



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC45 GCE04 Funding Strategic Growth Initiatives for Summer 2025

True Document Date: August 9, 2025

Origin: General Council Executive

1. What is the issue? Why is it important?

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 of General Council affirmed that the Growth objective was the critical priority and the leading edge for helping the church to live into its strategic Call. 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. What is happening now?

As the 42nd General Council, in Corner Brook, NL, 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, the church 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.

At its meeting of March 7-9, 2025, the General Council Executive affirmed its support and commitment to the growth initiative approved in the strategic operational plan and agreed to request the following of the 45th General Council.

3. What is the recommendation?

The Executive of the General Council requests that the 45th General Council:

- 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. Background information:

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 Supervised Ministry Education 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.

Moving towards 10% of Mission and Service for the growth initiative will enable these efforts to continue and will result in a budget that reflects the church's stated priorities. However, it will mean cuts to other Mission and Service funding to accomplish this.

5. How does this Proposal help us live into our church's 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.

For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Disagree and forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Take no action at this time

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: GCinfo@united-church.ca

Document Type: [Proposal](#)

General Council: [GC45](#)

Originating Body: [General Council Executive](#)