation, disability, or capacity to negotiate are not factors in setting salary. It would, likely, see multipoint pastoral charges categorized higher than single point or multi-staff communities of faith.

- A central pool to which each community of faith is assessed an amount from which then ministry personnel are paid. Some, based on their resources, would be assessed more than their current payroll while others would be assessed less than their current payroll, allowing for more equitable access to paid accountable ministry leadership by all communities of faith. This might ensure resources for leadership in select vital ministries (in communities with no United Church presence, specialized ministries, ethno- or linguistic-specific ministries or in marginalized communities). Centralizing a 70+ million dollar a year payroll would require significant additional staff either at the General or regional councils' levels. It would lift some of the administrative burden of payroll for local congregations but would contradict a hundred-year-old culture of the communities of faith being directly responsible for paying the minister. It would also require communities of faith to see the value of sharing for the benefit of all. Similar proposals have been contemplated—1944, 1977, 1980, 1982, 2006 - none were adopted.

Ultimately it was concluded, in conversation with the Executive of the General Council, that the current model of minimum regionally determined salaries, plus negotiated amounts in addition to, is working relatively efficiently with minimally apparent inequities, based on the data available. Introducing another major change to restrain a small number of outliers based on data received from approximately 30% of the individuals in the payroll system, at a time when there is considerable fatigue in the church, and when resources are increasingly limited, would be unadvisable. It will be important revisit these alternative models as better data is available to provide a clearer picture of the fairness and equitableness of the current model.

The task group has concluded that greater oversight by regional councils when terms of appointment and call are established would be a more effective means to support fair and equitable compensation.

To assist with this oversight, the General Council Office will annually provide regional councils with aggregate median and average payroll data by regional cost of living groups in each regional council. With this data, regional councils can assess whether new appointment and call terms are within the range of equitable practice.

Communities of Faith Providing a Manse

According to the payroll benefits file, 110 manses are currently occupied by a minister. Yearbook statistics indicate that there 355 manses still owned by communities of faith. Those not occupied by the minister are being rented, used for some other purpose (like a community ministry), or are unfit for occupancy.

Ministers in manses receive a base salary that is adjusted only for seniority (Categories A – F) and not for regional differences in cost of living. When the comprehensive salary with regional cost of living groups was designed to provide ministry personnel with a common “buying power”, the regional assignment was based solely on housing values. Thus, communities of faith providing a manse were exempted from the regional assignments since they provided housing. Since 2022, the regional assignment is based on a basket of goods and services, not only housing. Therefore, compensation for ministers occupying a manse should reflect the regional cost of living variances.

It is recommended that communities of faith providing a manse be assigned regional cost of living groups with concurrent salary gradations.

Manse vs renting vs owning

The task group heard from ministry personnel that they, like many Canadians, are finding the housing market challenging and discouraging. The prevailing wisdom of the 1960s and 1970s to sell manses did not anticipate the 2020s realities of housing in Canada. In the move to a comprehensive salary model with regional cost of living groups, we moved from a “fair rental value” housing allowance to an assumption of home ownership factored into the comprehensive salary. At the time, 70% of ministry personnel indicated that they owned, rather than rented, housing. This may have changed in the current housing market in Canada. In a time of high rental inflation, this model may not adequately factor in rental costs, leaving it to the minister and community of faith to negotiate a salary that does. Ministry personnel who rent or live in a manse are not accruing equity in real estate, a significant factor when it comes to providing for retirement.

For those who live in housing owned by their parish/congregation, some denominations, dioceses and synods offer an equity allowance which has not been factored into these tables. The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the synods within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have guidelines for congregational loans to help ministers purchase homes near their community of faith. Some dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada offer support to parishes in working out how to support a clergy mortgage. Some regional councils have developed guidance for communities of faith considering loans or some form of mortgage support. However, it is noted that there are tax considerations to such arrangements, and they could potentially undermine the charitable status of the community of faith. Also, such arrangements could unduly tie a minister to what had become an unhealthy pastoral relationship. There are many factors to be considered.

Part-time trends

Of considerable concern is the trend towards more part-time ministry positions. One review of data shows a decline of full-time positions from 1,599 in 1991 to 1,069 in 2021 and an increase in part-time positions from 175 in 1991 to 705 in 2021. This reflects closing congregations and declining membership in many of those remaining. While smaller, aging communities of faith may not be able to sustain full-time ministry, most ministry personnel still require full-time compensation to support themselves and their families. Redressing this trend cannot be done with compensation. However, the church can, and must, build and support new models of co-operative and collaborative ministries among communities of faith and with congregations of other denominations. The task group commends the work that is currently being done on this and highlights the importance of it to ensure ministry personnel have access to adequate compensation.

To this end, the church needs to remove polity and policy obstacles to shared ministries and minimize, as much as possible, the complexity of employment with multiple employers/communities of faith and ensure that part-time positions are, actually, part-time and not full-time for part-time pay.

Another consideration is the modelling of bi-vocational ministries where the minister might have full- or part-time employment in another vocation (a nurse, a plumber, ambulance driver, etc.) paired with a part-time appointment or call to a community of faith. Neither co-operative or bi-vocational ministries are new, but they need to be embraced and promoted by the denomination so that they are seen by both communities of faith and ministry personnel as among the new norms of ministry. This was also noted in the Ministry Leadership in the 2020s report to the 44th General Council and work is currently being done on it as part of the Leadership objective of the strategic plan.

Minimum/Base salary comparisons with other denominations

Comparisons were done with Anglican, Presbyterian and Evangelical Lutheran churches minimum salaries. Each continues to have a base salary and a housing allowance. Like the United Church, the Presbyterian Church sets national guidelines for the compensation of their clergy. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church determine clergy compensation at the synod and diocesan level. In the Presbyterian Church, presbyteries are able to create their own minimums so long as they exceed national guidelines. Each allows for locally driven variants and negotiation above the base salary and allowance.

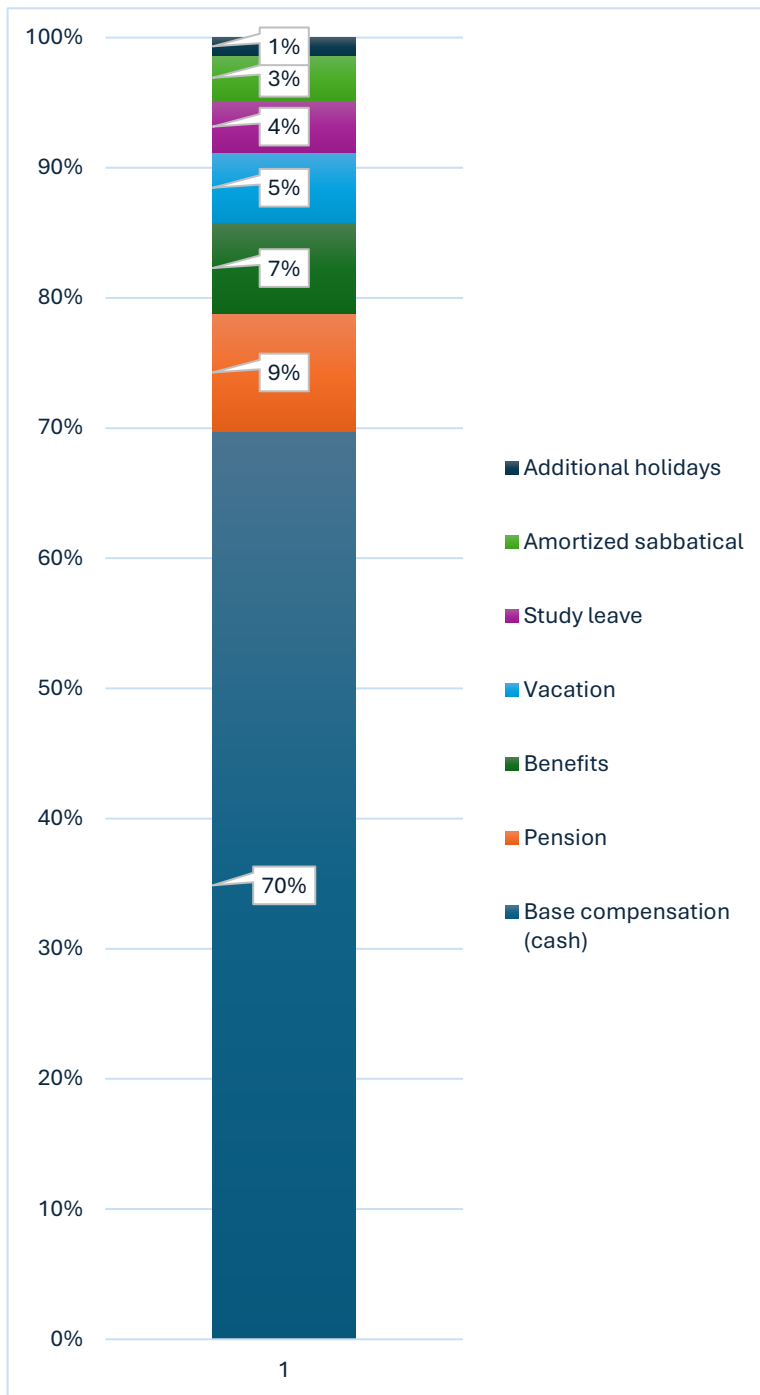
The United Church is the only denomination that sets a comprehensive salary (rather than a base salary plus a housing allowance/manse) and sets regional cost of living groups based upon a basket of economic factors. This makes it difficult to compare apples to apples, but it appears that, typically, United Church minimums are 10% - 20% lower than those of the Presbyterian and Evangelical Lutheran churches.

It is recommended that further research be undertaken to inform proposals about parity with our peer denominations with report to the 2026 annual meeting of the 45th General Council.

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Total compensation

Cash salary is the most obvious form of compensation and the one most immediately referred to when assessing the value of compensation. However, there are numerous other compensation components that are part of total compensation.



United Church employers contribute 9% of the salary to the minister's pension (the minister contributes another 6%) plus 9.82% of salary for benefits (health, dental, out of country coverage, life insurance, and Restorative Care (RCP for up to six months of salary continuance in the event of a medical absence) for a total of 18.82%. These benefits on a \$70,000 salary, as an example, are \$6,300 (pension) + \$6,874 (benefits) = \$13,174 employer paid for a total cost of \$83,174.

Other benefits include:

- minimum one month/five Sundays vacation leave annually;
- minimum three weeks study leave annually;
- three-month sabbatical leave every five years in a pastoral relationship;
- compassionate and bereavement leave provisions;
- parental leave top-up.

A legacy provision of The Manual (I.2.1.6) dictates that "The community of faith is responsible for providing the minister with a telephone." Today this is often a cellular phone or technology allowance which is typically \$1,200/yr.

In addition, in 2025, ministry personnel receive reimbursement for:

- travel expenses at a minimum rate of .55¢/km (some ministers receive instead a flat taxable amount set in the terms of appointment or call);
- continuing education (books, courses, etc.) of a minimum of \$1,640 (some ministers receive this as a taxable flat amount).

There is no policy around, or means to track, honoraria that ministers often receive for weddings and funerals. Anecdotally they are \$100 - \$300 per service. In some instances, they are paid to the church or paid to the church and then to the minister through the payroll service. More often, though, they are extended directly to the minister who is then responsible for reporting them on their tax returns. For some ministers this can be a substantial sum overall. For others, likely not consequential.

Ministers are also eligible to claim a clergy residence deduction, of up to one third of their church earned income. This can be a considerable benefit. It can also be no benefit, or a partial benefit, if a spouse or

other resident of the residence claims against the single fair rental value of the residence. The church has no insight into what is claimed by ministry personnel.

Base compensation is only 70% - 80% of total compensation. We provide a defined benefit pension plan; generous leave policies; and health insurance coverage. These place The United Church of Canada at the high end of indirect compensation compared to other denominations.

In consultations, ministry personnel frequently characterized the group health and dental plan as inadequate or limited compared to other plans. HUB International consultants who provide actuarial services to our plans, benchmarked our plan to plans in other similar organizations and churches. Their assessment was that our plan provides middling benefits: not the best but certainly not the worst. Providing additional benefits, with lower or no deductibles, would significantly increase the cost of the plan to the employers – the communities of faith – and to retirees who have elected the United Church retiree health plan.

Affordability and Adequacy of Compensation Levels

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. Approximately 63% of treasurers participating in the virtual consultation said that they have, or anticipate having, a deficit budget this year and into subsequent years.

An adjustment to our minimum salaries would certainly accelerate this trend and would likely accelerate the closure of communities of faith that are marginally financially viable.

While our bylaws direct that the first call on congregational finances is the minister's salary, it is said that the first area to be cut is the minister's salary. Some treasurers 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 co-operative 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.

The task group heard from ministry personnel that current compensation levels make it difficult to live. The cost of housing, particularly the cost of rent and utilities, 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 in relationships 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. Ministry

personnel struggle, as most Canadians do, with the affordability of life in Canada, particularly in urban centres and when there is only one income-earner in the household.

It is notable that it is taxing on ministry personnel's morale and health to, in many relationships, be living with the spectre of closures, reduced finances, reduced hours, and possible loss of job.

Given the likelihood of fewer and smaller communities of faith over the next ten years, full-time equivalencies via co-operative and bi-vocational ministries will have to significantly increase to allow ministry personnel to have a full-time salary and to allow for paid accountable ministry leadership in our communities of faith. It is incumbent upon regional councils when considering approving a part-time position that they work to pair it with other part-time positions so that applicants can have full-time income.

Comparing ministry compensation with other vocational groups is an imperfect science. Ministry is, as said earlier, unique in its calling. In the practice of ministry today, one is providing pastoral and worship services - which might be comparable to a service provider like a teacher or social worker. Today, however, the minister comparator might also be to that of a senior manager or executive director of a small not-for-profit organization: oversight of finances, budgeting, visioning, and strategic plan. In the task group's consultations, however, equivalencies were seen with social service sectors like teaching and health care. When comparing to other social service roles, compensation varies by collective agreement and location, and by specialization, but salary ranges in general are: social workers: \$41,000 - \$84,000 with an average of \$60,047; nurses: \$47,000 to \$105,000 with an average of \$90,414; teachers: \$43,000 to \$99,000 with an average of \$63,624. Looking at management/senior management salaries at non-profits, we see salary ranges from \$65,000 to \$87,000 in the Toronto-area. These ranges are comparable to our current average salaries of \$62,000 to \$88,700.

It is recommended that the General Council commit to fair, just and equitable compensation in the pastoral relations system by adding the words to The Manual section I.2.1.1 a) to read, "The community of faith is responsible for a) paying *fair, just, equitable*, and adequate remuneration to all ministry personnel called or appointed to it".

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Indigenous ministry personnel compensation

The Leadership Counts equity study did not have enough Indigenous participants to offer insight into equity for ministers identifying as Indigenous. However, most Indigenous ministry personnel are paid through Mission Support grants which require that compensation only be at the minimum levels. Through consultations with members of the Indigenous Mission Support working group and staff of the Indigenous Ministries and Justice unit and the Indigenous Office of Vocation, it is clear that the current compensation model is not compatible with realities of remote Indigenous communities: the circumstances of remote Indigenous communities are not reflected in the current practice and the constraints of Mission Support grants. Nor is it consistent with principles of autonomy embedded in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the 43rd General Council.

Other environmental factors have an impact on the costs for Indigenous ministers: derelict church buildings including manses, significant poverty within communities, lack of access to resources including health and other professionals, increased responsibilities that support Band Council and community life. Costs of basic supplies (food, fuel, utilities) are multiple times higher than in non-remote locations. Costs

of getting into or out of remote communities for medical care, for funerals, or for continuing education are astronomical. If the ministry position is part-time, ministry personnel have few options to assemble a full-time equivalent income, unless there is band work available.

Mission Support funding has been static for many years while minimum salaries have increased by the consumer price index, thus fewer dollars to fund salaries. Most Indigenous communities of faith in remote and urban locations fund salaries from Mission Support grants that have obligations that limit the compensation to the minimums set by the polity of the existing salary schedule. Many remote communities experience significant trauma, extracting high spiritual and emotional tolls on ministry personnel for which they have access to little recourse to mitigate. There is a need for nimbleness to assess each community's need and to set salaries that are adequate.

It is recommended that the General Council commit to supporting the Indigenous church as it discerns more appropriate compensation models and commit to removing any policy barriers to nimbleness in funding.

It is further recommended that the church explore with the Indigenous leadership additional resources and supports specific to the context of remote Indigenous ministries.

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General and regional councils staff system

The staff system of the General and regional councils draws its employees primarily from lay circles (73% overall, 81% at the General Council Office) and from skill sets and professional accreditations that may not be common among ministry personnel. Positions are categorized by skill, responsibility, complexity, independence of decision making, and educational requirement. Compensation is set within a twelve-step range for each of 15 categories of employment. Some exceptions to the salary grid are made to attract specialized skills that are higher priced in the marketplace. Examples of this from time to time are legal, pension, finance and information technology skills.

Categories 7 and 8 program positions in the staff system are relatively comparable to most pastoral positions. Salaries for these categories in 2023 began at \$66,200 and topped out at \$98,800. While the perception is often that staff salaries are considerably higher than those in the pastoral relations system, this range is consistent with payroll data for ministry personnel in the pastoral relations system - 2023 current average salaries were \$62,000 to \$88,700. The salary schedule and ranges for the General Council and regional council offices are publicly available on the United Church website.

Current policy commits to providing “fair and equitable benefit plans and compensation to all employees by ensuring that total compensation is internally equitable and externally competitive with medium-sized public sector organizations (except in the case of senior management in categories 10 and higher, whose salaries will not lag by more than 10 percent with those of non-profit organizations).”. A recent cost of labour assessment indicates that we are on policy: top-tier, for administrative positions, categories 1 – 4; competitive in categories 5 – 8, which require a level of subject matter expertise and accreditation; and increasingly divergent for management and executive level positions, categories 9 – 15. The green line in the graph below shows not-for-profit pay, the orange line United Church pay.

In consultations and surveys, the task group heard an assumption that staff salaries and pastoral relations salaries should be on the same or similar compensation schedule. The task group concludes that it is not so simple when many of the skills required in the staff system have to be recruited and retained from a larger labour market where we are competing with other employers. Nonetheless, mid-range categories are comparable to pastoral relations system averages. Most senior positions are more complex and broader in scope and consequence than many pastoral relations positions. They require a different range of experience. Compensation for them is comparable to the higher range pastoral relations salaries. Decisions were made in the early 2000's to restrain senior compensation levels. As the divergence from not-for-profit executive salaries expands, the task group cautions the church that this will likely affect the church's ability to attract and retain this level of skill and leadership to its senior roles.

-

Annual economic adjustment to minimum salaries

In 2023, the Executive of the General Council gave one year notice that it was discontinuing the twenty-year practice of annually adjusting salaries by the annualized Consumer Price Index (CPI) two years prior to the year of adjustment (2021 CPI was used in the spring of 2022 to determine the adjustment for 2023). It also decoupled the pastoral relations and staff systems adjustments. The 2024 adjustment for pastoral relations was set at the CPI, 6.3%, but at 2% for the staff system.

For 2025, the Total Compensation Review Task Group reviewed multiple wage projections and collective agreements and looked at adjustments being provided by Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches. It recommended 2.5% to 3.0%, with a bias towards 3.0% because of the still high shelter index. The Executive set the adjustment for pastoral relations at 3% and staff system at 2.5%. It asked that the task group recommend a standing formula for future adjustments that would not require an annual decision by the Executive.

Both ministry personnel and treasurers in the consultations and surveys identified the CPI as an objective and independent indicator of inflationary pressures. The 2024 6.3% increase, based on CPI, however, was a considerable burden for communities of faith to meet. Such high levels of inflation going forward would be a significant hardship for congregations and would by all indications contribute to accelerating

the trend towards part-time ministry positions or concluding ministries all together. It is also noted that few employment sectors are fully or consistently indexed to inflation.

The task group recommends that future annual cost of living adjustments be attached to the annualized CPI in July in the year prior to which it will be applied, with a ceiling of 3%. When the CPI exceeds 3%, staff would gather data on wage predictions, collective agreements in not-for-profit and social service sectors, adjustments being offered by other denominations, and the CPI to make a recommendation to the Executive for consideration in the context of affordability for communities of faith and adequacy for ministry personnel.

Continued adjustments to the staff system compensation lower than the CPI will make the church uncompetitive for talent required for its ministries of administration and oversight. It is noted that overall in the staff system, 73% are lay employees, 27% ministry personnel. For the General Council Office, 81% of employees are lay people, only 19% ministry personnel. Remaining competitive with administrative and subject matter expert markets is critical.

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Regional cost of living groups and shorter-service implications for pension accrual

Multiple proposals, with concurrence and without concurrence, came to the 43rd and 44th General Councils proposing improvements to benefits for retirees of The United Church of Canada and led to the 44th General Council commissioning this review. Being a fair, generous, and respectful employer is important to the United Church and providing commensurate and secure benefits in retirement to those who have served in paid accountable positions with the church is important to the church.

Proposals were carefully considered by the Pension Board's legal and actuarial consultants and reviewed by the Pension Plan Advisory Committee, the Pension Board and by United Church legal counsel. The conclusion was that the proposals to the General Councils would not accomplish the desired outcome, are not affordable, or are not legally permissible. The larger principle of a guaranteed livable retirement income is one that is supported by The United Church of Canada but cannot, however, be achieved through a private registered pension plan, or by former employers sponsoring supplemental retirement benefits.

A registered pension plan is highly regulated and is designed to provide an equitable benefit relative to one's contribution to the plan. Thus, it is not an effective or efficient vehicle for providing an additional benefit for members of shorter service. Vehicles that are available are not tax efficient and would require very significant asset commitments that the church does not have. It has been suggested that proceeds from church property sales be directed to supplemental retirement vehicles, but the General Council does not have authorities to make such directions and the local communities of faith, in cooperation with the regional council, have many demands upon these proceeds.

With the introduction of the comprehensive salary, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services sought both actuarial and legal advice which concluded that, while there would be variances in accrued values compared to the 140% of base salary formula the variances were not material and did not constitute an adverse amendment to the plan. Variances already existed over the range of negotiated salaries.

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CONCLUSION

The task group is grateful for the generous input of ministry personnel and lay leaders to this study. Vocational ministry is deeply valued. Ministry personnel are committed to call and vocation. Clearly, while definitions and expectations vary, everyone is committed to fair, just and equitable compensation of ministry personnel.

Overall, the task group did not identify significant, inherent, systemic problems with our current compensation model. It is based upon a set of regional cost of living group minimums intended to provide ministers with a common “buying power” regardless of where they are serving. It provides for negotiation of compensation above these minimums to allow for the particularities of site, ministry, minister credentials, and local/micro economic conditions, including housing, to be reflected in the negotiated terms. 85% of appointments and calls have compensation terms above the minimum requirement. Other models were considered that might have limited variations and opportunities for some inequities to occur. These models would have required investments of considerable energy and dollars to implement for incremental improvements, energy and dollars that the church does not have at this time. **Future assessments may provide a clearer picture if there is greater participation in the Leadership Counts equity data project.** Greater oversight of the appointment and call process at the time of establishing terms of compensation will significantly help in mitigating opportunities for inequitable terms to be written into appointment or call.

The polarities of sustainability for communities of faith and adequacy of income for ministry personnel, particularly at a time when most Canadians are experiencing the stresses of affordability of housing and food, felt irreconcilable, and the task group, despite considerable research and discussion, often felt like it was able to find no wisdom to reconcile them to either’s satisfaction. The task group did find, however, that compensation levels are relatively comparable to vocations traditionally considered similar and to non-profit roles that are similar in scope.

While one does not live by bread alone, one cannot live without bread. When the church affirms a Call to ministry and then appoints or calls a minister to a paid accountable position, it commits to a covenant to provide compensation which affirms their call, acknowledges their gifts, permits them to meet their financial obligations, and allows them to secure satisfying food, shelter, and tools to sustain themselves and those in their care. The church commits to fair, just, equitable, and sustainable compensation policies and practices in both the pastoral relations and the staff systems.

A Song of Faith, one of our doctrinal statements of faith adopted in 2006, reminds us that together we sing of:

“God’s good news lived out, a church with purpose:
faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
gifts shared for the good of all,
resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,
fierce love in the face of violence,
human dignity defended,
members of a community held and inspired by God,
corrected and comforted,

instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
creation's mending."

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Task Group,
Jane McDonald, Chair

Members:

Reverend Elizabeth Brown

Reverend Doctor Oliver Dingwell

William Harasymow (has been unable to participate)

Beth Martin

Janice Sidney

Reverend Bri-anne Swan

Staff Support:

Reverend Alan Hall

Stefanie Uyesugi-Cooper

Appendix 1

Current Compensation Practice

The last study of compensation was commissioned by the 38th General Council in 2003 with report to the 39th General Council in 2006. To realign compensation policies with just, fair and equitable principles to address systemic problems and provide tools to monitor progress and compliance, the Council authorized the establishment of:

- a mandatory payroll service for all ministry personnel in pastoral relations and other paid personnel in pastoral charges;
- a comprehensive minimum salary for all ministry personnel so that base salary and all allowances, including the housing allowance or equivalent, were combined into one cash payment with a provision for regional cost of living differences;
- a new salary structure that includes a minimum and maximum in each category with a greater differential in the salaries of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates; and
- a vehicle to augment compensation in exceptional circumstances such as exceptionally high cost, remote areas and for ministry personnel couples unable to claim the full clergy residence deduction.

A national payroll service and a comprehensive salary with six regional cost of living groups were implemented. As the Permanent Committee developed the model, it recommended to the Executive that the introduction of maximum levels of compensation in each category was not advisable at that time. In its report to the Executive in March of 2012, the Permanent Committee wrote that “While sound in principle, this is not the time to implement a maximum: respondents to the Collaborative Research Project were divided on the question of a maximum; the Executive of the General Council has not shown strong support for a maximum; other denominations do not have a maximum; the current payroll data indicates that there is not an exaggerated disparity of salaries within the increment categories; and there are so many other changes proposed to salary, pastoral relations, oversight and discipline and church processes.

It was also concluded at that time that there was no effective way to assess the financial impact on clergy couples of the Canada Revenue Agency’s clergy residence deduction limitations. Thus, there was no action taken on augmenting clergy couple salaries.

The General Council sets the minimum salary levels for the pastoral relations system, but the community of faith holds the primary responsibility for paying salary and benefits. This has been affirmed at numerous junctures: 1930, 1940, 1964, 1974 and 1977 General Councils. Each pastoral relationship establishes compensation terms at or above these minimum standards as part of the terms of the appointment or call. Minimum compensation levels are subject to annual cost of living adjustments as set by the Executive of the General Council. While payroll is run through a single payroll service, Automatic Data Processing, or ADP, each community of faith is a separately established “employer” and must instruct ADP for their employees. This is challenging for some congregations. The General Council Office provides support for local treasurers in administering payroll but cannot do it for them.

Two factors determine the minimum cash salary. The first is the minister’s years of service. There are six seniority categories: A 1 – 2 years; B 3 – 4; C 5 – 7; D 8 – 10; E 11- 13; F 14 years and more.

The second is the regional cost of living group of the location of the community of faith. This was introduced with the comprehensive salary to reflect the differences in cost of living associated with different locations across the country. Previously this would have been captured in the different housing allowance levels set by presbyteries.

There are six regional cost of living groups, with approximately a 5% differential between each, a spread of 30% between group 1 and group 6. Initially these were based upon median sales values of houses within the municipality where the church is located. More recently, working with the Mercer compensation practice, a location-specific index derived from the combined cost of a basket of goods and services was used. It was heavily weighted on housing given that the previous model was 100% housing. The basket includes mortgage principle, Interest and Insurance, maintenance; utilities; property tax; goods and services; and provincial income tax.

The regional cost of living variances are intended to provide ministers with similar buying power regardless of where they serve. The task group heard that this is not widely understood by ministry personnel. In the survey conducted with ministry personnel currently serving, 24% of respondents indicated that they did not know their regional cost of living group. There is a perception that there is no regional balances and that ministry personnel in higher regional cost of living groups are advantaged in compensation.

Appendix 2

Total Compensation Review: Ministry Personnel

Post Ministry Personnel Webinar (distributed in French and in English)

The General Council directed that a study be done of the total compensation practices of the church, considering whether they are equitable and whether compensation, with all of its pieces, is adequate and sustainable. This is the first study of compensation since 2006.

This survey, and the online consultation with ministry personnel and treasurers earlier this spring, will provide valuable insights into your experience of our compensation practices and help shape further questions for focus groups in the fall.

The task group, appointed by the General Council Executive on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee after a church-wide recruitment, includes lay members from across the church, professional compensation specialists, members of the Indigenous Church, active and retired ministry personnel and a member of the Executive. It will make recommendations in September 2024 to the General Council Executive for the 2025 annual adjustment to salaries, interim reports to the Executive in November 2024 and February 2025, and a final report to the 45th General Council in August 2025.

Tell Us Who You Are

1. Is your community of faith:
 - Rural
 - Town
 - Suburban
 - Urban
 - Other (please specify)
2. Which regional council are you a part of?
 - Antler River Watershed Regional Council
 - Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council
 - Canadian Shield Regional Council
 - Chinook Winds Regional Council
 - Conseil Régional Nakonhaka Regional Council
 - East Central Ontario Regional Council
 - Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
 - First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
 - Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council
 - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council
 - Living Skies Regional Council
 - Northern Spirit Regional Council
 - Pacific Mountain Regional Council
 - Prairie to Pine Regional Council
 - Shining Waters Regional Council
 - Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
 - My community of faith is part of the Indigenous Church

3. Did you take part in the online webinar on June 13, 2024?
 - Yes
 - No
4. What regional economic cost of living (RCOL) group is your community of faith in?
 - RCOL 1
 - RCOL 2
 - RCOL 3
 - RCOL 4
 - RCOL 5
 - RCOL 6
 - I don't know
5. What is your seniority category?
 - Category A (1-2 years)
 - Category B (3-4 years)
 - Category C (5-7 years)
 - Category D (8-10 years)
 - Category E (11-13 years)
 - Category F (14+ years)
 - Candidate Step 1 (1-2 years)
 - Candidate Step 2 (3+ years)

If Category F, how many years of service?

6. Is ministry your first vocation, or have you entered ministry as a second or third vocation?
 - First
 - Second
 - Third
 - Other (please specify)
7. Is your current position full-time or part-time, or are you retired?
 - Full-time (one pastoral charge)
 - Full-time (more than one position adding up to full-time)
 - Part-time (one pastoral charge)
 - Part-time (in more than one position but less than full-time in total)
 - I am currently not in a call or appointment.
 - Retired and serving in a retired supply position
 - Retired and not in a paid accountable position
 - Other (please specify)
8. In your current call or appointment, do you or did you negotiate your salary?
 - Yes, annually
 - Yes, only at the time of appointment or call
 - No
 - I am currently not in a call or appointment.

9. Where does your salary fall in relation to The United Church of Canada compensation guidelines?

- At minimum salary
- Up to 5% above minimum
- Up to 10% above minimum
- Up to 15% above minimum
- Up to 20% above minimum
- 20% or more above minimum
- I don't know
- Other amount above minimum (please specify)
- Not applicable. I am currently not in a call or appointment.

Factors in Determining the Annual Salary Adjustments

10. For the annual salary adjustments, which of these factors should be considered? (Choose all that apply.)

- Change in the Minimum Salary Schedule
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Local exceptional economic conditions
- Local housing/rental cost changes
- Change in job responsibilities
- Other (please specify)

Principles of Just, Fair, and Equitable

11. Describe what "just, fair, and equitable" means to you.

Adequate and Sustainable

12. Do you think your salary is appropriate for your level of education and responsibility?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13. Do your salary and benefits allow you to live comfortably and securely?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

14. What factors in your work **should** contribute to your compensation?

- Number of congregations serving
- Size of congregation(s)
- Education
- Years of experience
- Remote area
- Complexity of role
- Supervision of ministry or lay staff
- Administrative support available
- Team ministry
- Community of faith's budget

- Ability to negotiate
- Ability of your congregation to pay
- Other (please specify)

15. What factors in your work **actually** determine your compensation?

- Number of congregations serving
- Size of congregation(s)
- Education
- Years of experience
- Remote area
- Complexity of role
- Supervision of ministry or lay staff
- Administrative support available
- Team ministry
- Community of faith's budget
- Ability to negotiate
- Ability of your congregation to pay
- Other (please specify)

16. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of ADEQUATE?

17. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of SUSTAINABLE?

18. What factors or data would help inform an ADEQUATE and SUSTAINABLE annual adjustment to salary?

Sustainable Ministry

19. How will the financial stability of your community of faith impact your current or future appointment or call?

20. What kind of help from your regional council or the General Council would assist your community of faith in being more sustainable?

Components of "Total" Compensation

21. What do you consider "valuable" in this list? (Check all that apply.)

- Vacation above the minimum 4 weeks (5 Sundays)
- More than minimum continuing education time (3 weeks)
- Time off after Christmas and/or Easter in addition to vacation
- Sabbatical leave
- Book/continuing education allowance
- Technology allowance
- Phone allowance
- Funeral/wedding honoraria
- Moving expenses
- Flexibility to work from home
- Flexibility in day-to-day scheduling
- Defined benefit pension plan (to which your employer contributes 9% of salary)

- Group health and dental benefits paid for by your employer
- Hours of work
- Expectations for being “on call”
- Value of the total compensation package (vacation, condensed allowance, benefits, pension, phone allowance, moving expenses, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

22. Are there other factors you consider to be valuable that are not currently part of the total compensation components?

23. We’ve asked a lot of nuts and bolts questions so far. When considering your satisfaction in your ministry role, how do call and vocation influence your thoughts and choices?

Adequate Compensation

24. What other professions or trades would you compare the vocation of ministry to? (E.g., teacher, nurse, social worker.)

25. What do you think would help make our compensation practices more just, fair, and equitable?

26. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Appendix 3

Total Compensation Review – Treasurers

Post Webinar for Church Treasurers on May 22 (distributed in French and in English)

- This survey is intended to hear from you, as a treasurer, about:
 - what some of your practices are in setting compensation
 - how we as a church/employer can provide just, fair and equitable compensation to your ministry personnel leaders, and
 - how you are mitigating some of the financial challenges to maintaining a sustainable ministry.

Tell us who you are

1. Is your community of faith:
 - Rural
 - Town
 - Suburban
 - Urban
 - Other
-
2. Which Regional Council are you a part of?
 - Antler River Watershed Regional Council
 - Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council
 - Canadian Shield Regional Council
 - Chinook Winds Regional Council
 - Conseil Regional Nakonhaka Regional Council
 - East Central Ontario Regional Council
 - Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
 - First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
 - Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council
 - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council
 - Living Skies Regional Council
 - Northern Spirit Regional Council
 - Pacific Mountain Regional Council
 - Prairie to Pine Regional Council
 - Shining Waters Regional Council
 - Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
 - My COF is part of the Indigenous Church

Ministry Personnel and Compensation

3. What regional economic cost of living (RCOL) group is your community of faith located in?
 - RCOL 1
 - RCOL 2
 - RCOL 3
 - RCOL 4
 - RCOL 5

- RCOL 6
- I don't know
-
- 4. Are your ministry personnel full-time or part-time?
 - Full-time
 - Part-time
 - Combination (ex. One full-time minister & two part-time, team ministry, etc.)
 - We presently don't have ministry personnel
-
- 5. Where does your ministry personnel's compensation fall on this continuum? (If you have more than one ministry personnel in your community of faith (COF), please select all that apply)
 - Minimum salary
 - Up to 10% above minimum
 - Up to 15% above minimum
 - Up to 20% above minimum
 - I don't know
 - Other (please specify)

Factors in Determining the Annual Adjustments

6. When you consider an annual economic adjustment, which of these factors do you consider? (choose all that apply)
 - Change in the Minimum Salary Schedule
 - Cost of Living Index
 - Local exceptional economic changes
 - Local housing / rental cost changes
 - Change in job responsibilities
 - Other

Principles of just, fair and equitable

7. How do we know if we have achieved compensation that is Just, Fair, and Equitable?

Adequate and Sustainable

8. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of ADEQUATE?
9. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of SUSTAINABLE?
10. What factors or data would help inform an ADEQUATE and SUSTAINABLE annual adjustment to salary?

Budget

11. Where does your current 2024 budget fall on this continuum?
 - Deficit
 - Balanced
 - In surplus
 -
12. Where will your 2025 budget fall on this continuum?
 - Deficit
 - Balanced

- In surplus
-

13. Where will your 2026 budget fall on this continuum?

- Deficit
- Balanced
- In surplus

Sustainable Ministry

14. If you are working with a deficit budget now or project that you will be in the next couple years, what strategies are you thinking of to increase revenues? (ex. partner with a neighbouring church; find community partners . . .)

15. What strategies are you thinking of to decrease expenses?

16. What kind of help from your Regional Council or the General Council would assist you?

17. Not thinking about your “minister”, in a sentence, what makes a “ministry” sustainable?

Components of "Total" Compensation

18. Which of these does your COF provide to your ministry personnel? (check all that apply)

- Vacation above the minimum 4 weeks (5 Sundays)
- More than minimum con ed time (3 weeks)
- Time off after Christmas and/or Easter in addition to vacation
- Our minister has taken a sabbatical leave
- Book/continuing education allowance above minimum
- Technology allowance
- Phone allowance
- Funeral/wedding honoraria
- Moving expenses
- Flexibility to work from home
- Flexibility in day-to-day scheduling
- Defined Benefit pension plan
- Group health and dental benefits
- Other

Factors in establishing an “Adequate” Compensation

19. When considering compensation for your minister, which of the following factors are considered? (check all that apply)

- The denomination's Minimum Salary Schedule
- Exceptional cost of living considerations in your specific location
- Your church/s budget / affordability
- Value of the total compensation package (vacation, con ed allowance, benefits, pension, phone allowance, moving expenses, etc.)
- Hours of work
- Expectations for "on-call"
- Exceptional costs of local housing and expenses
- Salary of your previous minister
- Salary of your minister in their previous pastoral charge

- Experience
- Education and specialty certifications
- Other

Factors in Assessing Comparable Jobs

20. What factors should be considered in comparing a ministry position to a comparable job in another field?

- Education
- Experience
- Scope of responsibilities
- Complexity of roles
- Hours on call
- Prestige
- Other

"Adequate" Compensation

21. What other professions or trades would you compare the "job" of "minister" to? (Ex. Teacher, bank manager, social worker.)

22. What do you now think makes a compensation package "ADEQUATE"?

PARTNER COUNCIL REPORT

Mending the World Roundtable: A Mechanism for Radical Accompaniment

The Mending the World Roundtable serves as a key mechanism for intentional partner engagement with the United Church of Canada's (UCCanada) Strategic Plan activities, specifically focusing on "Radical Accompaniment." In 2024, this involved deepening mutually accountable, decolonizing engagement with partners through a global consultation via Zoom, engaging in innovative mission practices to transform the world toward justice, peace, and healing of creation with CFGB Nature Plus project with the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK), and providing a platform for diverse perspectives. The Roundtable also facilitated partner participation in COP29 and supported reciprocity, respect, and transparency through the leadership of the Partner Council. In addition, the ACT Alliance General Assembly requested UCCanada accompaniment to deepen the decolonizing partnership.

Key activities in 2025 will continue the focus on Mutual Radical Accompaniment, power-shifting, and decolonizing partnerships through regional roundtables. Partners in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East are planning "deep, bold, and daring conversations" at the regional level. Annie Namala convened online conversations with Asian partners in December 2024 and January 2025, with an in-person meeting planned for May 2025. Samer Laham convened an in-person conversation with Middle East partners in Amman, Jordan in January 2025, while partners in the LAC region are planning an in-person conversation in Cuba for May 2025. Partners in Africa are yet to convene

The Partner Council, composed of Annie Namala, Samer Laham, Kangwa Mabuluki, Horacio Mesones, Marcelo Leites, and Silvia Vasquez Olguin, provides essential leadership for these global and regional roundtables. These activities aim to build relationships, strengthen partnerships, and create shared ownership and commitment to the outcomes of these critical discussions, fostering a future of more equitable and just global partnerships.

Consent Proposals**GS 129 EDITORIAL CHANGES TO *THE MANUAL*, J.6.7 FINANCIAL SUPPORT****Origin: General Secretary, General Council****1. What is the issue?**

In October 2023, the proposal “GCE 01 Financial Support for Ministry Personnel Suspended While in a Directed Program” was carried. This proposal introduced changes to section J.6.7 to provide greater clarity regarding financial support for ministry personnel.

The Manual Committee now recommends further minor adjustments for additional clarity, specifically the phrase “not less than the minimum salary.” They propose this be changed to “*up to the minimum salary*.” Without this adjustment, the Office of Vocation would either have to refuse any Personnel Emergency funding or pay the full minimum salary set by the appropriate body.

This wording change would allow Personnel Emergency Funding to act as a top-up to other remuneration a suspended ministry personnel may be receiving, ensuring their total remuneration meets the minimum salary level if appropriate.

Further, “minimum remuneration” should replace “minimum salary” for consistency with the other language changes that have been recently implemented in the Manual.

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

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

J.6.7 Financial Support

This section (J.6.7) applies where the appropriate body within the Office of Vocation has:

- a) suspended a ministry personnel; or**
- b) required ministry personnel, who is not actively serving in a community of faith and who is otherwise without remuneration from the United Church, to engage in a directed program for the improvement of their pastoral skills.**

The appropriate body within the Office of Vocation may provide Personnel Emergency Funding in an amount up to the minimum remuneration set by the General Council, for a period of time and subject to terms as set by the appropriate body.

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

N/A

GS 130 AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS H.3.6, H.5.2.1 AND H.5.2.2

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

3. What is the issue? Why is this issue important?

Recently, the Office of Vocation has updated its guidelines for ministry personnel for continuing education from Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership. The Manual needs to be updated to reflect these changes in our by-laws.

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

The General Secretary recommends the following changes to sections H.3.6, H.5.2.1, and H.5.2.2:

H.3.6 Assess

1. The Candidacy Board assesses the promise, suitability, and readiness of applicants and candidates for designated lay, diaconal, and ordained ministry by following the required markers of the Candidacy Pathway.
2. The **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership** ~~Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership~~ and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice form the basis for assessing promise, suitability, and readiness for ministry leadership.

*The **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership** ~~Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership~~ and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice are each available from the [General Council Office](#).*



H.5.2.1 Ordained Ministry and Designated Lay Ministry

Each candidate for ordained and designated lay ministry must satisfactorily complete a Supervised Ministry Education program that involves learning goals based on the **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership** ~~Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership~~, reflection on the practice of ministry, and regular supervision and evaluation.

The Candidacy Board determines a candidate's readiness for Supervised Ministry Education.

The Candidacy Board determines completion of Supervised Ministry Education by assessing a candidate's competence for ministry leadership based on the **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and**

Lifelong Ministry Leadership Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

*The **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership** Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership are available from the [General Council Office](#).*



H.5.2.2 Diaconal Ministry

Each candidate for diaconal ministry must satisfactorily complete field placements through their program of study.

The Candidacy Board reviews the evaluations from the field placements to assess a diaconal ministry candidate's competence for ministry leadership based on the **Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership** Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

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

GS 133 DESIGNATING ORANGE SHIRT SUNDAY

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

Many United Church communities of faith observe Orange Shirt Day, also known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, but it is not designated as a “Special Sunday” in The United Church of Canada. Making this official observance would be an appropriate way to publicly honour the thousands of children we harmed through our operation of the residential institutions.

2. Why is this issue important?

Orange Shirt Day (September 30) has been observed in Canada since 2013 as a way to honour all children who were forcibly removed from their families, homes, and communities. In fulfilment of Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action 80, September 30 has also been designated as a federal statutory holiday (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) since 2021.

Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation are observed by United Church individuals and communities of faith. On the Sunday preceding September 30th, we honour the children through worship as a public expression of our grief, and of our commitment to reconciliation and Indigenous justice. Resources are prepared by the General Council Office to support this, and the past 3 Moderators have prepared messages for the day, but the Sunday has not been placed on the list of “Special Sundays.”

In a time when we are seeing increased denialism of residential institutions and the trauma they caused, as well as continued discriminatory treatment of Indigenous children by contemporary institutions, formalizing the recognition of “Orange Shirt Sunday” and reminding people that Every Child Matters would be an act of faithful public witness honouring the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to educate church communities about residential institutions and to speak up for justice for Indigenous children, and the sacred obligation named by the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites to resist residential institutions denialism.

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

The Executive of the General Council could:

- **direct that Orange Shirt Sunday (the Sunday prior to September 30) be so designated in the United Church’s list of Special Sunday observances;**
- **Direct the General Secretary to ensure that supports and resources are available to mark the day (including but not limited to worship resources, articles and Moderator messages)**
- **encourage regional councils and communities of faith to participate in this observance.**

GS 135 Finance Advisory Committee – UPDATE TO Terms of Reference**Origin: Finance Advisory Committee****1. What is the issue?**

In February 2025, the Finance Advisory Committee identified a few additional changes to their terms of reference to more accurately describe their roles and responsibilities and clarify length of term. These changes are in addition to the updates approved by the Executive in September [2023](#).

2. Why is this issue important?

It is important that committees of the General Council have clear terms of reference to ensure clarity and accountability for their work. Terms of reference need to be reviewed and updated regularly to accurately reflect the responsibilities of the committee.

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

The General Secretary proposes

That the General Council Executive approve the following updates to the Finance Advisory Committee Terms of Reference subject to final editing for punctuation, formatting, consistency of terminology and similar editing matters, as may be approved by the General Secretary:

Responsibilities

- **2(5) add” including the adequacy of reserves”**

Membership

- **3(3) a. add “risk management experience”**
- **Add 3(3) b. "One member of the Finance Advisory Committee may be appointed to the Audit Committee”**
- **Add 3(5) Members will serve for a three-year term. They may be reappointed at the discretion of the General Council Executive for a maximum of one additional term, totaling six years. To ensure knowledge continuity due to the unique work of this committee, members may be appointed for an additional year, ensuring that no more than two members rotate out at the same time.**

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

N/A

Terms of Reference appended

3.03 – General Council Executive Finance Advisory Committee

Page 1 of 2

VISION:

Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. – 2 Corinthians 9:6-

Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. – 1 Peter 4:10

Purpose Statement

The GCE Finance Advisory Committee will provide support, leadership and advice on the finances of the General Council Office, the General Council and its Executive, the impact on the Regions and Communities of Faith.

Policy

Governed by This Policy

1. The policy applies to the members of the GCE Finance Advisory Committee.

Terms of Reference

Responsibilities

2. The GCE Finance Advisory Committee is responsible to
 - (1) Monitor the finances and policies of the General Council including assets, liabilities, income, expenditures, considerations of its short and long-term financial issues, risk management and investment and fund management
 - (2) Consider and suggest long-term financial planning for the General Council
 - (3) work with the Executive and Finance team recommending the assumptions on which the annual budget is prepared
 - (4) recommend the overall expenditure and income budget to the Executive
 - (5) recommend financial and sustainable strategies including the adequacy of reserves
 - (6) ensure that the Executive has adequate information to briefs the General Council on a regular basis on its finances.

Membership

3. The Committee will be composed of six to eight members including:
 - (1) two voting members of the Executive appointed by the Executive of whom one will be chair.
 - (2) This person will have good communication, facilitation and process skills, as well as a broad vision of the financial health and program work of The United Church of Canada.
 - (3) up to six other members who will be able to contribute some or all of the following gifts:

- a. a passion for and sound understanding of the United Church of Canada, financial experience and skills, risk management experience, theological reflection skills and experience, or stewardship knowledge and experience.
 - b. One member of the Finance Advisory Committee may be appointed to the Audit Committee.
- (4) Ideally, the make-up of the committee will include an accountant with a professional designation such as CPA, CGA, and persons with real estate and philanthropy expertise.
- (5) Members will serve for a three-year term. They may be reappointed by the General Council Executive for a maximum of one additional term, totaling six years. To ensure knowledge continuity due to the unique work of this committee, members may be appointed for an additional year, ensuring that no more than two members rotate out at the same time.
4. The Executive Officer, Finance and Executive Officer Philanthropy are Resource Staff for the Committee.

Meetings

5. The Committee meets throughout the year as necessary at the General Council Office or by conference call, depending on agenda items. Additional committee and task group meetings will be used for items specific to agenda projects where warranted.

The Manual, 2023,

Established 2001-11-02-0247 by the Executive of the General Council

Revision History

Date	Resolution or Minute Number	Description of Modification	Modification Authorized by
2007-11-16	214	New Format	Executive of the General Council
2019-04-28	2019-04-27-019	Adjustments for change in church structure	Executive of the General Council
2023-05-12	2023-05-12-031	updates	Executive of the General Council

Review History

Date	Have modifications been made (Yes/No?)	Review conducted by	Review Approved by
2007-05-04-122	Yes	Executive of the General Council	Executive of the General Council
2019-04-27-019	Yes	Executive of the General Council	Executive of the General Council

GS 140 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE KINDRED WORKS INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

GS118 (December 16, 2024) authorized the establishment of an Oversight Committee to support changes in the governance structure of Kindred Works. The committee will serve as a liaison between The United Church of Canada and Kindred Works and an *advisory* group to the Executive of the General Council. This proposal outlines the committee's Terms of Reference.

2. Why is it important?

When the General Council established the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) as a way of managing the property challenges of the church ([GS18 Establishment of a Property Development Corporation and Seed Funding](#)), it realized that it was venturing into new territory. One aspect of the project was the understanding that the new entity would need to find additional investments. The Memorandum of Agreement that we signed, offered this as the context:

"The United Church is emerging in a new shape as a result of shifts in church membership and attendance over recent decades. Congregations and regional councils are increasingly facing decisions about church properties that are no longer fully utilized. At the same time, there is a pressing need for more affordable housing in Canada. Together these factors present an opportunity to use church properties that are either surplus or in need of redevelopment to create affordable housing that would serve the wider community in Canada. The United Church recognizes that through land development it can contribute non-monetary enhancements to the overall mission of the church."

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) was an early partner and investor. However, the Executive understood at the time that there would be challenges in securing additional investments:

"With that said, CMHC now sees an opportunity to commit significant funding to the UCC through a revolving fund that would be used to demonstrate the model and get started. They recognize that it will be difficult for the UCC to bring additional capital beyond our land equity. This new possible funding is to help prevent project failure during the time when traditional capital might be difficult to arrange i.e., pre-development, equity for construction financing, Mezzanine capital, etc."

Further to this the Executive understood the challenges and opportunity to raise additional capital:

“In addition, we will remain eligible for their other programs that can be layered into individual projects. This includes access to their co-investment fund, rental construction financing and mortgage programs. If we pursued this, it would only strengthen our position with partners. If our goals are to achieve affordable housing and other social benefits, the low cost of capital made available through CMHC will entice partners and help the UCC to achieve outcomes where land equity alone isn’t sufficient. There is no doubt that that the UCC will continue to need strong partners going forward. This opportunity with CMHC can set the foundation for those relationships and ensure we accomplish our mission.”

In 2023, UPRC created Kindred Works as a subsidiary development company committed to property development that prioritizes affordable housing, Indigenous partnerships, equity in procurement, and carbon emissions reduction.

Over the past few years, UPRC/Kindred Works has been working to secure additional investors to support the development of affordable housing. This process has required changes to UPRC’s governance structure. To facilitate investor engagement, it became necessary to establish Kindred Works as a separate corporation.

Given the creation of a new enterprise in which the United Church is a majority shareholder, the new governance structure requires specialized oversight—beyond what the Executive can manage alone.

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

The Executive of the General Council could:

- a. approve the Terms of Reference as outlined in *Appendix 1***
- b. direct the General Secretary to operationalize**

4. What will be the impact?

This proposal if approved will allow for a clearer and more streamlined framework for communications between the church and Kindred Works. It will provide a mechanism to ensure that the interests and values of the church are protected.

5. How does this Proposal help us live into the Commitment on Equity?

As a B-Corp entity (see Appendix 2,) Kindred Works continues to value the equity commitments of the United Church.

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

The General Council Executive at its December 16, 2024, Special Meeting approved GS118 – Authorizing the Change of Governance of the Kindred Works Corporation. As part of its approval, the GCE affirmed: the creation of a Kindred Works Investment Oversight Committee

(the “Committee”) that reports to the GCE. The Committee shall be tasked with liaising with Kindred Works and receiving regular and detailed reports from Kindred Works on the status of the investment and the progress of the development projects.

Appendix 1**Terms of Reference****Kindred Works Investment Oversight Committee****Mandate**

The Kindred Works investment oversight committee (the “Committee”) reports to the Executive of the General Council annually, or as needed, regarding the activities of Kindred Works and serves as a resource for the GCE to carry out its shareholder responsibilities. The Committee will meet at least twice a year.

The Committee is responsible for liaising with Kindred Works and receiving regular and detailed confidential reports from Kindred Works on the status of investments and the progress of development projects. Additionally, the Committee will ensure that the interests and values of the Church are being upheld by the corporation. Designed to enhance transparency and reporting, the Committee acts as a mechanism for improving communication from Kindred Works to The United Church of Canada.

To carry out its responsibilities, the Committee will use the following frameworks:

- United Church of Canada control as reflected in the Shareholder Agreement;
- Financial return on the church’s investment as negotiated;
- Mission intent, and
- Ensuring that the investment continues to support charitable compliance.

- **Membership**

The committee will be made up of five members as follows:

- One of the United Church’s appointed members of the Kindred Works Board as nominated by the Board
- One member appointed by the Executive of the General Council
- One member of the Finance Advisory Committee
- Two specialist members at large, recruited by the General Secretary for their expertise in real estate, investment, entrepreneur or venture capital and appointed by the General Council Executive.

Member Skills and Experience

Members at large will possess expertise in real estate, investment, entrepreneur or venture capital, or other expertise of use to the committee. Members at large will be active participants in a United Church community of faith or ministry.

All committee members will be

- committed to the Call of the United Church and willing to discern God’s yearnings for this work

- predisposed to collaboration and teamwork
- able to listen and discern
- committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination
- comfortable with and able to participate in electronic meetings
- able to commit the time required for this responsibility

United Church Relationship: Active participant or full member

Expectations and Term

The Committee meets twice each year, or more frequently if necessary. In line with achieving our climate commitments, in-person meetings will be minimized.

Members of this committee agree to a [Behavioural Covenant](#) as a way of committing to mutual relationships, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

Members-at-large serve for terms of three years with the possibility of reappointment for a second term (OR to a maximum of three terms).

Appendix 2

B-Corp Performance Requirements

Here is a summary of the latest draft B Corp Performance Requirement Impact :

Purpose & Stakeholder Governance (PSG): B Corps act in accordance with a defined purpose, contributing to an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economic system for all people and the planet.

Workplace Culture (WC): B Corps have positive workplace cultures with meaningful worker dialogue.

Fair Wages (FW): Workers can afford a decent standard of living for themselves and their families, and there is wage equality among the workforce.

Justice Equity Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI): B Corps have inclusive and diverse work environments and contribute meaningfully to just and equitable communities.

Human Rights (HR): B Corps treat people with dignity and respect their human rights.

Climate Action (CA): B Corps take action in accordance with science to combat climate change and its impacts.

Environmental Stewardship and Circularity (ESC): B Corps demonstrate environmental stewardship and contribute to the circular economy in their operations and value chain, minimizing any negative impact and pursuing positive impact.

Government Affairs and Collective Action (GACA): B Corps play a leadership role in fostering shared understanding, solutions, and implementation towards an equitable, inclusive, and regenerative economy, including contribution to the public infrastructure they utilize and rely upon for their success.

Complementary Impact Topics (CIT): B Corps comprehensively identify and measure a wider set of impacts of their business, in addition to the core Impact Topics, and improve upon them over time.

BOV 01 ADDITIONAL MANDATORY TRAINING FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

Origin: Board of Vocation

1. What is the issue?

The Standards for Accreditation Committee brought a proposal to the Board of Vocation to offer a way forward after the 43rd General Council (2018) passed proposals regarding additional mandatory training for ministry personnel on topics like mental health, anti-homophobia/anti-transphobia, and the Kairos Blanket Exercise.

2. Why is this issue important?

Since 2019, the Standards for Accreditation committee has had a lot of conversation about the continuing education of ministry personnel, including what to do about the decisions of the 43rd General Council on the topic on additional mandatory training of ministry personnel. One part of the conversation has been on the question of the denomination's expectations on ministry personnel once the training is complete, such as more effective leaders, safer communities, sharing learning with community of faith or another ministry site. If the latter, then wouldn't our training be offered to both ministry leaders and congregants? Is mandatory training of ministry personnel effective in shifting culture? How do we assess impact?

Some of these questions were the basis for a consultation with the GCE in 2021. The consultation asked further questions. What are our assumptions and expectations about mandatory training for ministry personnel? Is the training about knowledge or practice or both? Does it meet our call/hopes for the church?

The listening team heard that there's an assumption that ministry personnel are doing learning that will speak to them but then will be shared within the church. This is not necessarily a reality. It was also shared that there's a sense that not every problem can be solved with mandatory training. It is one solution. Training is not the only pedagogical way to accomplish learning outcomes. Have I ticked a box or have I developed the skill/behaviour? Finally, GCE members noted that there is not a lot of clarity about what the purpose is when there is a proposal.

Another discussion question focused on if there are other ways the denomination could address the needs and hopes for the church and leadership raised in the various proposals for mandatory training. In this area, the listening team heard wondering about whether we need to identify competencies for communities of faith, similar to the competencies for ministry personnel. It was also shared that if the goal is to change the church, then that requires a different methodology than a workshop model for ministry personnel.

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

The Board of Vocation proposes that the General Council Executive respond to this issue by:

- a) taking no further action on these decisions of the 43rd General Council (Mental Health Training 2018-09-29-221, ANW 7, and MAR 1; anti-homophobia/anti-transphobia GC43 2018-24, M&O 04; and the Kairos Blanket Exercise (GC43 2018-29) for additional mandatory training; and
- b) affirming the work of the Standards for Accreditation Committee in:
 - i. developing learning outcomes for new learning opportunities focused on affirming and anti-transphobia education for ministry personnel; and
 - ii. developing an interpretive bulletin on the continuing education standard to highlight the importance of continuing education on the topics of Indigenous justice and reconciliation, and mental health and how learning in these areas would fit into the framework of the continuing education standard.

The learning opportunities would not be mandatory for all ministry personnel to complete. The affirming course is being developed in partnership with Affirm United. The anti-transphobia course is being developed in relation to a case before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal.

The Kairos blanket exercise is undergoing revisions and is not currently available widely across the church.

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

The Board of Vocation passed a proposal at its November 2024 meeting, to encourage the General Council Executive to take no further action on the proposals, given the work the Standards for Accreditation Committee is doing.

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

a) **KAIROS BLANKET EXERCISE**

Motion: GC43 2018-29

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal TOR 02 TRC Call 60/Blanket Exercise, including the recommendations from Toronto Conference, and direct it to the General Secretary for implementation.

The proposal asked that:

The General Council establish a policy that all current and future ministry personnel and church leaders undergo immersive education on the history and legacy of Canadian colonialism using a tool such as the KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

b) MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Motion: 2018-09-29-221

Approve the way forward proposed by the Governance and Agenda Committee for the following non-prioritized proposals - ANW 7 – Mental Health and the Mission of the Church; MAR 1 – Mental Health Training

That the Executive of the General Council acknowledge the importance of mental health issues and refer proposals ANW 7 – Mental Health and Mission of the Church and MAR 01 – Mental Health Training to the General Secretary with the request that she identify and implement actions to enable the United Church to respond to mental health needs.

Included in the proposal from Maritime Conference was a request:

That as a means of strengthening their ability to work with people with mental health problems, all paid accountable clergy be required to receive training on mental health. In addition, mental health training to become a module in the curriculum for candidates for Ordered Ministry.

The Mental Health Working Group report to the General Secretary in January 2021 proposed that:

- i) Ministry personnel be equipped with the capacity and competencies needed to keep a person safe until a mental health professional arrives and that the Standards for Accreditation of Ministry Personnel Committee create learning outcomes for ministry personnel around mental health that either is similar to or draws upon existing training programs (such as the Mental Health First Aid program).
- ii) Ministry personnel be provided with sufficient resources to direct a person to qualified mental health professionals, including region councils creating and maintaining lists of ministry personnel who are dually credentialed as mental health practitioners (eg. psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, social workers, etc.), and to make those lists available to ministry personnel. These lists need to be provincially appropriate, informed by regulatory realities, and easily accessible on the denominational website. There is also a need for cultural sensitivity around how stigma functions in different communities.

c) **ANTI-HOMOPHOBIA TRAINING**

Motion: GC43 2018-24

That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal M&O 04 Mandatory Training for All United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel and directs the General Secretary to implement its recommendations.

This proposal requested the following:

As a further step along the pathway of making the United Church a safe and welcoming community of faith, we propose that the General Council develops a curriculum, and implements mandatory training that will explore issues surrounding homophobia, and sensitize its ministry personnel to how homophobia affects the life and work of the church, in order to stop homophobia from being promulgated.

The parameters of Mandated Training for all clergy/paid accountable ministers, should be extended to training workshops dedicated to the issues, concerns and consequences of homophobia towards our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer-questioning, twospirited (LGBTQ2) brothers and sisters, and to their families of origin and families created, in an effort to help The United Church of Canada continue to live out its principles and engagement with justice and to facilitate an end to homophobia being promulgated in the church.

As the church seeks to formally apologize to the LGBTQ2 community, the implementation of a policy dedicated to combatting further harm on the part of the church is a step in honoring its commitment.

The time frame to develop and implement the training is not to exceed a two-year period.

We ask that the General Council support this proposal to help ensure we honour the commitment to ensure the well-being of all who form the Body of Christ and work to continue to break down barriers and build right relationships and just institutions.

NOM 16 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Originating Body: The Nominations Committee

1. What is the issue?

We believe that the Holy Spirit calls us to use our God-given gifts. Our gifts differ, but all are needed. The practices of Christian spiritual formation call on us to practice individual and group discernment in selecting and affirming leaders for the church.

2. Why is this issue important?

The Executive of the General Council needs to appoint and authorize members to serve on committees and task groups which conduct work on its behalf and as delegates to represent The United Church of Canada. On this occasion, the Executive also has a responsibility to ensure that leadership is in place in the role of chair for the Pension Plan Advisory Committee.

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

The Nominations Committee and the Pension Board jointly proposes that the Executive of the General Council extend the appoint of Jacques Tremblay to January 2026.

4. What will be the impact?

Appointments are offered with a view to the strategic objective of Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship. The work that this role advances falls within the strategic objective of Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources.

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

In its discernment, the Nominations Committee considers diversity with regards to geography, gender identity and ministry stream, as well as the myriad ways that our lives, cultures and lived experiences make each of us unique. All members of committees and representatives of The United Church of Canada to ecumenical bodies are expected to uphold the United Church's commitments to equity in the roles to which they are being appointed.

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

Pension Board THAT the Board recommend to the Nominations Committee that Jacques Tremblay's term as chair of PPAC be extended to January 2026. *Carried*

The Nominations Committee: Lynella Reid-James (chair), YongSeok Baek (regrets), Katherine Brittain, Allan Buckingham, Jessica Stevenson, Pat Tooley, Samuel Dansokho (GCE), Richard Bott (GCE, regrets), Norm Seli (Board of Vocation liaison). Diane Bosman & Jamie Wilder (staff)

The Nominations Committee offers gratitude to all who serve and prays for faith and joy in their appointments.

GS 144 APPROVAL OF INTERIM OFFICE LOCATION**Origin: General Secretary****1. What is the issue?**

In November to 2024, the Executive approved [GS 107 – Authorization to Relocate to Interim Location prior to the move to 300 Bloor Street](#). The General Secretary was directed to explore and assess interim office location options and develop a project plan that was operationally and financially viable, and, if adequate space was found, to terminate the current office lease at the end of its term in 2026. We have secured adequate space for your final approval.

2. Why is it important?

After preliminary searches, a couple of options were identified. A staff survey was also conducted in December 2024 to gather data on staff commuting patterns to be included in the office location selection criteria.

The selection was based on criteria including accessibility, cost, size, layout, and staff commute survey data. The staff survey revealed that, among the 68 staff who participated, 39.68% were coming from the western end of the Greater Toronto area, and 38.10% from the eastern end. The survey also asked about the modes of transportation used by staff, finding that 32% used cars, 25% used public transit, and 13% used a combination of car and public transit.

The extra move to an interim location is expected to deliver at least \$500,000 in one-time savings on office rental costs in 2026, with manageable interruption to operations, as most staff continue to are work remotely most of the time. However, it does add pressure on the moving planning team, especially the IT team. To mitigate this pressure, temporary contracts will be utilized to assist with the move.

The next steps include preparing communication to the staff about the interim office location decision and establish a detailed project plan ensuring a smooth transition to the interim office location.

3. How might the General Council Executive respond?

The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council

- a. approves the interim move of the General Council Office to the Presbyterian Church office at 50 Wynford Drive, North York, Ontario, and**
- b. the termination of the current lease at 3250 Bloor Street West as of February 28, 2026**

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

The Executive of the General Council has the responsibility of ensuring that there is a General Council Office (Manual D.5.3.4).

Appendix III

TICIF 02 REVISED PRINCIPLES FOR JUSTICE WORK

Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

4. What is the issue?

The 44th General Council asked that a principles-based approach to the United Church's justice work be developed. A set of principles would govern the church's responses to historic, current, and emerging social justice issues and enable timely and contextual responses. The 44th General Council 2022 directed that this work be done by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee. In October 2023, General Council adopted the principles in principle and directed the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to prepare "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."

Why is this issue 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.

Members of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee met with General Council Office staff who have been applying the principles to various situations of injustice and to calls from partners. Staff provided feedback on the wording and application of the principles. While determining a method for applying the principles, and tracking the use of the principles, is beyond the scope of what TICIF has been asked to do, the committee strongly encourages the development of a method of applying the principles **as a whole** and the development of a tracking mechanism in order to record how and in what situations the principles have been applied.

How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?

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

- a. that the General Council Executive receive the revised principles, including the preamble, for information and forward to 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.

What will be the impact?

The impact could be that the United Church is able to respond in more timely and contextual ways to situations of injustice arising in Canada and around the world, and further, that we can be more responsive to requests from partners. Shifting to a principles-based approach can be seen as part of the church's ongoing learning and efforts to decolonize its processes, actions, advocacy, and ministries.

The principles move us away from a time-bound, policy-based approach to our justice work that cannot respond adequately to rapidly changing contexts. The principles enable the church to be faithful, contextual, and responsive to partner calls as situations evolve. The challenge going forward will be to help the church understand the implication of this shift and to discern proposals that might shift the church back to a rigid policy framework.

There is no financial cost to this proposal. It will involve staff time in terms of staff developing and refining processes for applying and tracking the principles in their work.

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

Adopting a principles-based approach to justice echoes and amplifies the existing principles and commitments the church has made on equity.

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

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee approved the revised principles at its meeting on February 7, 2025.

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

[GCE03 A Principle Based Approach To Justice Work In The United Church Of Canada \(2022\)](#)
[TICIF02 Principles-Based Justice Work \(October 2023\)](#)

REVISED PRINCIPLES FOR JUSTICE WORK IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, MARCH 2025

Preamble:

The United Church has used a policy-based approach to its justice and advocacy ministry for decades. Policies are reflective of a particular time in history. Changes to policies are often slow because of our governance processes. Policy statements made in specific moments in time find us out of sync with the calls of partners and with rapidly changing global realities. The 44th General Council asked that a principle-based approach to its justice work be developed. A set of principles would govern the church's responses to historic, current, and emerging social and ecological justice issues and enable timely and contextual responses.

Principles are guides for prayerful discernment when responding to situations of injustice. Principles do not spell out in detail what specific actions should be in specific circumstances but rather provide a framework for making ethical, justice-seeking decisions. The context of each justice issue will need to be considered in such decision-making, guided by the principles.

We believe God calls The United Church of Canada to seek justice, dignity, and fullness of life for human beings and for all our relations within God's beloved creation. The United Church is called to speak and act with humility and with courage, recognizing the ways in which the church has perpetuated harm and has benefited from its complicity in oppression and colonization. Colonialism remains in our midst. It shapes our imagination and informs the many ways we relate with one another and with creation, both individually and institutionally. Colonialism reproduces and expands white supremacy, modern-day slavery, racism, exploitation of labour of one class over another, among many other manifestations.

The [Call](#) to bold discipleship, deep spirituality, and daring justice means that we cannot remain silent in situations of injustice, demonstrating our love for our neighbours (Deuteronomy 6; Mark 12; Matthew 22; Luke 10). Jesus models costly solidarity; the Holy Spirit invites us to faithful transformation; and God calls us "to work with God for the healing of the world, that all might have abundant life." ([A Song of Faith](#)). We continue to seek to act ecumenically and with interfaith groups in responding to situations of injustice.

Addressing injustice includes (though is not limited to) building:

- a) *awareness* and understanding of injustices experienced
- b) *analysis* of the systems and forces that perpetuate injustice
- c) *advocacy* with those who are made vulnerable
- d) *action* with those neighbours who invite/welcome our participation in their work

The principles outlined below are intended to be used together as they are interdependent.

The principles speak to, and enrich, one another when they are used to discern action in situations of injustice. These are not intended as a checklist but as an invitation to prayerfully reflect on what the church's response could be. The principles are informed by the United

Church's policies, affirmations, and commitments.³ 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. The principles are identified in bold, with clarifying sentences to illustrate each principle.

³ Over the course of several years, General Council has made the following commitments on equity. There are places where the church is already living into a principle-based approach to its justice and advocacy work such as:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and [ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision](#);
- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity; and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

Anti-Oppression

Lament and actively oppose the sins of oppression and colonization, including but not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and discrimination of any kind, in our churches, our communities, our nation, the world, and God's good creation. Encourage the ministries and work of anti-oppression in our churches so that we may more fully express the dignity of humanity and creation as bearing the image of God.

Truth-telling and Repenting

Recognize, acknowledge, and repent the ways in which The United Church of Canada has contributed to, or enabled, whether intentionally or unintentionally, suffering and unjust practices, including its participation in colonization. Amplify the truth-telling voices of those who suffer and are made vulnerable as opposed to those who hold power. Encourage critical analysis of power and thoughtful exploration and questioning of biases.

Intersectionality

Recognize and name complexities and multiple oppressions in situations of injustice. Strive to avoid false binaries in analysis and in statements. While conflicts may arise, seek to understand differing perspectives while being aware of systemic power differences.

Respect for Human Dignity

Act with others in ways that uphold human dignity. Listen to and offer solidarity with those among us experiencing injustice, oppression, the denial of dignity, and violation of human rights. Affirm the right to resist, repudiate, and challenge any expression of injustice. Listen attentively to, and support, social movements and groups of people who are historically marginalized and who are most affected by injustice.

Full Participation and Decolonization

Recognize the church's complicity in causing harm and name ways in which we seek to redress, continue to learn, and dismantle colonization. Challenge expressions of domination that are replicated in our institutions, our relationships with partners, and with creation. Support community-based self-determination, including the self-determination of Indigenous peoples. Discern with humility and with partners and oppressed peoples in the church when to speak and act for justice. Encourage ways to imagine life in all its fullness in concrete terms, subverting structures of domination.

Equity, Mutuality, Respect, and Reparations

Pursue equity, mutuality, respect, and reparations as the path towards justice, reconciliation, and right relations. Continue to be prayerful companions in mutual discernment and justice-seeking with United Church partners, ecumenical and interfaith partners, and with other justice-seeking groups.

Costly and Prophetic Solidarity

Speak and act prophetically against injustice in all forms, knowing that solidarity may be costly.

Appendix IV

TICIF 03 STATEMENT ON MINISTRY 2025

Origin: Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

1. What is the issue?

In 2021, the Ministry Streams task group submitted a report and proposal, “Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s”, which acknowledged and commissioned the church to address the reality that United Church of Canada communities of faith are on the whole smaller, older, and less able to employ paid ministry personnel, making ordered ministry a less viable profession and lay leadership burdened by professional standards of accountability.

The 44th General Council received the report in 2022 and mandated a revision of the 2012 Statement on Ministry, particularly to include a focus on lay ministries and the vocational life of all believers. A small task group was established with members from the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee and the Board of Vocation, with staff support from the General Council Office.

The joint task group reviewed the 2012 Statement on Ministry, as well as previous related statements. They also reviewed the “Ministry Leadership” report and feedback from designated lay, diaconal, and ordained ministers as well as lay people from communities of faith without stipendiary/ paid accountable ministers. In reviewing this data and previous reports, the task group determined that a revision of the 2012 Statement on Ministry was not sufficient. The 2012 Statement on Ministry did not reflect adequately or strongly enough the vocations of lay people, who offer ministry in the church and in the world, nor did it reflect understandings of the three streams of paid, accountable ministry in the United Church. The joint task group therefore has developed a new statement on ministry for consideration by the General Council.

At every moment, our individual occupations, professions and vocations, and the vocation of the church itself, are gathered into a creative and interconnected gesture of divine love for the world. A statement on ministry is a statement about the how the church participates in the Spirit-led work of love in our time, including through inspiring discipleship in community.

This statement

- a) defines ministry broadly as participation in God’s creative purposes
- b) centres on the call of the baptized into ministries of love and service
- c) reframes the focus of ministry from the individual to the communal
- d) considers the shape of communities which support these ministries
- e) names implications for ordered and lay leadership of such communities
- f) makes recommendations for policy and practice

2. Why is this issue important?

By virtue of baptism, Christians are called into a life of discipleship for the sake of God's creation. This is the foundational vocation of all Christians; how this vocation is expressed and how the church recognizes it varies over time and from community to community.

Re-locating the locus of faith and vocation from solely residing in individuals to a communal orientation is a step in living into intercultural and decolonizing commitments. The role of community in calling forth and supporting the gifts of persons is one that is foundational to Indigenous worldviews and practices; this also resonates in other cultures, all of whom are present within the United Church. This re-focusing also reconnects us to Pauline metaphors of the church as the body of Christ, where all parts, all members, are equally important and necessary to the body. Our conciliar model of governance continues to reflect this theological and scriptural foundation. The work of decolonization in church and society is inseparable from a metanoia (radical re-orientation) – a transformation in self-understanding. Christianity offers a path from individualism to communion through the affirmation of our being made in the likeness of a community: a divine Trinity.

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

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee recommends that the General Council Executive:

- c. receive the Statement on Ministry 2025, including the recommendations made in section F (see immediately below), for information and forward to the 45th General Council for decision-making.

Section F:

A move to embrace more fully a model of ministry inspired by divine interdependence will require attention to certain principles and practices related to models of ministry.

Regarding the ministry of the whole people of God, the General Council affirms the priorities of communities of faith to:

- 1) focus attention on nurturing and supporting people's lives of faith as the primary sphere of the church's ministry in the world,
- 2) bring the faith expressed in secular professions and vocations from the margins to the centre of the community of faith

Regarding models of ministry inspired by divine inter-dependence, the General Council directs the General Secretary to give priority to:

- 1) Working from an image of the desired whole, not from a collection of the surviving parts
- 2) Calling and equipping people for cooperative models of ministry

- 3) Freeing governance at the local level for maximizing cooperation, teaming, novelty and creativity
- 4) Focussing governance at the regional level on resourcing, support and oversight
- 5) Focussing governance at the denominational level on enabling and safe-guarding policy development, standards and accountability
- 6) Developing an accessible forum for exchange of experience and resource sharing

Regarding lay and ordered ministry within the church, the General Council directs the General Secretary to:

- 1) Clarify means of support for all roles in ministry (see appendix of report)
- 2) Build mentorship into all roles in ministry
- 3) Clarify lines of accountability for all roles in ministry (see appendix)
- 4) Ensure means of teaming for all roles in ministry
- 5) Ensure that the pathway to ordered ministry takes into account flexibility to maintain second profession/occupation.

4. What will be the impact?

The recommendations above, made in the Statement on Ministry 2025, align with the strategic plan in its commitment to strengthen and grow new and existing ministries, including collaborative ministries of lay and ordered people serving ministries together.

- S2.01.001 Whole People of God Training
- S2.02.003 Reimagine Theological Education
- S2.02.004 Cooperative Ministry and Mentorship Pilot
- S5.01.004 Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops
- S5.01.006 Supporting Renewal in Rural Ministries
- S5.02.002 Regional/Identity Communities
- S5.03.001 Engage with Call and Vision
- S1.05.003 Radical Accompaniment: People to People
- S1.06.003 Moderator's Initiative: Events and Book Club

Foundational to this commitment are renewed efforts in discipleship formation for the sake of deepening faith and growing capacity for ministries within and beyond current models. Enhancing an understanding of ministry that is collective will require alignment of formation and governance for collaboration of lay and ordered ministers in service to their communities.

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

The commitment to nurture the capacity of *communities* rather than *individuals* to live out their ministries, turns the church's attention to any obstacles or barriers to full participation in shared leadership.

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

The Statement on Ministry 2025 - Draft was approved by TICIF and the Board of Vocation at their meetings in February 2025.

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

- [General Council 44 WF16 GCE06 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s](#)
- [GCE 2021-11-19-180: GS 128 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s](#)

Statement on Ministry 2025: DRAFT

Background and Context

In 2021, the Ministry Streams task group submitted a report and proposal, “Ministry Leadership to Meet the Needs of the Church in the 2020s”, which acknowledged and commissioned the church to address the reality that United Church of Canada communities of faith are on the whole smaller, older, and less able to employ paid ministry personnel, making ordered ministry a less viable profession and lay leadership burdened by professional standards of accountability. The 44th General Council received the report in 2022 and passed some elements of the proposal associated with the report, including mandating a revision to the 2012 Statement on Ministry, particularly to include a focus on lay ministries and the vocational life of all believers. As this work straddles both the Office of Vocation and the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee (TICIF), a small joint task group was formed with members from the Board of Vocation and TICIF, with General Council Office staff support.

The joint task group reviewed the 2012 Statement on Ministry, as well as previous related statements. They also reviewed the “Ministry Leadership” report and feedback from designated lay, diaconal, and ordained ministers as well as lay people from communities of faith without stipendiary/ paid accountable ministers. In reviewing this data and previous reports, the task group determined that the scope of their work went beyond simply adding to, and revising, the 2012 Statement on Ministry. The joint task group noted that the 2012 Statement on Ministry did not reflect adequately or strongly enough the vocations of lay people, who offer ministry in the church and in the world, nor did it reflect understandings of the three streams of paid, accountable ministry in the United Church.

The United Church has long held the principles of two ancient understandings of ministry: one locates the gifts of the Spirit within the community and imagines a communal manifestation of Christ’s ministry, offered as “parts of the One Body”; the other acknowledges the personal charism for ministry as a gift of the Spirit to Christ’s church and calls upon those endowed with this gift to offer themselves to the ordered leadership of the church and stewardship of apostolic faith. In the first model, we speak of the ministry of the Baptised being shared by the whole people of God; in the second model, we take care to discern, call, equip, support and hold accountable the people gifted and willing to serve the church as its ordered ministers.

This statement recognizes the compatibility and the tensions between these co-existing models of ministry and proposes that the imperative of this time is to attend to their co-existence in ways that mitigate obstacles to the vitality of communities of faith, respects and supports those whom the church calls into paid accountable service, and encourages hybrid and collaborative models of ministry leadership and communal life.

Though the church has not always acknowledged professional and vocational callings of lay people as expressions of faith, this is by far the way the majority of Christians participate in, and respond to, God’s love in and for the world. When the church overlooks actions of faith in

everyday life as ministry, including in people's professional and vocational lives, the church's own activities take on disproportionate importance. Many people, when asked by the church about their own ministry, will immediately think only of their service to the church on a board or committee. A doctor will say, "I serve on the Ministry and Personnel Committee" and a daycare provider will say, "I volunteer in the church nursery." In some ways, this indicates the way the church has often obscured the primacy of their callings in the world with its own activity.

In what follows we take seriously

- a) the coexistence of models of ministry and leadership in our church as a gift and path forward, and
- b) The service/discipleship in which baptized Christians and others participate in their daily life as the central concern of the church's ministries.

The objective is to make recommendations for models of ministry which support the continued nurture and growth of vocations of love in the world and strengthen the communities of faith which inspire them.

A) Introduction: Animated by Love

In the letter to the Ephesians, the author writes about Christian faith and ministry as God's "handiwork" (*poiema*) [Eph 2:10]. Coincidentally, this word in Greek shares the same root as "poetry." We begin a statement on ministry with the image of human life as the poetry of God because this accurately reflects the various creative ways human beings live as instruments of God's loving, healing and creative purposes in the world. In this statement, ministry can be understood as the poetry of God; it reflects various expressions of faith as they are lived out in the world and in the church, individually and collectively. As "words within the Word⁴," or faith put into action in love of neighbour, these forms of ministry have in common the manifestations of the Spirit at work, tending the world in ways "infinitely greater than we could ask or imagine." [Eph 2:14]. Animated by love, the whole of God's human communion creates the poetic movement we refer to here as "ministry" in and for the world.

The Spirit's compassion, healing, justice and love flows through every generation, calling forth life from the grip of all that threatens and thwarts its flourishing. A quarter of a century into the new millennium, this call echoes calls to end racial violence, gendered discrimination, war, systemic poverty, and ecological disaster. These are not "issues of our day;" they are the realities we share as members of the human community. Each of these crises directly affects people and communities in The United Church of Canada: urban migration has shrunk rural church populations; ecological disasters have destroyed whole communities; the global pandemic changed our patterns of social connection and participation; and the rise of violent intolerance and racism cut across all communities with increasing intensity. By grace, we are learning ways of seeing and acting that keep the whole of life in view, present and future, across the widest reaches of the web of interconnected and interdependent life on the planet.

⁴ Marty Haugen, *Let Us Build a House* (All are Welcome), *More Voices #1*, French translation by David Fines.

We are learning ways of relating to one another that are not about power and privilege but about equal regard and well-being.

In the context of these realities, God animates our everyday lives. At every moment, our individual occupations, professions and vocations, and the vocation of the church itself, are gathered into a creative and interconnected gesture of divine love for the world. A statement on ministry is at its heart a statement about how the church participates in the Spirit-led work of love in our time, including through inspiring discipleship in community.

This statement

- g) defines ministry broadly as participation in God's creative purposes
- h) centres on the call of the baptized into ministries of love and service
- i) reframes the focus of ministry from the individual to the communal
- j) considers the shape of communities which support these ministries
- k) names implications for ordered and lay leadership of such communities
- l) makes recommendations for policy and practice

B) Vocations of Love: Baptismal Ministry of All



We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian
ministry.

...

To embody God's love in the world,
the work of the church requires the ministry and
discipleship
of all believers.

A Song of Faith

The Spirit calls the community as a whole, giving each and all a vocation to participate in the love of God in and for the world. Within community, we find and co-create together pathways to live our calls in ways that embody faith. The primary and foundational call of God to us is to be in community and thus to discern in what ways we offer ourselves as community in service to the world. Within community, each should be nurtured, supported, and even challenged in living out specific vocations and lives of faith. As *A Song of Faith* reminds us, "To embody God's love in the world, the work of the

church requires the ministry and discipleship of all believers." The ministry of the whole people of God, the priesthood of all believers, is the foundational ministry of the church.

By virtue of baptism, Christians are called into a life of discipleship, of discerning and sharing their gifts, simultaneously in the world and within the church, for the sake of God's beloved creation. This is the foundational vocation of all Christians; how this vocation is expressed and how the church recognizes it varies over time and from community to community. All people, through baptism, have ministries they exercise within the church and the world. In the United Church, we often refer to this idea as "the priesthood of all believers" or as the "ministry of the whole people of God."

For some people, vocational life, that is a life of faith lived out, is intertwined with paid employment, in a variety of fields of work. For others, vocational life is intertwined with volunteer, community, church, and other institutional and organizational commitments. Vocation is our lived response to God's gifts given to us to exercise for the good of the world/for the sake of the world. Vocation is exercised throughout our lives, and while the forms and functions of our vocational life may change and grow organically over time, at its heart vocation is our discerned response to the gifts God has given to us and therefore the claims God has put on our lives.

Teaching and forming lives of faith is a primary responsibility of the church. Not for its own sake in terms of maintaining the institution, but for the sake of supporting faithful peoples and communities in responding to God's call. In saying this, we stand well within United Church tradition, as we see reflected in this quotation from the 1980 Project Ministry report, highlighted in the 1994 Theology of Call report: "*A primary responsibility of the community', said the authors of The Report on Project Ministry (1980), 'is sensing, identifying, testing,*

confirming and supporting the various assignments and services to which the Spirit calls the community as a whole, and its many members.” (p. 12, Theology of Call)

We affirm that the church’s life and work prepares people for our lives in the world, as “Christ’s presence in the world.” (*A Song of Faith*) As people animated by God’s love, we are baptized into Christ’s own communion with the world. This deep connection to one another and to the world in love, service, compassion and justice-seeking is a reflection of the nature of God and is what we mean by Christian ministry. It is the primary ministry for which the church must prepare people through its vocation of worship and prayer, community, faith sharing and proclamation.

C) Ministries of the Community: Divine Interdependence

In a church that has been predominantly, although not solely, formed through a western neo-liberal perspective that prizes individualism, claiming community as foundational for ministry can be counter-cultural. The Trinity offers us a metaphor for thinking about ministry, one that is communal and relational in nature. The community of the persons of the Trinity models for us the importance of faith born in community and lived in community. The three persons of the Trinity relate to one another equally; each person of the Trinity holds different functions (in an “economic” understanding of the Trinity) and each of the three is necessary to the whole. While each person of the Trinity is distinct and necessary, none of the persons are sufficient unto themselves. Catholic feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson conceives of the Trinity as a triple helix, expanding on the double helix image of DNA, the very matter of life on earth⁵. In keeping with an embodied metaphor, ministry can be understood as an ecosystem.

In this understanding of the Trinity, we can also understand the varied ministries of the church, lived out in the world beloved by God. The various ministries of the church, and those who take on ministries of and for the church, are each distinct and necessary; none are sufficient unto themselves. Ideally, these ministries relate to one another equally. The ministries of the laity, offered in the world, as members of the body of Christ, are vital; the ministries of the laity offered within the church, for the sake of the church (for “good order” and for our continued foundational commitment to our conciliar model), are vital; the ministries of the order of ministry (those discerned, challenged, nurtured, and called by the church to respond to the needs of the denominational church), are vital. All of these persons and ministries form an ecosystem of ministry that constitutes the church and enables the church to participate in the *missio Dei* (purposes of God), the church’s call to witness to the love of God in creation, for God’s good creation.

Ministry is born, nurtured, challenged, sustained, discerned in and by communities of faith: local, regional, national. These communities of faith are animated by love: love of God and love of neighbour, including the Earth. Ministry is necessarily and profoundly communal in nature and in orientation. As John Wesley wrote and was affirmed in the United Church’s 1994

⁵ Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. St. Louis: Herder-Crossroads 1992, p222.

document, “Theology of Call”, the church is a community of persons “called by the gospel, grafted into Christ through baptism, animated by love, united by all kinds of fellowship, and disciplined.”⁶

Re-locating the locus of faith and vocation to community and a communal orientation, rather than solely residing in individuals, is another step in living into intercultural and decolonizing commitments. The role of community in calling forth and supporting the gifts of persons is one that is foundational to Indigenous worldviews and practices; this also resonates in other cultures, all of whom are present within the United Church. This re-focusing also reconnects us to Pauline metaphors of the church as the body of Christ, where all parts, all members, are equally important and necessary to the body. Our conciliar model of governance continues to reflect this theological and scriptural foundation. This model places authority, governance, and polity within community and affirms that “listening for God’s Spirit can happen most trustworthily when the membership is gathered prayerfully in council.”⁷

The Indigenous Church, in the “Calls of the Caretakers” which was received by the 43rd General Council in 2018, notes the centrality of community in ministry:

“We, the Indigenous ministries and communities of faith of The United Church of Canada, declare that we will tell our own story of what ministry means for us. We will decide for ourselves who we are, who constitutes our ministries groups and practices. Colonialism took community control away from us and placed it in a colonial centre of authority. Recovery from colonialism is our path moving forward.” (p. 1-2)

“We have faith that the Spirit of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of creation, and the love of God will move us forward on the road of true reconciliation so that we can know ‘the beloved community’ of ‘All Our Relations.’” (p. 3)

The work of decolonization in church and society is inseparable from a *metanoia* (radical re-orientation) – a transformation in self-understanding. Christianity offers a path from individualism to communion through the affirmation of our being made in the likeness of a community: a divine Trinity.

⁶ John Wesley, *The New Testament with Explanatory Notes* in United Church of Canada “Theology of Call” 1994, p 14

⁷ United Church of Canada “Theology of Call” 1994, p 14


D) Co-operative Ministries: No one thrives alone

The Trinitarian or braided triple helix metaphor reminds us of a divinely choreographed interdependence which the apostle Paul described as parts of a Body.

For decades, communities of faith strived to be independent and self-sufficient. This is no longer possible or desirable. This does not mean the end of communities of faith; on the contrary, conceiving of the body as a much bigger, more amorphous entity with shared leadership, frees the church to strengthen ministry as a whole. Just like chaplaincies, campus ministries, youth ministries, and emerging forms of Christian communities, communities of faith, must be understood as **parts** of a body rather than the body itself.

Co-operative ministry is a model of ministry in which the clergy and lay people of one or more communities of faith are working together, as Christian ministers, each in their own right, being mutually supportive and accountable and committed to God's purposes in the world. For communities of faith to thrive there must be collaboration between clergy and lay people, among communities of faith, and between communities of faith and their neighbourhood. It is a way of relating and working together in the life of the church that understands ministry to be governed by:

- A deeply held belief that by virtue of their baptism all Christians share in Christ's ministry for the world.
- A recognition and acknowledgement that there are a diversity of gifts and vocations within the body of Christ which need to be discerned, nurtured and supported so that all may fulfill their calling.
- A belief that the church is reflecting the nature of God and Christ's example only when living and working together in an inclusive community; recognizing their interdependence with each other and the world, and striving to be a just living and justice seeking community.
- An approach to the role of ordered ministry as midwifery to the birth of the giftedness already present in the baptized.



We ask ourselves what parts of the whole need to be present for the ministry of the church to thrive. We begin not with “who” or “how,” but with “what.” The core ministries of the church are sharing, nurturing and practicing the faith in order for Christ's life to be animated through lives of love in the world.

Within this wide ecosystem of collaboration, we ask ourselves what parts of the whole need to be present for the ministry of the church to thrive. We begin not with “who” or “how,” but with “what.” The core ministries of the church are sharing, nurturing and practicing the faith in order for Christ's life to be animated through lives of love in the world. How we do that and who is involved changes over time and from place to place but in every manifestation of the body, where the core ministries of sharing, nurturing, and practicing the faith are taking place, there will be, in some form:

- a) a community of people supporting one another in living and growing in faith (*koinonia*)
- b) facilitated time and place of public worship and prayer (*liturgia*)
- c) facilitated sharing and learning the faith (*kerygma, didache*)
- d) facilitated spiritual practices of service (community, justice, healing) and hospitality (*diakonia*)

Keeping this holistic and inter-dependent image in view means that models of ministry that are struggling to be self-sufficient can give way to cooperative models that enable ministry to take place. Whether connected geographically or virtually, manifestations of the body, collectively animating Christ's ministry in the world through human communities, become hubs of sharing, nurturing and practicing faith. This means that one-minister-per-congregation is neither the norm nor the goal. Rather, a community of ministers (baptized, clergy and lay) nurturing and practicing faith together is the goal.

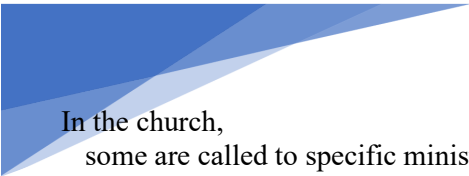
E) Ministries of Leadership Within the Church: Lay & Ordered

We have articulated the core ministries of the church for our time by speaking of The United Church as a "Christian evangelical, ecumenical, and missional community rooted in a particular locale focussing on deep spirituality, daring justice and bold discipleship."⁸ With this as the purpose (the "what" of ministry), "who" and "how" follows.

Broadly speaking, the "who" will be both paid and volunteer, working together; they will be ordered and lay, working together. Their training, support, authorization and accountability will vary, but in every case will serve the good of the whole.

"How" these ministers will work varies from situation to situation but in every instance, ministry is intended to be offered *in community* and *as community*. The church is a communion created by Christ; within that communion, the church has "offices", which are filled by both lay and ordered, "for worship, teaching, administration, and government" (Basis of Union). Therefore, it is on behalf of, and grounded in, community, that we offer ministry.

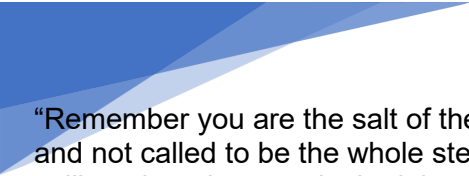
Ministries which serve the life and work of the church are often given "offices" of responsibility and accountability. These offices, for which lay and ordered ministers are "set apart" for service, demand varying levels of commitment.



In the church,
some are called to specific ministries of leadership,
both lay and ordered;
some witness to the good news;
some uphold the art of worship;
some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;
some build up the community of wisdom;
some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.

- A Song of Faith

⁸ United Church of Canada General Council 43, "Becoming Beloved Community 2022-2025" 2021. p 5



“Remember you are the salt of the earth—and not called to be the whole stew! Your calling, then, is to equip the laity to bring distinctive flavour to their several worlds, and to ensure the voice of the United Church is raised effectively in the public square on issues critical to the common good.”

- Rt Rev. Dr. Lois Wilson presenting an honorary degree at Emmanuel's 2019 Convocation (Emmanuel College e-newsletter, September 16, 2024)

Lay ministries are served in one or more short terms, with freedom to move in and out of offices of service, expressing their faith in deeds and actions within and beyond the community of the church. Ordered ministry, which includes both diaconal and ordained, is more restrictive than lay ministries as ordered ministers pledge to a lifelong office and share not only their own faith with the church and world but are required to carry and share the faith of the church itself. Ordered ministers are “set apart” on behalf of the **denomination**, to carry relationship with the denomination to communities of faith. This uniqueness is not by virtue of role or

responsibility or stream of ministry but by the relationship with the wider denomination, including accountability. This is reflected in the reality that ordered ministers and designated lay ministers in appointments are accountable to the Office of Vocation, the denominational structure, rather than to a local or even regional expression of the church. It is also reflected in the understanding that ordered ministers are officers of the church by virtue of their ordering rather than by a particular function or ministry that they carry out.

Both lay and ordered ministers may have a vocation in the world which aligns with their sense of discipleship. A lay person serving a ministry on a church board or as a licensed worship leader may be a professor at the local university or a daycare provider in the neighbourhood. Likewise, the ordered minister may be a registered and practicing therapist or a religious studies instructor. Sometimes a life of faith and service takes more than one expression at the same time (bi-vocational ministry). As bi-vocational, lay and ordered ministers experience coherence in the fulsome expression of their faith and service, though only one of those vocations may be accountable to the church.

F) Recommendations:

A move to embrace more fully a model of ministry inspired by divine interdependence will require attention to certain practices and ways of thinking. These are by no means new but are brought into focus again here. Implied in the statement above are recommended directions, priorities, and areas for the church as a whole to attend to with renewed commitment.

Regarding the ministry of the whole people of God

- 1) As the primary sphere of the church's ministry in the world, focus attention on nurturing and supporting people's lives of faith
- 2) Bring the faith expressed in secular professions and vocations from the margins to the centre of the community of faith

Regarding models of ministry inspired by divine inter-dependence

- 1) Work from an image of the desired whole, not from a collection of the surviving parts
- 2) Call and equip people for cooperative models of ministry
- 3) Free governance at the local level for maximizing cooperation, teaming, novelty and creativity
- 4) Focus governance at the regional level on resourcing, support and oversight
- 5) Focus governance at the denominational level on enabling and safe-guarding policy development, standards and accountability
- 6) Develop accessible forum for exchange of experience and resource sharing

Regarding lay and ordered ministry within the church

- 1) Clarify means of support for all roles in ministry (see appendix)
- 2) Build mentorship into all roles in ministry
- 3) Clarify lines of accountability for all roles in ministry (see appendix)
- 4) Ensure means of teaming for all roles in ministry
- 5) Ensure that the pathway to ordered ministry takes into account flexibility to maintain second profession/occupation.

Conclusion: Animating Ministries of Love for our Time

The purpose of this statement is to affirm the church's participation in the poetry of God: a ministry animated by love in and for the world, and to recommend where policies may aid its flourishing.

The language and notion of ministry flows freely through the church: a term of service on a board or committee is ministry, the Go-Project is ministry, the General Council's work is ministry, the Moderator is a minister, the music director is a minister, the field education student is a minister, the youth are ministers, ministry personnel, campus ministry, forest ministry, Christian ministry, Christ's ministry, the church's ministry. A great constellation of Spirit-led activity, personal faith, global community, professional accountability, and Christian tradition circles around our understanding of ministry in the church.

A gift from the Spirit, this broad understanding of generative and shared ministry graces our church. Forgiven for the hurt and confusion provoked by multiple coexisting models of ministry, we are invited to step into the Spirit's gift for our time: a creative, collective, holistic and inter-dependent understanding of ministry. In whatever shape or size, the purpose of this ministry is to nurture, practice and support the faith in which people of The United Church of Canada are engaged as instruments of God's "handiwork" of love in the world.

Appendix: In every role, it is necessary to be equipped and to be in relationships of support and accountability.

SELF-OFFERING IN MINISTRY	FOR EXAMPLE	EQUIPPED THROUGH	SUPPORTED BY	TEAM (ONE OR MORE OF)	ACCOUNTABLE TO	COMPENSATED BY
faith expressed in the world	care-giver, teacher, social worker, coach, parent, artist, activist	faith shared and nurtured in community of faith	community of faith	N/A	N/A	N/A
service through the church in the world	community ministry	diaconal training, experience in social services	global diaconal community, diaconal peers	volunteer and staff teams	community and individuals served, employer, association or accrediting body	employer salary
	chaplaincy	chaplaincy certification	mentors	staff teams		
	theological education	the academy	academic association	faculty		
	spiritual direction	professional training and qualification	professional association	peers/associates		
service to church unpaid (local and institutional)	community outreach, committees and boards, music, church school, pastoral care, worship team, Regional and General Council boards and committees	experience, orientation	chair, team lead, paid accountable minister, pastoral charge supervisor	lay leaders, lay ministers, ordered ministers, ecumenical partners, staff of neighbouring agencies	community served, team	N/A
service to church occupational/paid (local)	leadership in community of faith (with or without ordered minister), music ministry, specialization	Lay Licensed Worship Leadership credential, Pastoral Care training, professional training or education	Ministry and Personnel Committee, Pastoral Charge Supervisor, mentors, elders	lay leaders, lay ministers, ordered ministers, ecumenical partners, staff of neighbouring agencies	community served, employer	employer (salaried or stipendiary)
service to church professional/paid	ordered minister	candidacy and testamur	Ministry and Personnel Committee, Pastoral Charge Supervisor, mentors, elders	lay leaders, lay ministers, ordered ministers, ecumenical partners, staff of neighbouring agencies	community served, employer, denomination through ethical standards of practice	employer at denominationally determined salary
service to and for church professional/paid (local, regional or denominational)	First Third (children, youth and young adult) ministry, justice ministries, advocacy and animation, stewardship Executive ministry, Pastoral Relations, administration, facilitation, archives, Regional/GCO employment	experience, training, professional/occupational credentialling and experience	staff lead, committee, council, chair	staff and volunteer team, working group, committee	General Council, direct report through HR policy	employer through human resources policy standards

Appendix V

GS 132 FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada has been asked, along with the Anglican Church of Canada and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, to contribute to the capital fund for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Senior leadership of the three churches are proposing a joint contribution.

2. Why is this issue important?

The NCTR was established in 2015 to be the permanent home of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's records, to continue documenting the stories of survivors and of residential institutions, to be a centre of the educational efforts that are key to reconciliation, and to be a place of healing for Survivors and their families. In addition to archival holdings and an extensive oral history collection, the NCTR is home to the Bentwood Box which travelled the country with the TRC Commissioners gathering expressions of reconciliation (including the United Church's "broken chalice") and the ongoing National Student Memorial Register, naming children known to have died in residential institutions. We continue to share our records with the NCTR, including records from other colonizing institutions (not previously collected by the TRC), which we began digitizing in late 2021.

The NCTR has physically outgrown its current space on the grounds of the University of Manitoba (Treaty One Territory) and is planning for a new permanent home for these records and to provide space for its work. In November 2022, the Government of Canada invested \$60 million for this initiative, and the NCTR has since initiated a capital campaign for the remaining \$40 million. After an initial \$5 million investment from the Winnipeg Foundation, the NCTR began meeting with other potential donors, including our three churches.

The Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches have a long history of working together on issues related to the settlement agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We collaborate on many other issues and are now about to embark upon shared office space, bringing a new dimension of collaboration to our relationship. When each of the churches were approached by the NCTR in the summer of 2024 to explore how we might contribute to the capital campaign, senior leadership agreed that this should be another such collaborative effort.

The General Secretary proposes that the United Church contribute from its reserves to this effort. The other denominations will make their own contributions and the collective total amount would be publicly attributed to "The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and The United Church of Canada."

This proposal is rooted in the principles of reconciliation, Indigenous data sovereignty, and ecumenism: in the framework of the Lund principle, that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.

To not respond to this request in this manner would be to dishonour these principles to which we have so often and so publicly pledged. More specifically, to not respond to the call to build a proper home for Indigenous stewardship of materials related to the TRC helps open the door further denialism of residential institutions, which the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites calls on us to resist.

Support for the NCTR capital campaign would not in any way reduce the United Church General and Regional Council Archives' continuing commitment to fully and directly sharing records with survivors and communities.

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

The Executive of the General Council might:

- **direct the General Secretary to identify up to \$500,000.00 from the United Church reserves to add to a collaborative donation to the NCTR from the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches**
- **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.**

Appendix VI

GS 134 UPDATED APOLOGY FOR UNITED CHURCH PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada, as an operator of residential institutions, is being asked to issue an updated apology for its role and the actions of its employees in that system. Calls for an updated apology have come from a survivor/United Church settler group in Port Alberni; Pacific Mountain Regional Council; and in the Final Report of the Special Interlocutor for Missing and Disappeared Children and Unmarked Burials.

2. Why is this issue important?

In the summer of 2021, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation was the first among a number of Indigenous communities to share information that it had located unmarked and undocumented burial sites on the property of former residential institutions. This was not “news” to these communities; it had been known and spoken of for years, and it factored significantly into the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Findings continue to be shared, including from United Church run institutions in Port Alberni BC and Coqualeetza BC.

In the summer of 2024, *?Aps Ciik Cha Chim Hiy Ap (Road to Reconciliation)*, a group of survivors and United Church members affiliated with Courageous Community at Alberni Valley United Church provided suggested text for an updated United Church of Canada apology, including a full and specific explanation of the harms perpetrated against the children. Pacific Mountain Regional Council has also submitted a General Council 45 proposal for a revised, more specific apology.⁹

In September 2024, the Special Interlocutor reached the end of her mandate and released a final report identifying “the legal, moral, and ethical obligations that Canada must fulfill to address the legislative and structural gaps that exist in identifying, protecting, and commemorating missing and disappeared children and their burials.”¹⁰ One of the 42 obligations calls for renewed apologies:

⁹ PMRC proposal:

(1) the General Council of The United Church of Canada undertake an appropriate process to update the 1986 and 1998 Apologies in light of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation discoveries and subsequent similar discoveries at other locations. The update is to include an acknowledgement of the babies and children who died and were denied proper funeral ceremonies, incinerated, and never returned home to their communities and families.

(2) The General Council of The United Church of Canada in partnership with the Autonomous Indigenous Organization design, communicate, and implement a coordinated Truth and Reconciliation ministry plan for Communities of Faith and Regions to be presented to The General Council in 2028.

¹⁰ <https://osi-bis.ca/news-post/independent-special-interlocutor-final-report/>

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments, churches, the RCMP, universities, and any other organizations that supported and/or operated Indian Residential Schools and associated institutions must apologize for the multiple harms they committed against the missing and disappeared Indigenous children, their families, and communities. For these apologies to meet the criteria of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, they must:

- *Establish a full and accurate public record of the historical injustices and ongoing harms of genocide, colonization, and mass human rights violations; and*
- *Commit to further substantive material and symbolic reparations and actions in accordance with international human rights law.*

Through the 1986 Apology, the 1998 Apology, and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), the United Church has taken a measure of responsibility for its role in colonization and in operating residential institutions. Both the 1986 and 1998 Apologies promised a future “living out,” and while they have been acknowledged, they have not been accepted. The Settlement Agreement obligations acknowledged harms, but within a traumatic framework. None of the responses reflect the deeper knowledge that has been unflinchingly placed before us by communities and the Special Interlocutor.

In 2021, former Moderator Richard Bott referenced the church’s responsibility to help bring missing children “the honour we denied them in life.” Both the *?Aps Ciik Cha Chim Hiy Ap (Road to Reconciliation)* group and the Special Interlocutor have made clear that time is passing. Survivors of residential institutions are aging, and dying. There is not a lot of time left to give them the full apology that they and all the children deserve.

The General Secretary would like to propose that General Council 45 undertake an updated apology process. An updated apology must be honest, direct, and trauma-informed. It must be national in scope, as the United Church operated residential and day institutions across Canada. For these reasons, the proposal should be for a process that is trauma-informed, collaborative across the breadth of the Indigenous church and with the regions, respectful of nation-to-nation relationships with caretaker communities, and rooted in a theology of care and reparative justice.

An updated apology is an act of restorative justice for those whom we as an institution have harmed. It is also rooted in the United Church’s “duty of care” theology, our commitment to reconciliation, and our growing focus on reparative justice as outlined in the strategic plan.

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

The Executive of the General Council could:

- **Recommend to the 45th General Council that an updated apology be developed to be offered to the Indigenous communities and that the text of the apology and an animation plan be brought to the Annual meeting of the 45th General Council in October of 2026. Further, the process of developing the apology should be trauma-informed, collaborative across the breadth of the Indigenous church and with the regions, respectful of nation-to-nation relationships with caretaker communities, and rooted in a theology of care and reparative justice.**

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

The United Church has never apologized for its role in day and other colonizing institutions, such as hospitals. Nor has it spoken in depth about spiritual violence against Indigenous people not only in these institutions but more generally in the process of evangelism and ministry on reserve. Any new apology should also speak into these other institutions and the issue of spiritual violence.

5. Is this proposal in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal / motion numbers.

Additional materials may be appended.

Appendix VII

GS 139 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA 2025

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year 2025. The Presbyterian Church in Canada was instrumental in the formation of The United Church of Canada. The United Church has a long-standing ecumenical relationship with the Presbyterians. Acknowledging this milestone in the life of the Presbyterian Church is a way of honouring our shared history and lifting up our continuing relationship.

2. Why is this important?

This is the centennial year for the United Church and as we celebrate this anniversary, it is helpful to acknowledge our history. In 2026 the national office of the Presbyterian Church, along with the Anglicans, will be sharing office space with us. In 2015 on the 90th anniversary of the United Church, the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church made a formal motion to acknowledge the United Church's 90th anniversary. The then Moderator of the church visited the General Council Office to bring greetings on behalf of the Assembly.

The United Church and the Presbyterian Church work together through our membership in the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Truth and Reconciliation processes and through ecumenical shared ministries. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the sibling relationship.

3. How might the Executive of the General Council respond?

The General Secretary proposes that the Executive of the 44th General Council:

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

4. What would be the impact?

This is an opportunity to honour our history as well as deepen our friendship and collaboration.

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

The church lives out its commitment to interculturalism as we build strength across our differences.

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

N/A

Appendix VIII

GS 142 APOLOGY 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES BY THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

At the 42nd General Council, the church approved support for a national process of a Living Apology installation project for dialogue, storytelling, education, and reconciliation with persons who identify as sexual or gender diverse including but not limited to Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer persons. [The Iridesce: The Living Apology Project](#) launched in 2017 was a collaboration between the General Council Office (GCO) and Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (AU/SE).

Over three years, the project gathered stories from across the United Church and submitted its final report to the General Secretary in July 2020. Upon review of the report, it was recommended that the General Council Office (GCO) form a working group to recommend follow-up actions to the General Council Executive. The working group concluded and submitted formal recommendations for follow-up on the [Iridesce Project in February 2023](#). The Executive received the report in May of 2023 ([GS 33](#)), and acted on the recommendation to craft and offer an apology to 2S and LGBTQIA+ communities.

2. Why is it important?

In November 2023, an apology task group was appointed to draft an intentional living apology that moves beyond a statement to explicit action. Recognizing the need for apologies to be lived into with action, the apology task group has developed a statement in response to the findings of Iridesce: The Living Apology Project and the 2011 National LGBT Consultation, for which review by the GCE is requested.

Over the past decade the Church has engaged in intentional listening processes to better understand the experiences of 2S & LGBTQIA+ people within The United Church of Canada. We have engaged in prayer, reflection, art, listening, community building, and more through a National GLBTT Consultation (2011) and Iridesce: The Living Apology Project (2017-2019) and the Living Apology into Action working group (2023). We are grateful for each story that has been shared and hold with sadness the large reality that there are still many stories of harm left untold.

The Apology Task Group developed the first draft of the statement in June 2024. Through Regional Council Executives, the Task Group invited initial feedback to the zero draft in an online survey and a total of 34 responses were received.

In January 2025, a public town hall meeting was held, during which the Task Group presented the draft of the Apology. The Town Hall was attended by 96 people. The Task Group provided

an update on the Apology development and welcomed insight into what needs more attention. Participants also spent some time in small groups brainstorming ways that the church could invite Communities of Faith across the country to live into the apology.

The Apology to Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities by The United Church of Canada is a covenant of solidarity, justice, and faithfulness. Through its adoption and implementation, the United Church of Canada will embody its commitment to being an inclusive and affirming faith community, ensuring that past wrongs are acknowledged, relationships are restored, and the Church continues to stand boldly for the dignity and rights of all people.

This apology creates an opportunity to learn, remember, and uplift the stories of 2S & LGBTQIA+ justice work within the history of The United Church of Canada: the stories of challenges, heartbreak, and oppression and the stories of solidarity, healing, and celebration.

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

The General Secretary proposes that the General Council Executive:

- a. receive and approves the text of the Apology (Appendix 1)**
- b. receive the Pastoral Letter – GS142a – for information**
- c. direct 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. direct the General Secretary to develop a plan to share and animate the apology, to communities of faith, regional councils and partner groups.**

4. What will be the impact

An apology would serve as a critical step in healing the wounds caused by historical and ongoing discrimination. It would recognize the lived experiences of those harmed by Church policies and theological stances, fostering a renewed relationship built on trust, humility, and accountability. By formally apologizing, the United Church would reaffirm its commitment to radical hospitality and full inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in all aspects of Church life, including leadership, worship, and governance. This would strengthen the Church's witness to justice and love in action.

An apology would necessitate tangible commitments, such as revising policies, providing reparative supports, and ensuring 2SLGBTQIA+ voices are centered in decision-making. This accountability would help dismantle systemic barriers and foster a Church culture where equity is actively pursued.

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

The proposal helps the Church live into its commitments on equity by acknowledging past harm: It explicitly recognizes and apologizes for the homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia experienced by 2S & LGBTQIA+ individuals within the church. It includes a commitment to upholding and fulfilling the recommendations of the ["Living Apology into Action"](#) statement. By offering the apology and committing to action, the Church hopes to promote healing from past harms and foster reconciliation with the 2S & LGBTQIA+ community. The ultimate goal is to create a church that is a place of sanctuary and belonging for all people, where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued.

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

The apology task group members are Rev. Michiko Bown-Kai (acting Chair), Rev. Aaron Miechkota, Christine Dolson, Rev. Frederick Monteith and Rev. Tricia Gerhard. The task group acknowledges the insights and contributions of Steven Shales to the initial process of drafting the apology statement, particularly regarding 2-Spirit peoples.

The 43rd General Council (July 2018) approved GCE13 which called for an apology to the 2S and LGBTQI communities.

Please consult the following resources to learn more about the different projects and consultations which have helped shape the apology.

1. [GLBTT Consultation Report](#) (pages 93-105).
2. [Iridesce: Living Apology Project](#)
3. ["Living Apology into Action," Iridesce Working Group to the General Secretary of the UCC in February of 2023.](#)
4. [A Timeline of 2S & LGBTQIA+ history in The United Church of Canada](#)

APPENDIX 1

Apology to 2S & LGBTQIA+ People and Communities

Draft: February 12, 2025

Key summary: Recognizing the need for apologies to be lived into with action, The United Church of Canada offers the following statement in response to the findings of Iridesce: The Living Apology Project and the 2011 National LGBT Consultation.

*God tends the universe,
mending the broken and reconciling the estranged.
God enlivens the universe,
guiding all things toward harmony with their Source.*

*The church has not always lived up to its vision.
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,
helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition,
challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement,
for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.
-A Song of Faith*

To all 2S & LGBTQIA+ individuals who currently are or have previously been connected with The United Church of Canada,

We, The United Church of Canada, express our deepest apologies to all those who have experienced homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia within The United Church of Canada. This has at times looked like overt actions such as: loss of income, harassment, being denied access to church leadership, and threats to personal safety. The church should be a place of sanctuary and belonging for all people. You deserved a church that reflected God's unconditional and abiding love.

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia has also been present in the times when we remained silent or ignorant instead of actively ensuring policies of inclusion and welcome were being lived out in communities of faith, conferences, presbyteries, regions, other forms of ministry, and at the national level of the church. We recognize that 2S & LGBTQIA+ members of The United Church of Canada have experienced feelings of abandonment when feeling unsafe or unable to access support and care navigating homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic church environments.

We lament the ways in which the church has failed you, and that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia has hurt not only individuals, but loved ones as well, including friends, families, and fellow siblings in Christ. The cost of 2S & LGBTQIA+ oppression in our churches is not just personal; having harmed, excluded, and denied 2S & LGBTQIA+ people, it has been to the detriment of the church. We acknowledge that homophobia,

biphobia, and transphobia continue to impact people in the United Church today and we offer this apology with an awareness of both past and present harms and failings.

Moving forward, we recognize that change is required in the hearts and minds throughout The United Church of Canada and also through actions taken at an institutional level. We offer this apology with awareness of the many ways in which healing from homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia is needed within our church. We hope that you will receive this apology as only one part in a larger story of the work of the church and that you will turn to prayer, worship, and fellowship as you receive these

Pastoral Letter on Receiving the Apology

Dear Reader,

As the authors who were tasked with writing this apology, we have held the deep challenges and complexities of speaking on behalf of the church. We know that each of you carry your own stories and experiences; you have come to understand the United Church through relationships with communities of faith, clergy, staff, and fellow United Church members.

We recognize that each person has their unique needs when it comes to healing and that for some, this apology arrives too late and for others, this apology arrives ahead of healing actions by the church that have been longed for.

We offer this apology not because we're convinced, we have everything figured out but because we refuse to let fear keep us silent, nor do we wish for perfectionism to overtake the necessary task of publicly and explicitly addressing the legacy of 2SLGBTQIA+ oppression and discrimination in The United Church of Canada.

We hope that where the apology feels inadequate, that these further resources may provide more depth, nuance, and healing as you process this apology.

Sincerely,

The Apology Task Group:

Rev. Michiko Bown-Kai (acting Chair), Rev. Aaron Miechkota, Christine Dolson, Frederick Monteith and Rev. Tricia Gerhard
February 2025

Prayer

Theological Reflection/Prayer (Rev Michiko Bown-Kai)

- The church has not always lived up to it's vision
- creating/still creating - the church as the answer to God's ongoing call for justice and liberation - and how we need to continue living into any apology we make
- An apology for those to find words of confession/accountability, an apology for those who are in need of healing
- Different spiritual gifts for different places we are in our journeys: grace, righteous anger, courageous love, justice-seeking grief,
- Thank you for the voices who told their stories
- Reconciliation as seeking wholeness - the wholeness of the church requires the wholeness of each 2SLGBTQ+ person, In this sense, reconciliation is not only an invitation that is offered by God to all, but it is a calling to participate in God's mission.

Appendix IX

GS 127 Future of Fundraising in the Church

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

Mission & Service is a critical part of the identity and ethos of the United Church. In 2015 as part of the restructuring of the church, the Council approved (CR8 Funding the New Model) that Mission and Service was only to fund Ministry and Mission activities. The Philanthropy Unit of the General Council Offices is currently responsible for the fundraising activities for Mission and Service. Ensuring that we continue to have a robust mechanism for the engagement with the church and Canadians in raising funds for the ministry and mission of the church is essential. At the same time, The United Church of Canada Foundation as a separate entity, also has a mechanism for its fundraising. Because of the connection between the two entities, we have identified some significant overlaps.

As we seek to live into the structural changes approved in 2018, to be more efficient and nimble, we think there is an opportunity to eliminate duplication and maximize resources by having only one locus of fundraising and that being the Foundation. We are therefore recommending that the fundraising function be housed within The United Church of Canada Foundation. To be clear, this is the operational function only. Governance and decision-making will remain the purview of the General Council, its Executive and staff.

2. Why is this issue important?

The need to be as effective as possible in our fundraising mean that we should work to avoid duplication. Improving how fundraising is done is of particular importance to our ability to resource the church currently and in the future. We have a limited window to effect change given the demographics of most of our current membership. Consultation with donors has indicated that as long as the decision-making and branding related to Mission and Service remains with the General Council/General Council Executive, they are not concerned with which organization is actually doing the fundraising.

This is not a cost saving exercise, it is a different way to deploy resources to better achieve our goals. We spend very little on fundraising. The United Church of Canada tends to allocate 2% of its expenditures to fundraising. The most comparable organization, Salvation Army and World Vision, allocate between 6% and 10% of their expenditures to fundraising (separate from administration/management expenses). Transferring the Mission and Service fundraising function to the Foundation will decrease duplication of efforts thereby freeing up resources to be better allocated to frontline fundraising and engagement.

A negotiated agreement with the Foundation would need to ensure:

- a. That the connection to the denomination be fostered, not just through Mission and Service but through the entirety of the programs and support the General Council Office offers to Communities of Faith and through Regional Councils.
- b. Ensure connection and collaboration between the Church and the Foundation
- c. Provide the framework for comprehensive reporting both to and from the Foundation
- d. Ensure that strategies are in place to mitigate either organization pursuing goals other than those agreed upon

There are a number of ways to mitigate risk in pursuing this arrangement including a relationship and service agreement that clearly lays out expectations, reporting, collaboration and mechanisms to ensure alignment between the organizations. Further, creating a restricted fund in the Foundation with the sole purpose of supporting Mission and Service legally – not just morally or ethically – binds the Foundation to ensure donations it receives for Mission and Service are passed on to the Church for that purpose. Additionally, we expect that the bank account that congregations use – the largest source of Mission and Service revenues – would remain with the General Council Office’s account so that the majority of Mission and Service revenues still arrive at the General Council Office as they do currently.

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

The Executive of the General Council could:

- a. **Direct the General Secretary to begin negotiations and sign an agreement with the Board of The United Church of Canada Foundation to undertake the responsibility for fundraising for Mission and Service including special appeals for emergencies, etc.**

4. What will be the impact?

The impact of successful implementation will be increased focused and resources for engagement with Mission and Service

5. How does the proposal help us live into the commitment on Equity?

Like the church, the Foundation has made commitments to become an anti-racist organization; and like the church, the Foundation is committed to all matters related to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-oppression. One of the objectives in the Foundation’s current strategic plan is to embed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in all the Foundation’s work including all operations and governance. Further, a portion of this Objective relates to equity and diversity in fundraising approaches, strategy and tactics.

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

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

This proposal comes with the support of the Finance Advisory Committee and with the Joint Committee of the Church and Foundation, as well as the Board of the Foundation. See Appendix 1 (November GCE Backgrounder)

Appendix X**GS 128 AMMENDMENT TO SECTION B.7.3.1 - MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNING BODY- EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES****Origin: General Secretary, General Council****1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

Section B.7.3.1 of The Manual defines the criteria for membership on the governing body. Given the trend of declining membership in communities of faith, it has become necessary to broaden exceptions for individuals who do not typically meet the standard criteria. The Manual already acknowledges that non-full members may be elected in special circumstances. However, it is recommended that in the next reiteration of The Manual, non-full members receive prior permission from the regional council to access their wisdom about these types of appointments, in order to mitigate potential issues.

Currently, individuals in familial relationships with ministry personnel called or appointed to a pastoral charge are being elected to governing bodies, which, in certain instances, may contravene The United Church of Canada's Conflict of Interest Policy. While it is not encouraged to have family members of ministry personnel on the governing body, it is understood that this may be necessary in some limited circumstances. For this reason, The Manual should recognize these exceptional circumstances and ensure that such appointments are approved by the regional council, given the potential conflicts of interest that may arise.

These proposed changes are important to address these shortages and to mitigate risks that may arise from these situations.

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

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 approval of the regional council.

FYI: The *Conflict of Interest Policy* should 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.

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

N/A

Appendix XI

GCE 05 REVIEW OF THE ROLES OF MODERATOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY

Origin: Task Group to Review the Roles of Moderator and General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

The Executive of the General Council initiated a review of the Offices of Moderator and General Secretary. A final report is submitted to this meeting. Following are proposals arising from the work of the task group.

2. Why is this issue important?

Good organizational practice requires periodic reviews of these two significant offices, particularly given the changing context of the United Church and the strategic directions it has set.

The United Church is experiencing significant change while facing considerable constraints that test its viability and sustainability. With limited resources, all roles—especially those of the Moderator and General Secretary—must be utilized to their fullest to support the church at all levels, from local communities of faith and regional councils to the national expression at the General Council.

It is equally important that these roles be accountable to the church, both in practice and perception, and have measurable outcomes and performance metrics. Accountability to a job description and performance standards ensures that the Executive can fulfill its fiduciary responsibility to the members.

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

It is proposed that the Executive of the General Council:

- i) receive the final report of the Task Group to Review 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.**

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

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

5. Is this proposal in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal / motion numbers.

- Manual (2021) D.4
- 44th General Council Proposals:
 - [GCE 08 - Review of the Offices of Moderator and General Secretary \(2022-04-30-205\)](#)
 - [NIC 01 - Recommendation from the National Indigenous Council for the Task Group to Review the Roles of the Moderator and General Secretary](#)
- November 22-23, 2024, Executive of the General Council meeting:
 - [GCE 04 REVIEW OF THE ROLES OF MODERATOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY](#)
 - [TASK GROUP TO REVIEW THE ROLES OF MODERATOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY](#)

Appendix XII

GS 137 INCREASE loan to captive insurance entity

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

In July 2022, the 44th General Council approved the establishment of a captive self-insurance program as set out in sections 1 and 2, and the Appendix of proposal [WF 39: GCE07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model to Potentially Benefit all United Church Ministries](#); and authorized the General Secretary to implement the program.

In November 2022, the General Council Executive approved *GS 12 Funding The [Captive Insurance Model to Potentially Benefit ALL United Church Ministries](#)*. The proposal included two key decisions: 1) allocating \$3 million as seed funding in the form of a loan to the Captive Insurance entity via the Common Good Foundation, with the loan bearing interest at Prime Rate plus one percent per annum, and 2) authorizing the General Secretary to effect the requisite Letter of Credit.

The captive insurance model was approved in response to skyrocketing premiums, which added significant financial burden to United Church communities of faith. A risk factor that existed, and continues to exist, is the uncertainty around claims. In the initial financial modeling in 2022, two scenarios were presented: expected and catastrophic. In the catastrophic scenario modeling, it was projected that additional capitalization would be required if a catastrophic claim occurred within the first two years of the captive's operation. Unfortunately, this became a reality with the two fire claims in 2024, costing the captive insurance \$4 million.

The captive insurance entity has been operating for two years and has been delivering tangible savings to United Church communities of faith. In the first year of the Captive's operation, it was able to decrease the premium for congregations AND pay the interest of \$258,423. Table 1 summarizes the total premiums paid by congregations participating in the United Protect Program both before and after the establishment of the Captive Insurance Model. In the 2022/2023 renewal cycle, the captive insurance model delivered immediate savings of \$2 million, translating to less financial burden for the 960 congregations participating in the program. In the first year of operation, the loss ratio was within the expected range of 20%. As a result, the captive insurance was able to contain premium increases at a minimal level. However, two unexpected catastrophic fire claims occurred in the summer of 2024, each costing the captive insurance approximately \$2 million.

Table 1: Premium & Performance

Renewal Year	Total Premium	Total # of Policy	Loss Ratio
2021/2022 (prior to captive setup)	\$10.10 million	937	55%
2022/2023 (captive year 1)	\$ 8.10 million	960	20%
2023/2024 (captive year 2)	\$ 8.80 million	955	48%
2024/2025 (captive year 3)	\$ 9.60 million	944	n/a

The multiple catastrophic claims that occurred in 2024 have necessitated the recapitalization of an additional \$1 million to the captive to ensure the solvency reserve is above the insurance regulator's requirements. In the first year of the captive insurance operation, it built up retained earnings of \$1 million. However, the two catastrophic claims in 2024 wiped out all the retained earnings and brought it to a deficit of \$2.8 million.

The risk of multiple bad claim years was considered during the implementation plan, even though the probability of occurrence is low. The following is an excerpt from the Risk Management Evaluation in GCE 07 Implementation of a Captive Insurance Model to Potentially Benefit all United Church Ministries:

"Claims experience can be volatile and we should not enter into this without being prepared on a worst-case basis to recapitalize twice. However, adverse claims experience would cause any insurer within all structures to increase premiums, so the cost to congregations would increase in any case irrespective of insurer or insurance financing model."

2. Why is this issue important?

The captive insurance company is in its start-up stage, and building up financial strength is crucial to ensure its ability to deliver long-term savings and value to communities of faith. The catastrophic claims experienced in 2024 was unprecedented due to wildfires and other uncontrollable factors. The broader insurance industry experienced a similar trend in 2024. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), the 2024 total is nearly triple the total insured losses recorded in 2023 and twelve times the annual average of \$701 million in the decade between 2001 and 2010. Appendix 1 lists Canada's Top 10 Highest Insured Severe-Weather Loss Years on Record as broader context for the insurance industry.

The insurance industry is highly regulated, and regulators constantly monitor claim solvency reserves to ensure the financial health and viability of insurance companies. The two multi-million-dollar claims have driven UCC's captive insurance company's solvency reserve below the regulatory requirement, necessitating additional capital in the range of \$1 million to \$1.5 million to be added to the existing \$3 million loan. While alternatives are available, they are not recommended at this time. As discussed in the initial implementation analysis in 2022, the alternatives include: 1) increasing premiums at the next renewal dates, and 2) winding up the captive insurance and reverting to a standard insurance arrangement.

In the worst-case scenario where the captive insurance entity needs to be wound up, the loan won't be repaid and will essentially become an expense to the General Council Office. On the flip side, the financial resources are used to benefit and subsidize congregations' insurance premiums. The existence of the captive insurance entity offers the Church a tool to stabilize insurance premiums for congregations, but it comes with costs and risks, and normal claim experience is a crucial assumption. If the captive wasn't created and congregations had similar adverse claim records, the costs would translate to skyrocketing premium increases immediately.

The captive insurance company needs to be run professionally as an insurance business, and like all insurance companies, it is subject to regulatory scrutiny. The value the captive insurance offers to congregations includes minimal profit margins, allowing economic benefits to be passed on through lower premiums, and lower administrative costs achieved by streamlining processes and eliminating local brokers.

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

The General Secretary recommends

That the General Council Executive approve additional funding of up to \$1.5 million for the captive insurance company through a loan to the Common Good Foundation.

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

Transmitted with the Finance Advisory Committee's recommendation for approval. The Committee reiterates the message conveyed through [*GS 12 Funding The Captive Insurance Model to Potentially Benefit ALL United Church Ministries*](#), emphasizing the potential need for further capital investment in the event of extreme adverse claims experiences in future years of operating the captive insurance model.

The Committee acknowledges the significant financial savings that the captive insurance model has delivered to nearly 1,000 congregations through the initial investment of a \$3 million loan. While it is unfortunate that an additional loan is necessary due to unexpected adverse claim experiences in 2024, the captive model has proven to be an effective tool for the Church. It has helped mitigate skyrocketing premium increases, reduce financial burdens on congregations, and enhance overall financial sustainability. In the worst-case scenario, where adverse claim experiences continue and the loan cannot be repaid, the financial resources will still benefit the participating congregations. While the captive insurance model does pose claim risks beyond anyone's control, it would have been worse had the congregations used the traditional insurance model.

Last but not least, the Committee emphasized the initial remarks made in 2022 when approving the establishment of the captive model, in which the Committee and management stressed that the captive insurance needs to be operated as a traditional insurance in terms of premium setting and risk management. In particular, it cannot be operated on the basis of having GCO subsidies for unexpected adverse claims. Hence, the Committee reiterates that the alternative option of increasing premiums to recover the unexpected adverse experience should be examined at the next renewal date, or earlier if a proper mechanism is deemed feasible and economically viable.

APPENDIX 1 - CANADA'S TOP 10 HIGHEST INSURED SEVERE-WEATHER LOSS YEARS ON RECORD
(LOSS AND ADJUSTED EXPENSES IN 2023 DOLLARS)

APPENDIX 2 - GCE07 IMPLEMENTATION OF A CAPTIVE INSURANCE MODEL TO POTENTIALLY
BENEFIT ALL UNITED CHURCH MINISTRIES

APPENDIX 3 - GS 12 FUNDING THE CAPTIVE INSURANCE MODEL TO POTENTIALLY BENEFIT ALL
UNITED CHURCH MINISTRIES

Appendix 1 - Canada's Top 10 Highest Insured Severe-Weather Loss Years on Record (loss and adjusted expenses in 2023 dollars)

Rank	Year	Total loss (\$ billion)	Notable severe weather events
1	2024	8.55	Calgary hailstorm, Jasper wildfire, remnants of Hurricane Debby, Greater Toronto Area (GTA) floods
2	2016	6.20	Fort McMurray, Alberta, fire
3	2013	4.03	Alberta floods, Greater Toronto Area (GTA) floods, GTA ice storm
4	2022	3.61	Multiple events
5	2023	3.61	Nova Scotia floods, Okanagan and Shuswap, BC, area wildfires
6	1998	2.94	Quebec ice storm
7	2021	2.56	Calgary hailstorm, British Columbia floods
8	2020	2.52	Fort McMurray flood, Calgary hailstorm
9	2018	2.49	Multiple events: Ontario and Quebec rainstorms and windstorms
10	2011	2.05	Slave Lake, Alberta, fire and windstorm

Sources 1983–2007: IBC, PCS Canada, Swiss Re, Deloitte. 2008–2024: CatIQ

Appendix XIII

GS 131 FUNDING VISION 2035

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

1. What is the issue?

In the development, adoption and implementation of the Strategic Plan (2021) with its [Call and Vision](#) and [strategic operation plan](#), the Executive of the General Council was committed to seeking to reverse the narrative of decline that is so prevalent in the life of the church. There is no doubt that church has lived experience of decline, and the data supports this. The Executive Leaders have committed to foster a climate of data informed decision making and to lead from the future.

A recent research project comparing the statistics from 1992 and 2023 and projecting out to 2035 has given validation to anecdotal experience of decline and garnered important new insights. The data demonstrates the urgent need for intervention—analysis, vision, and strategy—to enable a different and better future to emerge *Toward 2035*.

The possible interventions are not about structural change, but about a change in imagination and an exercise of the influence and authority of the regional councils in partnership with the denominational council. It will require a whole church vision and strategy, intentionality, additional resources, and a risky boldness.

We are reminded of Paul's words to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 3: 12 ESV) "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold." It is possible to intervene towards preserving and growing resilient and inspired communities of faith as we look toward 2035. This requires denominational commitment and collaboration on the development of vision and strategy, based in strong analysis of the data, and active experimentation and learning. This proposal is providing a framework for these interventions.

2. Why is this issue important?

In 2006, the 39th General Council affirmed a call to the church in which it prayed that God would "propel" the church into God's future "rooted in the richness of the past." ([Call to Purpose](#)) From its inception, the church has sought to be responsive to the reality of its context, seeking to embody its understanding of the gospel. The changing context of both the church and the Canadian society and the global community is requiring that the church commit again to being responsive to the reality of its contexts.

Beginning in 2009 at the 40th General Council, the church began a process of seeking to clarify its purpose and vision. The church understood that it needed clarity of purpose and a nimbleness to not just be reactive but to be responsive to emerging realities. The church began to experiment – Candidacy Pathways, a review of Theological formation, the establishment of Experimental ministry opportunities through the EDGE network, and of course the

establishment of The Comprehensive Review Task group. The Task group report and recommendations were brought to the 43rd General Council, meeting in Newfoundland. The Task group recommended some fundamental changes to the structure and processes of the church. The proposed changes came into effect in 2019, and within a year were impacted by the Global COVID epidemic. The church has continued to experience significant decline and financial challenges.

With the General Council's adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2021 with its Call and Vision and the General Council Office's strategic operational plan, it has become more and more evident for the need for other strategies to enable the church's future. The recent data research project – comparing trends between 1992 and 2023 and projecting out to 2035--has not only shown that the United Church is in decline but that there are opportunities, if we are intentional, to intervene to find a robust future. At the same time the data highlights both existing churches that are growing and the presence of an increasing number of emerging churches.

Vision 2035 is a sharpening of the current strategic operational plan and is intended to be an intentional response to some of the challenges facing the church. It calls for a sustained and deeper collaboration between the denominational council and the regional councils. It is an invitation to the church to take up a new way of imagining what it means to be church in this time and place, to experience the promise of a “future and a hope” (Isaiah)

3. How might the General Council Executive respond?

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.

4. What will be the impact?

If we are successful, we anticipate that there will be renewed vibrancy and vitality in the communities of faith across the country. This would create the space for the Church to more broadly invite both individual leaders, whole communities, and clusters of communities to discern what God is doing among their neighbours and neighbourhoods and how a new form of ministry might allow them to follow the Spirit's leading.

These investments will allow the General Council and Regions to partner more strategically to name and pursue opportunities for cooperation and support of local ministry.

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

In 2025 it is estimated that about 5-10% of The United Church of Canada reflects the diversity of the whole country, in regard to race and ethnicity. The initial response to the invitations extended through the growth initiative to migrant and francophone communities has been nothing short of astounding.

As well as potentially assisting with other forms of strengthened invitation, this investment potentially contributes resources to work towards more fulsome support of these emerging communities, as well as supporting existing communities of faith who are growing through welcoming and engaging with newcomer Christians that God has brought into their neighbourhoods.

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

Appendix 1 (GCE05)

The Executive of the General Council recommends to the 44th General Council: that it give permission for regional councils and communities of faith to experiment with new ministry initiatives, provided such initiatives are within the bounds of the authority of the regional council and community of faith as set out in the Basis of Union, and on terms agreed to by the regional council and the community of faith. Such permission will remain in effect until the convening of the 45th General Council at which time the General Secretary will report the results of the experimentation for information and further action as appropriate.

Appendix II

Pineview Lodge was given to the United Church of Canada in 2019. At the time it was valued at \$1.3M. The terms of the gift as stated in the will of the donor:

“B) Specific Bequest The title to the apartment block known as the Pineview Lodge, located at the municipal address of 254 Sunset Blvd., Whitecourt, Alberta and legally described as Plan

4884RS, Block 15, Lot 26A shall be given to The United Church of Canada, 3250 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, for their use. in their own discretion, as they see fit.”

In 2023, the property was transferred to the property Trust with United Property Resource Corporation/Kindred Works.

Appendix XIV

GS 136 FUNDING THE STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVES

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

In 2022 the Executive of the General Council adopted the strategic operational plan for the work of the General Council Office. One of the six objectives was Strengthening Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith. The objective's goal was 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. The Strengthening Invitation (Growth) initiative has identified three streams of work: ***renew (existing communities of faith)***, ***create*** (100 new communities) and ***invite (regaining the confidence to share the gospel)***. There are six regionally deployed Growth animators working with communities of faith in initiatives that are beginning to have an impact.

In establishing the strategic operational plan, the Executive affirmed that the Growth objective was the critical priority and the leading edge for helping the church to live into its strategic Call. The Management team believes it is important that our budget reflects the priority mandated by the Executive. The other objectives which are necessary to support the Growth initiatives require funding as well and the stress to increase the percentage of the growth program budget would impact the necessary investment in leadership and shared services.

It has become clear that we need to create another mechanism to support the initiative and demonstrate that it is a critical priority for the future. Therefore, we are proposing a prioritizing of funding.

2. Why is the issue important?

Investment in the church's future is critical. The numbers are not our friends. We recognize that it is necessary to experiment and act boldly in seeking to reimagine vibrant and vital communities of faith, that make a difference in their communities as they partner with God in God's commitment to bring healing and transformation to God's world. The 42nd General Council meeting in Corner Brook, Newfoundland in 2015 recognized this truth. As the 42nd General Council voted to restructure the church in 2015, the Council recognized that it would be imperative to be investing, not just in sustaining existing ministries, but in creating new expressions and forms of ministry. Consequently, in response to the Comprehensive Review proposal on Chasing the Spirit, the Council directed that 10% of Mission and Service giving be invested in the initiative (see Appendix 1). Between 2015 – 2020 the initiative was renamed Embracing the Spirit and supported by the Edge Team. Over the course of the years, we expended about 3-4% of Mission and Service givings (see Appendix 2).

The implementation of the 2022 Strategic Plan, and the commitment to renewing and growing the church, has heightened the recognition that we need to do new things in existing

communities and create new communities. As the Growth initiative has been unfolding, supporting the streams of renew, create and invite as well as the engagement with new and existing migrant communities, it has become clear the need for adequate funding to support the various activities that are emerging.

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.

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

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.**

4. What will be the impact?

In 2025 the Growth and Leadership Initiatives earmarked just under **\$1.5 million** to support the creation of new migrant, diasporic, and francophone communities of faith, cooperative ministry SME sites, sites of experimenting with new models of rural ministry, and experiments in creating new things to reach new people, or new models to support renewal of ministry in areas the church is struggling to minister to within existing ministry forms.

These investments have been targeted in spaces where National and Regional leadership have noted possibilities. This proposed investment will allow The United Church of Canada to be bolder and more declarative in these experiments and others.

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

This proposal will continue to support the growth initiative with its commitment - to renew, create and invite Canadians into a new relationship with the church. The aim is that our communities are more reflective of the Canadian population. All the equity markers and values of the United Church are key to the work on growth. In some instances, the ministry is engaged with racialized communities, sexual identity and ability. There is a commitment to a decolonizing framework.

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

Appendix 1 - GC42 CR 1 Chasing the Spirit

That the 42nd General Council 2015:

1. commit to supporting new ministries and new forms of ministry through an initiative tentatively called “Chasing the Spirit”;
2. direct that ten (10%) percent of annual Mission and Service givings be invested in this initiative, with the United Church to begin work immediately towards implementation of this direction, and for it to be fully implemented no later than 2018; and
3. direct the General Secretary, General Council that implementation should:
 - include initiatives for existing communities of faith that want to be transformed;
 - reconsider the name of the new initiative and its theological implications;
 - consider setting proportional targets for diverse intercultural ministry expressions;
 - consider accessibility and engagement by rural, remote and other communities;
 - consider additional sources of revenue for the fund, such as revenues from property sales or bequests; and
 - communicate with regions.

Appendix 2 – Mission and Service Expenditure based on CR 1

Annual percentage expenditure between 2015- 2019 of Mission and Service:

2015: 0%;

2016: 1%;

2017: 3.4%;

2018: 4.6%;

2019: 4.3%;

2020: 4.2%

Appendix XV

GS 141 WORKING GROUP ON MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

Origin: General Secretary

1. What is the issue?

In the 2012 statement on Ministry, the report in reflecting on the future of ministry in the United Church offers the following:

“The church is about God’s mission in the world. Therefore, the Holy Spirit continually calls the church to renew its understanding of ministry opening itself to new expressions that serve the needs of the present day.

In particular, existing paradigms of congregational identity are changing. People no longer maintain formerly expected patterns of participation. The United Church is challenged to re-image the nature of life in the church. As the church has begun to experiment with new expressions of community it will develop a greater variety of forms and models of ministry that will involve all of the people of the church. As the church carries God’s Word into the world in new ways, ministry will be characterized by more collaboration, networking and transparency as well as a variety of educational approaches.

Ministry will be transformed as the church itself is transformed.”

With the shifting context of the Canadian society and the need to be responsive to the changing landscape the church needs to identify and manage opportunities and obstacles to Ministry Leadership.

2. Why is this important?

As early as 1908, the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Church began conversation about engaging the growing Canadian society with the good news of the gospel; they imagined new ways of building robust, vital, relevant ministries. They risked. Over 100 years later, the United Church is being called to reimagine new ways of being the church and be effective in engaging Canadians with the good news of the gospel of Jesus.

The reality of the Canadian context is increasingly secular, with the largest religious affiliation listed as “no religion.” The decline of the United Church is real, the numbers tell that story well. At the same time, there are a significant number of communities of faith that are growing. Since 2022, as part of living into the reality of the new structural change, the church has been organizing its life around the Call and Vision and the General Council Office has used the framework of the strategic operating plan. Especially with the deployment of the growth animators in partnership with the regional councils, it has become critical that the church be intentional to ensure the existence of The United Church of Canada into the future. Part of that

intentionality requires a reorientation, even intervention, to strengthen existing communities of faith to be vibrant, vital, relevant, diverse, and resilient disciples.

Several factors are contributing to the need of the church to “*renew its understanding of ministry opening itself to new expressions that serve the needs of the present day.*” The 2025 statement on ministry which will be received by the 45th General Council is one response.

Significant work is being done around the development of **Cooperative Ministry** as a new approach to building faithful communities of disciples (ordered and lay) sharing ministry in and to their local context particularly in smaller and rural communities. We are seeing a growing number of **Lay-Led** communities of faith, many of whom will not have ordered ministry personnel in the foreseeable future; with the shortage of full-time ministry opportunities there is a trend towards **Bi-Vocational** ministry. The church is yet to be clear about its understanding of bi-vocational ministry and valuing it as an acceptable expression. The growth initiative’s commitment to supporting **emerging migrant communities of faith** has identified a few issues related to those giving leadership (often highly trained in other contexts) within these communities and how they become part of the church. The creativity and leadership required **for new and renewing ministries** will necessitate some flexibility in leadership and the practices and polity of the church. There are some particular challenges to the church’s commitment to bilingualism, there is the need to have training resources, venues and opportunities (such as SME), including supervisors, for **francophone candidates**.

In 2015 the General Council directed the church to welcome **ministers and congregations** that have been removed from their denominations because of their affirming stance, but we do not have a framework to enable this to be seamless and welcoming. Finally, another emerging challenge is the length of time it takes to train ministry personnel – might we imagine other ways? – as well as the fact that we need to develop ways of contributing to the formation of ministry leaders (lay and ordered) for the reality of today. The Moderator’s (Re)Generate Project has offered some insights and an approach. Conversations have emerged about the possibility of Supervised Ministry Education being focused on ministry formation for present and future realities.

In 2022 the task group on *Ministry Leadership to meet the needs of the Church in the 2020s*, concluded that “it is not reasonable to assume that every pastoral charge can have a pastorate without interruption (Basis of Union Section 10.10.2) as it might have been imagined or intended in 1925. The contexts and expectations in our communities, in Canadian society, and in ministry personnel lives have changed dramatically since union. Despite these changes, or because of them, **even where our policies or expectations have not kept up**, vibrant faithful ministry is happening in rural and smaller communities of faith, led by vibrant and faithful lay members and by generous, resilient, and theologically astute ministry personnel, active and retired. These proposals imagine that Section 10.10.2 of The Basis of Union can be fulfilled in new and different ways ninety-seven years later.”

The proposed Working Group is meant to identify both obstacles in the church’s response to the current realities, and opportunities to meet the current and future ministry leadership

needs that will enable the church to live into its preferred future – vibrant, diverse, resilient communities of disciples with faithful, adaptive, effective ministry leaders (lay and ordered).

3. How might the General Council Executive respond?

The Executive of the General Council could:

- a. establish (or recommend to the 45th General Council or its Executive) 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 (or recommend the) the attached Terms of Reference (TOR) for the working group.**

4. What will be the impact?

If approved, the work of this committee will provide a framework for the church to be nimble and responsive to the changing realities of ministry leadership. It will also contribute to recognizing the various ministry leadership that currently does not fit within our existing system who are serving our existing and emerging communities of faith. It will enable clarity for emerging migrant ministries and space of welcome for communities seeking to find a home in the United Church.

5. How does the proposal help us to live into the commitment on equity?

This proposal will enable the church to live into the call to be vibrant, diverse communities of faith with leadership equipped for this and reflective of the changing demographic of Canada.

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The Ministry Leadership Working group will:

- map the ministry leadership (lay and ordered) needs of the church to 2035, with particular attention to (but not limited to):
 - migrant, diasporic, and emerging church plant leaders
 - cooperative ministry models
 - Bi-vocational ministers
 - welcoming existing communities of faith and ministry leaders from other denominations;
- identify opportunities and barriers to lay and ordered ministry leadership;
- recommend strategies and practices to enable the church to be responsive to the current, emerging and future realities of its context, that can be implemented immediately, in 1-3 years, and in 5 and 10 years
- Consult with regional councils, growth animators, emergent communities of faith church plant leads, migrant communities, staff and communities involved in piloting cooperative ministry, francophone communities, communities engaged in ecumenical shared ministries, as well as ecumenical partners (e.g. the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the British Anglican Church), theological schools and global partners
- Provide an interim report to the spring meeting of the GCE and make recommendations to the 2026 Annual Meeting of the 45th General Council regarding any necessary changes to policy and practices

To carry out its responsibilities, the Committee will use the following frameworks:

Membership

The Working Group would be made up of no more than 6 individuals:

- One member nominated by the Board of Vocation
- One member nominated by the Theology Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee who worked on the 2025 Statement on Ministry
- One member nominated from a Candidacy Board
- One member nominated by the General Council Executive
- Two members recommended by the Nominations committee from the Commissioners of the 45th General Council

Member Skills and Experience

Members will have familiarity with United Church polity and practice with regards to ministry leadership and formation (lay and ordered). They will have the capacity to think outside the box

and be open to creative and contextual imagination. Members will be active participants in a United Church community of faith or ministry.

Committee members will be

- committed to the Call of the United Church and willing to discern God's yearnings for this work
- predisposed to collaboration and teamwork
- able to listen and discern
- committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination
- comfortable with and able to participate in electronic meetings
- able to commit the time required for this responsibility
- Able to analyze complex problems, identify patterns, and develop strategic solutions.
- Problem-Solving: Able to identify issues and developing creative solutions to overcome challenges.
- Strategic Planning: Capable of developing long-term plans and strategies to achieve expected outcomes
- Visionary Thinking: Able to envision the future needs of the church and develop innovative approaches to meet those needs.
- experience with understanding complex qualitative and quantitative data, research, and reports
-

United Church Relationship: Active participant or full member

Expectations and Term

Serving on this task group will be a significant commitment. The working group meets as necessary, monthly at a minimum, with work required in between meetings. In line with achieving our climate commitments, in-person meetings will be minimized. The working group members should anticipate a minimum of 4-6 hours/month for this work.

Members of this committee agree to a [Behavioural Covenant](#) as a way of committing to mutual relationships, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

Proposed term is approximately one year, from fall 2025 to the annual meeting of the 45th General Council in October 2026.

Appendix XVI**GS 143 BENEFITS PLAN BENEFITS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE****Origin: General Secretary****5. What is the issue?**

The working group was established by the Executive of the General Council in Spring 2024 to consider governance and funding of the Benefits Plan of The United Church of Canada. The working group consisted of external volunteers from the actuarial community, members of the Executive, and church staff.

Given the complexity of the benefits plan, the working group recommended that the Executive delegate oversight of the Plan to a dedicated “Benefits Committee”. A Benefits Committee would be a key component of a more robust governance structure for the Plan. Those involved with the Benefits Committee would have more specific knowledge, understanding and accountability for the obligations and liabilities of the Plan. The Executive is now asked to approve the Terms of Reference for this committee.

6. Why is this issue important?

To meet our fiduciary duties to the plan members and the participating employers, the Benefits Committee will support the Executive in overseeing the Benefits Plan in responsible and professional ways in the best interests of the Plan’s members and participating employers, and to best support the Plan’s continued sustainability.

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

It is proposed that the Executive of the General Council:

- 1. adopt the attached Benefits Committee Terms of Reference.**

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

The proposal will support the Executive of the General Council in meeting its fiduciary duties to plan members and participating employers by effectively managing the Benefits Plan.

Is this proposal in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting?

- GS66 GROUP BENEFITS PLANS ADMININSTRATIVE EXPENSE FUNDING, November 2023 meeting.
- GS115 BENEFITS PLAN GOVERNANCE CHANGES, November 2024 meeting.

TERMS OF REFERENCE - THE BENEFITS COMMITTEE

The Executive of the General Council (the “Executive”) as the Plan Administrator, has established the Benefits Committee to support the Executive in governing, managing and operating the Benefits Plan of The United Church of Canada (the “Plan”) in accordance with the provisions set out below. The Executive continues to be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Plan, as well as the activities of the Benefits Committee.

In carrying out the mandate to support the Executive in governing, managing and operating the Plan, and to seek, where possible, to support the church’s human resources objectives through the design and operation of the Plan, members of the Benefits Committee will use the skills and work-related knowledge that they possess, or ought to possess by virtue of their profession or calling, to exercise the care, diligence and skill that a person of prudence would exercise in dealing with the property of another person.

The Benefits Committee’s composition, operation and responsibilities are described below.

1. Benefits Committee Composition and Operation

- a) Three to five voting members with relevant professional experience and expertise in one or more of the following core areas of benefits practice: actuarial, legal, human resources, group benefits or benefits administration. Preference will be given to individuals who are currently employed or recently retired in one of these professional fields.
- b) Two to three members-at-large recruited from the membership of The United Church of Canada.
- c) The Nominations Committee will recommend professional and member-at-large members to the Executive of the General Council for appointment. If the number of members on the committee at any point in time is less than three, the Executive will appoint the number of members necessary to achieve at least three.
- d) The Executive will appoint one or two voting members to the Benefits Committee who are also members of the Executive (the “Executive rep(s)”).
- e) The two ex-officio designated staff members will consist of:
 - i. TBD; and
 - ii. TBD;
 - iii. or their designates (the “Designated Staff Reps”)
- f) Voting members will normally serve for a term of three years. The maximum number of terms that may be served consecutively by members is three, unless the Executive of the General Council grants an exception in writing on such terms and conditions as the

Nominations Committee of the Executive may establish from time to time. Wherever possible, terms of the specialists should be staggered in such a manner as to promote continuity on the committee.

- g) The Executive of the General Council will appoint the chair of the committee. The chair's appointment will be for a three-year term and may be renewed to coincide with their membership term for a maximum of nine consecutive years.
- h) No person will be eligible to serve as a voting member if they are a member of the General Council Office staff.
- i) The committee will meet at least four times a year and will adopt meeting processes and procedures.
- j) A meeting will be properly constituted only if a majority of the voting members are present in person or participating by means of a telephone, video conference or other technology.
- k) No motion at a meeting will be adopted unless it receives an affirmative vote from a majority of the voting members of the committee participating in the meeting. Should a motion be proposed by circulating hard copies, use of e-mail, or comparable technologies outside of a meeting, it will not be adopted unless it receives an affirmative vote from a majority of all voting members of the committee.
- l) In the event the chair cannot attend a particular meeting, the chair may appoint an acting chair in advance, or the remaining members present will appoint a member to act as acting chair for the purposes of that meeting.
- m) Benefits Committee members are entitled to reimbursement from the Plan of reasonable expenses incurred personally in the conduct of their duties.

2. Benefits Committee Responsibilities

The Benefits Committee has responsibilities in the following areas:

General governance:

- a) recommend to the Executive, governance policies necessary for the effective governance of the Plan and the Beliefs and Guiding Principles related to Plan design, funding, and investment;
- b) recommend to the Executive any changes in benefit levels and contributions;
- c) recommend a review of the Plan's governance structure at least every seven years;
- d) Annually, review compliance with:
 - i. all policies adopted by the Benefits Committee and the Executive;
 - ii. the Benefit Committee's Terms of Reference; and

- iii. report results to the Executive;
- e) at least annually, undertake a collective self-assessment and report the results to the Executive.

Plan design, Plan funding, legal and administration:

Issues related to Plan design and Plan funding are analyzed and considered by the Benefits Committee. The Benefits Committee makes recommendations and presents items to the Executive for approval. The Benefits Committee shall:

- a) oversee and analyze the annual renewal process;
- b) regularly review the claims experience of the Plan;
- c) periodically review external benchmarking information;
- d) assess modifications or refinements to Plan design and any amendments to the Plan;
- e) approve the Plan's funding policy;
- f) oversee and analyze actuarial valuations and extrapolations;
- g) monitor and evaluate the consistency of the Plan's funded status with the funding policy and consider **and make recommendations to the Executive regarding** benefit improvements, contribution levels, and contribution holidays;
- h) appoint, monitor and terminate when necessary or appropriate external vendors and agents that provide Plan services, such as a third-party administration service provider(s), insurer(s), consultants and legal advisers and arrange for the review and execution of related documents in accordance with the Benefit Committee's relevant policies; and
- i) decide matters of Plan interpretation (including the payment of benefits) referred to the Benefits Committee by staff, and to initiate the review of staff decisions on matters of Plan interpretation where the committee deems such review necessary.

Investment:

Issues related to the Plan's investment are the responsibility of the Investment Committee of the United Church. The Benefits Committee will supply supporting rationale for consideration by the Investment Committee on the following:

- a) the appointment and/or termination of the Plan's Custodian;
- b) the approval and creation of investment policies, including the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures and all other investment policies and guidelines not necessarily contained in the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures such as policies related to responsible investing; and
- c) the approval of new asset classes, investment strategies and risk mitigation strategies of significance to the Plan.

Communications:

- a) given the importance of communication with Plan members and other stakeholders, the Benefits Committee will adopt a communications policy.

3. Orientation and Continued Learning Policies and Guidelines

The Benefits Committee, with support from staff, will develop policies regarding orientation of Benefits Committee members and continued learning for its members.

4. Review Terms of Reference

The Benefits Committee shall review this Terms of Reference document every three years or more often, as needed.

Appendix XVII

GOV 07 USE OF IN CAMERA SESSIONS

Origin: Governance Committee

1. What is the issue?

The decision-making procedures of The United Church of Canada are governed by: 1) the by-laws as stated in *The Manual*; and b), as noted in *The Manual* Appendix, Section 3.7:

“In any point not covered in *The Manual*, the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot’s Rules) will be followed.”

Both *The Manual* and Bourinot’s Rules are silent on the use of an *in camera* session by a decision-making body.

Bourinot’s Rules refer to “a committee of the whole”, a process by which a decision-making body sets aside the regular rules of parliamentary procedure to allow for a freer and fuller consideration of a matter. This changes how a topic is addressed but not who is present for the topic to be addressed. In recent years, the church has regularly employed a three-fold approach to business—learning, discussing, deciding—in which only the final stage involves parliamentary procedure. This has provided for the type of discussion that previously required a motion to move into a committee of the whole.

In the section on “Rules for Usages and Assemblies Generally”, Bourinot’s Rules note that some special motions which have come to be in use are not drawn from Canadian parliamentary practice and should be accepted only if there has been general prior agreement to their use and effect. The use of *in camera* sessions would fall within this. There is no stated agreement as to when it is appropriate to use an *in camera* session and what the practice of decision-making associated with it should be.

As with “a committee of the whole”, an *in camera* session can provide an opportunity for a fuller and freer discussion of a topic. What distinguishes an “in camera” session is that it is only open to the voting members of the decision-making body and any resource people they elect to include.

2. Why is this important?

Clear guidelines on *in camera* sessions will help protect the practice from abuse, ensure required procedures are followed, and safeguard the transparency of decision-making in the councils of the church.

Because the standard for this is not set by Bourinot’s Rules, the church needs to clarify:

- 1) What are justifiable reasons for moving *in camera*? and
- 2) Are decisions able to be made *in camera*, provided the rules for quorum are met, and, if so, how are these decisions recorded and reported in the minutes of the public record of the council?

3. What might the Executive of General Council do?

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 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.