

APPENDIX: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent (4-6 members)

We are seeking between 4-6 members with lived experience and/or a background with anti-Black racism and broader questions of equity and justice. They will offer direction on ways that the church can engage with the second United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. They will also offer advice for the church on the process to develop an apology to people of African descent (Black people) in Canada for enslavement.

Mandate

The Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent will have responsibility for:

- engaging in appropriate consultations with groups in the church, and in the broader community, as part of the apology development process,
- exploring processes and wording of past United Church apologies, as well as related apologies from other church denominations,
- discerning and outlining the process for developing an apology from The United Church of Canada to people of African descent (Black people) for enslavement,
- reflecting on and clearly naming the current legacies of enslavement faced by Black people in Canada,
- naming potential responses to these legacies of enslavement from church and in society,
- exploring and offering creative ways of engaging with the United Nations Second International Decade for People of African Descent, and
- offering options for congregational education, reflection, and action on all of this work in ways that are consistent with the church's focus on [Toward 2035](#).

This is faithful work that will build on the church's commitments to anti-racism and reparations. This work of church legacies would be theologically grounded and could offer options for congregational education, reflection, and action in ways that are consistent with the church's focus on [Toward 2035](#).

There is considerable background information contained within the two proposals from 2025 that led to the call to create this new working group:

- The [Apology from The United Church of Canada to the African Diaspora for Enslavement](#)
- The commitment to engaging with the [United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent](#) (2025-2034).

The Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent is accountable to the Executive of General Council (GCE) and will offer the GCE updates on its ongoing work.

Membership

The Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent have an overall membership of 4-6 people (not including staff) who reflect the broad diversity of The United Church of Canada, with particular attention to its equity commitments and the presence of both lay people and ministry personnel from across the geography of the church.

The membership of the working group will be appointed by the Executive of General Council (GCE), through the United Church's Nominations process.

The Anti-Racism and Equity Lead will be the staff resource to the Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent.

Skills and Experience

We are seeking people who have experience with anti-racism work, intercultural engagement, or broader work of anti-oppression, whether through volunteering, employment, education, and/or lived experience. Members will have good communication, animation, or analytical skills and have strong skills in interpersonal relations, group conflict resolution, understandings of racial trauma, and working in the midst of cultural diversity.

All members of the Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent will be active participants in a United Church community of faith or ministry who are:

- passionately committed to the calling 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 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.

The United Church is committed to working toward the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; people who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+, Indigenous, racialized, or francophone; people active in French ministries; people with disabilities; people who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from communities who have been historically excluded who are not named here. This is a part of the United Church's commitments to equity and self-determination, as well as eliminating barriers and working toward the full participation of all people. Individuals with these identities and lived experiences are particularly encouraged to express interest.

Expectations and Term

The Working Group on Addressing Church Legacies for People of African Descent hopes to have its first meeting in-person in the late spring of 2026. After that time, the working group would generally meet 3-4 times per year, online.

Additional online meetings may be scheduled depending on the needs and work of the whole group. Members are expected to attend meetings regularly. If members are not able to be at meetings, it is expected that they communicate this clearly and catch up on relevant missed work and conversation via the meeting minutes.

The term of this appointment is until the rise of the 46th General Council in the summer of 2028 with the possibility of reappointment for a second three-year term.