

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

Strategic Plan 2023–2025

2025 Operational Plan Report

Quarter 2

July 2025



2025 Operational Plan Report: Quarter 2

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Legend:

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

Bold is for priority activities

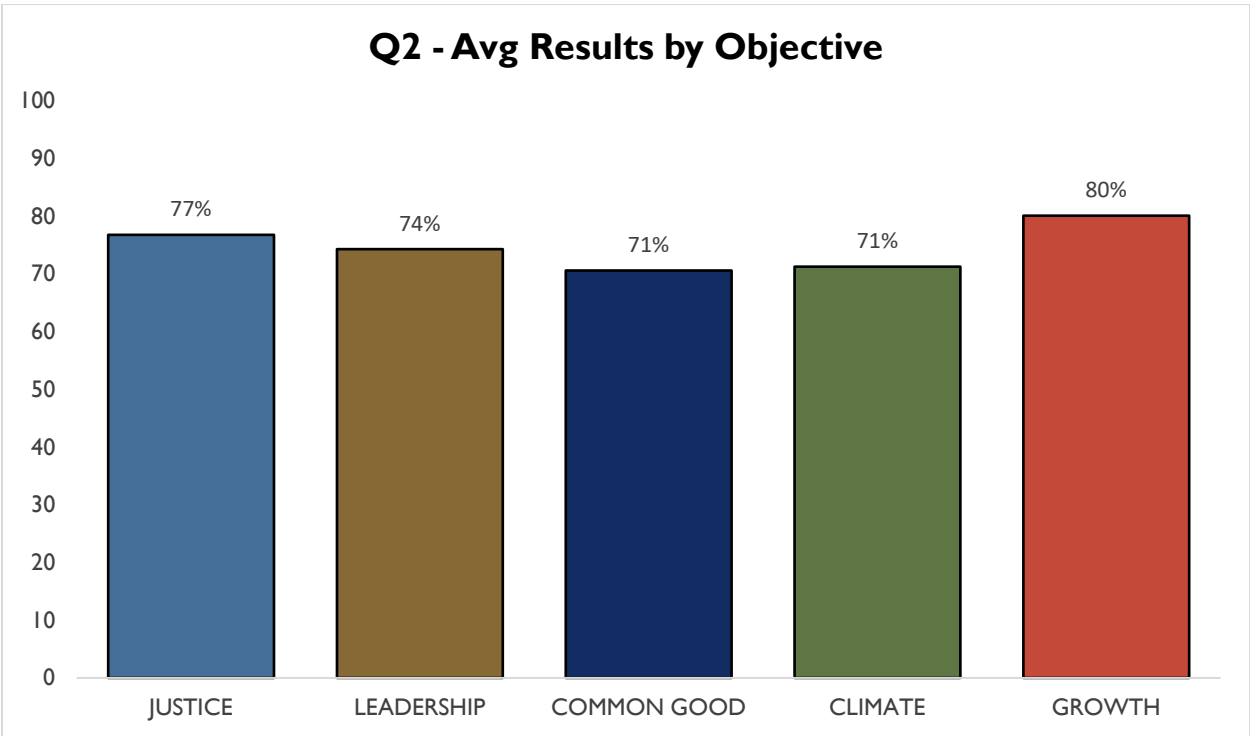
Overall Results:

Chart



Strategic Objective	Progress on Key Results
Strengthen Invitation	80%
Embolden Justice	77%
Nurture the Common Good	71%
Invigorate Leadership	74%
Deepen Climate Integrity	71%
Journeying Indigenous Pathways	Reporting unavailable at this time

Graph



Narrative Summary

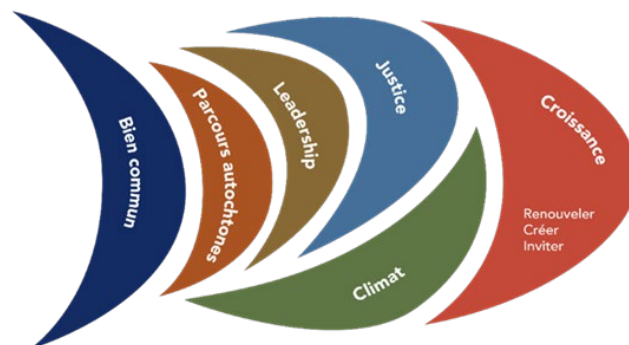
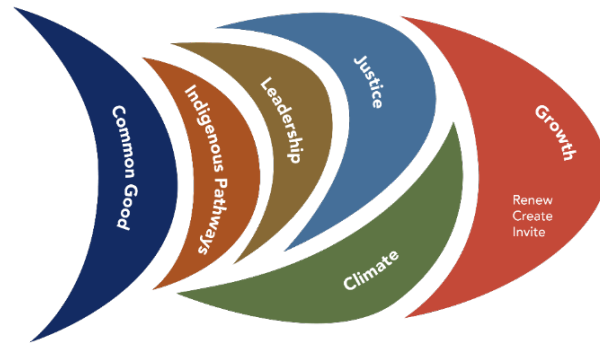
In quarter 2 of the third year, initiatives are moving forward solidly, reporting progress against planned key results at 75% overall. One common theme emerging from Q2 includes the way in which smaller initiatives become breeding grounds for larger scale projects. Where there are dilemmas in implementation, it is often because staff continue to be overly optimistic about the time required, especially for complex projects. Even so, some large projects, identified at the beginning of this strategic plan, including those related to the Common Good objective, are reaching conclusion.

The original strategic objectives for 2026-2028 were framed broadly and do not have specific metrics for that level. Metrics come at the activities level, rolled up to give an overall picture for the objective. With this approach, it is sometimes unclear whether initiatives and activities are moving us clearly toward achieving the overall objective. The question is not whether the initiatives and activities are within the thematic of the objective area but whether they are the best choice, the best “how,” to advance the “what.” Do they further the outcome anticipated by the objective or advance the strategy foundational to the objective? It is hoped that in 2026-2028 we will be able to strengthen both the focus and the metrics of the strategic objectives in order to sharpen strategy, and employ data to ensure initiatives and activities continue to be aligned as they implemented.

Staff are beginning to anticipate the next strategic planning cycle, tracking in the direction of *Toward 2035*. *Toward 2035* reflects an agreement to develop and implement a whole church strategy, focused on deepening the inspiration and resilience of communities of faith, sustaining a coast to coast, rural and urban denomination, and a commitment to be increasingly intercultural and multigenerational. This broadening of strategic approach to the whole church in 2026-2028 emerges out of the increased capacity to be data informed developed in the 2023-2025 strategic plan. As we formulate 2026-2028 strategic objectives to align with this whole church strategy, we are committed to greater focus and clarity and developing the baselines needs to support stronger metrics.

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives—Justice, Leadership, Common Good, Climate, and Indigenous Pathways—show strong intersections among them, and collectively contribute to the overarching strategic priority on Growth. The following section identifies each objective and offers a narrative and numerical summary of overall progress, as well as giving more detailed information as to how each activity in this objective has fared in this quarter. Please note that the numbers reflect progress not to the ultimate three-year goal, but to the planned key results for this quarter. For a further description of an activity, and/or the relevant key results, please contact planning@united-church.ca



Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith

80%

Objective: Develop and implement effective and connected regional and national strategies that result in growth within existing ministries, and by seeding and sustaining new expressions of communities of faith.

Accomplishments

Renew: Between April and June, regionally deployed Growth Animators engaged with 241 ministry personnel and 180 communities of faith. 28 individuals participated in a *Called to be the Church* Stewardship course. 88 Communities of Faith registered to participate in the *100 Tables* Project and were equipped with a planning toolkit and sent funds to support their work. 84 Communities of Faith (CoF) are working with Growth Animators on developing invitation plans. The Theological Banquet was featured on the National Rural Town Halls with Janet Gear acting as guest facilitator. Two rural focused stories were published on the UCCan blog. GCO staff supported the online Rural Ministry Town Hall specifically for CoFs in Shining Waters and Canadian Shield Regional Councils.

Create: The number of migrant and diasporic communities being supported increased to 28. The Migrant Church Plant leads network released their Centennial Art Piece. One emerging community has begun worshipping in the building of a now closed United Church congregation with the support of the Regional Council. The Indigenous and Racialized Youth Scholars and summer retreat programs are underway. Substantive work around supporting emerging Francophone communities towards self-governance has been undertaken with Nakonha:ka Regional Council.

Invite: The book version of *Immersion* discipleship resource nears completion, and *100 Words of Hope* posts continue to be published on social media. *A Place at the Table* was launched with much excitement and has garnered over 36 million media impressions. *The Finding Faith* survey results have been received and are already informing the key messaging for the *100 Tables* Project. *MonCredo* saw website engagement increased by 81% with 889 Unique site visitors and 1.6K YouTube views (up from 324 view in Q1). Many communities of faith marked the Centennial with events they shared on social media capturing the opportunity for members and communities to deepen and renew their United Church identity. The Centennial Service was held on June 8, Pentecost Sunday at Gower Street United Church in St. John's Newfoundland.

Challenges

Finding sites of new ministry outside of the migrant diasporic context that are ready for financial investment continues to be a challenge. Given the amount of other work being

done, there are difficulties developing the groundwork in partnership with Regional Council at any sort of scale. *Toward 2035* could provide an important opportunity to frame this new ministry work moving forward.

Looking Forward

The preparation work with CoFs participating in 100 Tables will result in exciting public projects launching in the next quarter. Small Foundation grants for Strengthening Invitation work will support new activities in the fall of 2025 in existing communities. Work with the Moderator's *Flourishing* Workshop will allow this material to continue to be offered to the church in the years to come. Analytics show that the increased viewership of *MonCredo* YouTube video content is coming from user searches more than direct links which promises increased engagement to continue.

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	51
	Stewardship for CoFs	75
	Moderator's Initiative: Church Workshops	100
	Renewing Francophone Communities	80
	Supporting Renewal in Rural Ministries	75
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.	Regional/Identity Communities	50
	Migrant/Diasporic Communities of Faith	100
	New Francophone Communities	100
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	60
	Outreach: Communication Strategy	100
	Francophone Outreach	70
	Centennial Commemoration	100

Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World 77%

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

Mutual Support and Shared Initiatives: Strategic partnerships with ecumenical and interfaith organizations (e.g., World Council of Churches, Canadian Council of Churches, KAIROS) are deepening relationships and enabling unified responses to pressing justice issues. This unity amplifies advocacy efforts and extends the church's reach, particularly in areas such as peace, social justice, and refugee sponsorship.

Cross-Pollination and Integrated Learning: Platforms like learning tables at GC45, published blogs, and collaborative webinars have fostered the sharing of best practices and case studies. This has stimulated innovation and enabled different ministry areas to learn from one another, leading to more holistic and effective approaches to justice work.

Strategic Partnerships Yielding Concrete Impact: Collaborations with organizations such as Affirm United, Rainbow Refugee Society, and UNHCR have resulted in increased sponsorship and support for marginalized groups, notably 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees. These efforts not only expand the church's justice commitments but also revitalize communities of faith by nurturing bonds, increasing outreach, and fostering spiritual growth.

Evaluation Data Driving Progress: Regular evaluations of programs like the 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism and "Wait, Is This Racist?" have provided actionable insights. High participation rates, positive feedback, and evidence of increased confidence and understanding among participants indicate that the church is on track to achieve its strategic goals in this area. Evaluation data is being used to refine program content and delivery, ensuring ongoing relevance and impact.

Synergy Across Activity Areas: There is visible interaction between advocacy, education, and outreach initiatives. For example, anti-racism education is being integrated into broader campaigns and communications, while refugee sponsorship work is informed by and contributes to the church's broader justice and inclusion agenda. This interconnectedness maximizes impact and ensures that efforts in one area reinforce progress in others.

Challenges

Implementing the strategy for just relationships and abundant life faces significant challenges that are prompting a need for adaptation and ongoing learning. One major hurdle is maintaining effective collaboration among a diverse range of partners, including ecumenical and interfaith organizations. Differing priorities, organizational capacities, and theological perspectives can create friction, slow decision-making, and dilute unified advocacy efforts. Additionally, translating shared best practices and innovative ideas into contextually relevant actions presents complexity, as not every solution is readily applicable to every setting. Resistance to change or feelings of overwhelm can arise within certain communities, making it difficult to implement new models consistently and effectively.

Another core challenge lies in sustaining the long-term energy and capacity needed for justice work. As outreach expands—such as increased support for marginalized groups like 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees—limited resources and the risk of burnout among volunteers and staff become pronounced concerns. These pressures spotlight the necessity of ongoing support, robust resource allocation, and intentional care for all participants in this piece of work. Collectively, these challenges underscore the importance of adaptive strategies, deep relationship-building, regular reflection, and flexible support systems to ensure that collaboration for justice not only persists but grows stronger and more impactful over time.

Looking Forward

The Justice team is preparing for a transformative year ahead, focusing on deepening partnerships, building organizational capacity, and launching ambitious justice campaigns. Key areas of focus include Indigenous rights and reconciliation, ecological and climate justice, refugee support, amplifying Jubilee 25 campaigns, and racial justice. The team will also be broadening its efforts to address emerging concerns such as first third ministries, food security, and global peacebuilding. Through strategic partnerships, collaborative learning platforms, and targeted advocacy campaigns, the team aims to achieve bold and visible outcomes in the coming year.

Anticipated outcomes include the launch of high-impact 40 days justice campaigns, measurable regional and community of faith-level action, deeper interfaith collaboration, and intensified engagement with political policymakers. The team will also introduce new webinar training resources and support platforms to sustain leadership and community of faith momentum, ensuring faith communities are equipped for systemic change and effective public witness.

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.	Reparations	70
RACIAL EQUITY: Advance racial equity. Shift: Towards transformed structures and systems and intentional leadership of racialized people.	Anti-racism advocacy	65
	Addressing Antisemitism	0
	Anti-Racism Education/Action	90
	Migrant Justice	70
2S-LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS: Enhance 2S-LGBTQIA+ rights including addressing religious-induced homophobia. Shift: Towards integrating and intersecting with other justice issues.	Refugee Sponsorship	100
	2SLGBTQIA+ Global and Ecumenical Advocacy	95
ECUMENISM: Increase ecumenical collaboration and effectiveness. Shift: Towards stronger impact and reduction in overlap.	Advocacy: Presence and Methodology	80
	Ecumenical Youth Exchange	0
	Stronger Ecumenical Partnerships	80
RADICAL ACCOMPANIMENT: Strengthen accompaniment of global partners. Shift: Towards needs development.	Radical Accompaniment: Financial Sharing	95
	Radical Accompaniment: Crisis Response	90
	Radical Accompaniment: People to People	90
	Radical Accompaniment: Witness	85
	Radical Accompaniment: Visits and Meetings	100
	Radical Accompaniment: Roundtables	95
PUBLIC WITNESS: Strengthen presence in the public sphere and effectiveness in advocacy as a denomination. Shift: Towards greater public presence, clearer principles and processes of response.	Moderator's Initiative: Events and Book Club	100

Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship **74%**

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

The soft launch of *Then Let Us Sing!* saw over 2800 units sold in less than a month, suggesting that the marketing, workshops, and ongoing communication about this new resource have been effective.

The reimagining Theological Education initiative has been invited to submit a full application for the Lilly Large-Scale Collaborative Grant, one of about 40 collaborative ventures invited to do so out of about 150 initial applications. The work the schools and national staff have been doing over the last 3 years to identify collaborative opportunities and seek external funds to support reimagining theological education is starting to bear fruit.

The (Re)Generate pilot program finished in June, with very positive evaluations from participants and an eagerness to share their learnings in the wider church. The participants have said they feel more engaged with the church regionally and nationally and have significant hope for the United Church, as well as an increased sense of satisfaction and improved capacity in their ministry.

Challenges

One challenge is a significant reliance on Canada Summer Jobs for funding related to youth and young adult leadership development programming/plans. For at least the 2nd consecutive summer, we have not received funding for all of the positions we applied for, which has meant scaling back plans. Alternative funding and alternative leadership development models will need to be explored going forward.

Pastoral Relations Equity, including Admissions, continues to face challenges, internal and external. The Canadian government's ongoing changes and further restrictions to visas has had a negative impact on Admission ministers seeking appointments. The work on developing a pilot workshop for pastoral relations equity has slowed down and we are revisiting our initial ideas, so that we can incorporate the *Toward 2035* planning into this area of work, in deeper partnership with regional councils.

Looking Forward

There will be further development of cooperative ministry models and storytelling, to lift up the stories of those co-operative ministries that already exist, as well as learnings from the co-operative Supervised Ministry Education sites that are funded through the strategic plan.

We are planning the launch of a mentorship program for those in their first five years of ministry, in partnership with an existing mentorship program at the Montreal School of Theology (MST). This is an ecumenical partnership, with the United Church having its own cohort, led by the experienced staff at MST. We will be able to launch this program much more quickly than anticipated, due to this ecumenical collaboration.

Accountable: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Janzen-Ball

Multi-Year Initiative	Activity Name	Progress on Key Results
WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD: Reinvigorate our commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God. Shift: To better coordinated support and resources.	Whole People of God Training	50
	First Third Leadership Development	85
	Worship Resources	100
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	85
	Cooperative Ministry and Mentorship Pilot	80
	Recruitment	80
	Leadership Counts	50
	Moderator's Initiative: (Re)Generate	80
	Pastoral Relations Equity Animation	50
	Animating Safe/Respectful Workplace Policy	100
ELECTED LEADERS: Support the increased diversity and effectiveness of faithful elected leaders. Shift: Towards greater inclusivity and accountability.	Equity Training-Governance	80
STAFF: Strengthen equity, accountability and effectiveness in General Council staff system. Shift: Towards learning culture, alignment, and evaluation against work plans.	Culture Shift in GCO	50
	Equity in Recruitment and Retention	80
	Management Training	70

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

A number of the activities have laid strong groundwork for carrying work forward in a way that will support *Toward 2035*. Three networks, *The Treasurer's webinars*, *Technology Best Practices*, and the *Property Network*, have all made significant strides in equipping and supporting specialized roles and responsibilities within Communities of Faith. These efforts will support growing the resilience of CoFs. Similarly, the *Data Collection and Analysis* activity gives Regions better access to data and enables more data-informed decision making, enabling better support for Communities of Faith.

The progress made in the *Transparency* activity is also leading to the ability to increase connections across the church and between different councils within the church.

As an example of the work, the success of the Mission and Service campaign for the Indigenous Ministers' Retreat exceeded the goal and will likely enable the retreat to accommodate more ministry personnel. Also in this activity is the Centennial Legacy Campaign which has reached the milestone of \$10M committed by individuals, families, and congregations.

Challenges

We continue to be overly optimistic in terms of the amount of time activities require to be completed. As we move forward, we will need to very carefully consider timelines and put contingency plans in place for where we think we may be particularly vulnerable to limited staff resources.

Looking Forward

Through the remainder of the year, we will see a number of the activities come to completion. Those that will carry forward will need consideration as to the next iteration of the work and timelines and how they may need to be adjusted to align more fully with *Toward 2035*.

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: Treasurers Plus	90
	Technology Best Practices	70
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
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: Ensure financial sustainability of the denomination. Shift: Towards stability and increased resiliency	Mission and Service Support	67
SHARED SERVICES: Reduce costs and improve capacity through shared service structures. Shift: Towards administrative efficiencies and effectiveness.	Shared Space	100
	Information Management	25
	Improve PAR	100
	Digital AV/Image Storage	75
ACCOUNTABILITY: Strengthen planning--strategic and operational--and increase accountability. Shift: Towards evidence-based decisions, greater alignment and impact.	Operational Planning	75
	Data Collection and Analysis	70
	Transparency	20
POLICY FRAMEWORKS: Improve policy frameworks and enhance effectiveness in governance. Shift: Towards appropriate roles and greater transparency	Governance Reviews	75

Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments

71%

Objective: Amplify and integrate current initiatives in a bold, hopeful denominational climate strategy that accelerates reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030.

Accomplishments

One of the key accomplishments this quarter was preparation of the [Sustainability Report \(2023-2024\)](#). This project was moved mostly in-house with the United Church more actively shaping the final product. Release of the report came at a busy time. Even allowing for that, uptake according to web statistics has been less than hoped for or warranted by the input involved. The team who prepared the report is reflecting upon this and has committed to animating the information in it as one way to advance the climate objective and to ensure that the report has life beyond its release date. It may be that a new way of being accountable for climate needs to be determined.

“New ways” is an important topic to consider as we tally the carbon footprint of General Council 45 travel. Carpooling to airports and a potential carbon offset have been offered to attendees. By year end, there should be sufficient data to assess the carbon impact of General Council 45 against the carbon offset offered and to have an informed conversation about how the General Council meeting helps or hinders the church from meeting the emissions reduction goal set by General Council.

Challenges

The key challenge remains the high demand for Faithful Footprints compared to the funds available. In the first quarter, steps were taken to implement new eligibility criteria. However, before these were able to be put in place, the applications already in hand equaled/exceeded the funds available for the current year. The pause placed on the program remains in effect until it can be coordinated with regional council strategies connected to *Toward 2035*.

Looking Forward

During this next quarter, the Climate Motivators will be undertaking their projects. We look forward to their learnings and leadership. By the end of 2025, there will be a plan for implementation of Faithful Footprints as part of putting our house in order. Also, by that time, there will be an opportunity to consider the carbon cost of travel both for General Council 45 and with regard to General Council staff relative to the ambitious reduction target.

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	50
	Reducing Carbon Emissions	Awaiting activation
VOICE: Raise our spirited voice. Shift: Towards greater public recognition of both the issues and United church leadership in responding.	Advocacy on Climate	80
	Youth Climate Activists	95
RECONNECT: Reconnect with the Earth Shift: Towards reawakened and strengthened love for all God's creation	Eco-Spirituality	60

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.

No report is available at this time.

Accountable: Springwater Hester-Meawassige

***Note that Indigenous pathways is using another process other than key results methodology for their reporting.*

Multi-year Initiatives	Activity Names
SELF GOVERNING: Create and develop a fully self-governing Indigenous Church within the United Church. Shift: Towards greater implementation of the Calls to the Church.	Structure: Indigenous Church
	Funding model: Indigenous Church
	Indigenous Testamur
	Theologies/Spiritualities: Indigenous ways
	Indigenous Youth Leadership
	New Indigenous Ministries

Origins of the Plan

The General Council Office developed an operational plan that would reflect the Call and Vision adopted by the General Council in October 2021 and implement the strategic objectives confirmed by the General Council Executive in November 2021. This required not just the creation of content, but the development of systems and processes of detailed planning, reporting, and evaluation, and clarification of lines of accountability. The operational plan uses objectives and key results (OKRs) as the organizing framework.

In alignment with six strategic objectives, staff developed 26 initiatives. 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:

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