



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 General Council Executive Accountability Report for Summer 2025**

True Document Date: June 22, 2025

**Origin: General Secretary, Kathleen Loewen, Chair of Governance**

## **Preamble**

The GCE is led by commitments to governance that is future-oriented, visionary and grounded in deep love and care for the whole church.

“Accountability” is a complex construct and means different things to different groups, but the GCE recalls that the origins of the term “accountability” reference reckoning, counting, and disclosing to others. The reckoning, the report or “story” of the work of the GCE is captured here as a rear-view mirror to the past with a simultaneous view to the future - accountability to the church and to the General Council as an account of its work accomplished and its work to come.

## **GCE Membership**

The 44th General Council in 2022 elected the following members to its Executive to serve until the rise of the 46th General Council, 2028:

Michael Caveney (OM), M Chorney (LM), Catherine Glover (LM), Wilson Gonesse (OM), Marlene Lightning (LM), Alan Lai (OM), Kathleen (Kit) Loewen (LM), Thea Sheridan-Jonah (LM);

They joined those previously elected by the 43rd General Council to serve until the rise of the 45th General Council, 2025: Teresa Burnett-Cole (OM), National Indigenous Council, Mitchell

Anderson (OM), Kathy Brett (OM), Samuel Dansokho (OM), Paul Douglas Walfall (OM), Jane McDonald (LM), and Arlyce Schiebout (OM); in addition to the Moderator, General Secretary and Past Moderator, Richard Bott. The gifts of service offered by these members of the GCE are noted with gratitude.

## Committee Membership

*Sub-Executive:* Teresa Burnett-Cole, Richard Bott and M Chorney along with the Moderator and General Secretary serve as the Sub-Executive.

*Foundation Board:* Paul Douglas Walfall and Catherine Glover;

*Finance Advisory Committee:* Jane McDonald and Michael Caveney;

*Pension Board:* Mitchell Anderson and Thea Sheridan-Jonah

*Governance Committee:* Kit Loewen (chair), Arlyce Schiebout, David Leyton-Brown and Paul Douglas Walfall;

*General Secretary Supervision Committee:* Mitchell Anderson (chair), Thea Sheridan-Jonah, Wilson Gonese and Michael Caveney;

*Nominations Committee:* Richard Bott and Samuel Dansokho;

*Joint Grants Advisory Committee:* Jane McDonald.

## Changes in Membership

With the resignation of Kathy Brett, Katherine Brittain (OM, Pacific Mountain) has been appointed for a term of one year. With the resignations of Marlene Lightning and Alan Lai, David Leyton-Brown (LM) and Alcris Limongi (OM), have been appointed until the rise of the 46th General Council, 2028. In consultation with the National Indigenous Council, two members of the Council (Leeann Shimoda and Kimberly Roy) have been appointed as Corresponding members of the Executive. General Council will be asked to name new members to its Executive.

## Priorities

The General Council Executive has deepened understandings of its governance roles, responsibilities and authorities in the context of the structural changes in the church. The GCE understands that the purpose of its governance is to faithfully, and with relentless commitment, live out God's Call and Vision for the church. The GCE continues to consider intentional processes and practices that honour that commitment in ways that will bring shape to the future of the church. The GCE understands and deeply appreciates that its governance role is coloured and shaped by the experiences of the church as a whole, which requires GCE members to be conscious of the perspectives and gifts that each member brings to its work, while simultaneously being open to those perspectives that others bring. As governors, GCE members are bound by shared commitments to the whole church, and continually consider approaches that will advance those commitments.

The GCE continues to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Governance Renewal Action Plan, set out by the Workflow Task Group, made up of GCE members and governance experts from across the church. The Action Plan, approved by the GCE, sets out specific actions/projects that support the GCE, the staff and the church in bring about the aspirations of the structural changes.

Additionally, the Governance Renewal Action plan imagined a set of lenses through which its work could be done. Those lenses, which the GCE has been focussed on, include holding itself accountable for governance processes and practices which are purposeful, visionary, trustworthy and decolonizing. The GCE continually tests and assesses approaches and practices that:

- encourage high-level, future oriented, generative dialogue,
- encourage less colonial ways of meeting and working together,
- encourage attention to shared equity aspirations, the behavioural covenant and Holy Manners.

As described earlier, the purpose of an accountability report is to ensure that the key priorities and actions of the GCE are communicated, and that its aspirations and goals for the future are also set out. As the GCE reflects on its work in the past, and its work to advance in the future, it considers three interdependent sets: fiduciary, strategic and generative work.

The ***fiduciary work*** requires that the GCE focus on the stewardship of material resources within its authority, honour all of its legal duties (Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty), pay attention what is required to ensure regulatory compliance and ethical conduct.

The **strategic work** of the GCE requires attention to a strong partnership and supervisory relationship with the General Secretary, oversight and monitoring of the strategy of the church and attention to the critical relationship between the strategic priorities and the allocation of resources.

The **generative work** of the GCE is to ensure constant and deep engagement of members to the collective work, a relentless focus on the future while reflecting on the past, considering and reconsidering, framing and reframing issues to ensure the deepest and most comprehensive consideration of the many complex issues before the church.

Exemplary governance within the church requires that governors attend to all three kinds of work, recognizing their interdependent nature. To that end, the GCE priorities include:

- Following the referral of NEW05 to the GCE (October 19, 2024), the GCE met (November 8, 2024) and emphasized that it honours and affirms the importance of the relationships among the National Indigenous Council, staff and the GCE. The GCE recognized that there is a need for greater clarification of those relationships and looks forward to engaging with the National Indigenous Council and the staff, at a time suitable to the NIC, to seek clarity and strength. The GCE also honours and affirms that the future governance of the Indigenous Church must be determined by Indigenous Church; the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering being the traditional and appropriate body to provide leadership to that end. The full minutes of the the meeting are available for further details.
- Ongoing governance education -among other things, its approaches to risk management, strategic oversight, and decolonizing principles and practices. The GCE commits to using data with integrity to inform its decisions, to assess and monitor specific issues - and it aspires to grow into the practice of using data in a meaningful and ethical way.
- Reviewing the roles of the Moderator and General Secretary, in alignment with the findings of the Review Working Group, and to report any implementation to the General Council. While the GCE is obliged to review the role of the Moderator, it extended that review to include the role of the General Secretary.
- Exercising its fiduciary role - including the review of budget principles, prioritizing growth, and acting as the administrator to the UCC Pension Plan. Additionally, the GCE monitors the Captive Insurance program and continues to explore, clarify and consolidate the governance of the UPRC to ensure its goals are advanced and grounded in our common values.

- Ongoing strategic oversight - including receiving and monitoring updates to the Strategic Plan to support the GCO in living into the Call and Vision of the church. The GCE has been engaging in dialogue with staff regarding the “Towards 2035” initiatives in its two recent meetings (November 2024 and March 2025), and reflects on, makes meaning of, and imagines how it will come to life.
- Reflecting on, in a prayerful and whole-hearted way, how best to support the preparation and issue of the National Indigenous Church remit.
- Committing to all of the governance authorities and responsibilities set out in the Manual, including “communicating its decisions to all members of the General Council and all councils” (Manual Section D 5.3.2 (f)).

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