



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC45 NOM01 Members Recommended for the General Council Executive for Summer 2025

True Document Date: June 22, 2025

Origin: Nominations Committee

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

The General Council needs to elect and authorize members to serve on the General Council Executive which is accountable to the General Council.

The structure of the United Church calls for an Executive which is the decision-making body for the United Church between meetings of the General Council, living into covenantal relationship and mutually accountable with the General Council, regional councils, and communities of faith.

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. What is happening now?

The Executive consists of 18 members. Three serve by virtue of office (Moderator, Past-Moderator, and General Secretary); 15 are elected by the General Council to serve terms of six years, staggered to ensure that approximately half conclude their terms each triennium to be replaced by new members. Seven of the elected members are concluding their terms with this General Council.

The Nominations Committee is responsible for reviewing nominations and uses collaborative Spiritual discernment processes to submit to the General Council a slate of recommendations for election. In continuance of past-practice, the National Indigenous Elders Council has been invited to recommend one person, to be added to the six recommended by the Nominations Committee.

Having faithfully engaged in the work mandated to it, the Nominations Committee confidently offers this recommendation to the General Council.

3. What is the recommendation?

The Nominations Committee of the General Council recommends

That the General Council elect the following members to serve as the General Council Executive from the rise of the 45th General Council:

Members to serve until the 47th General Council, 2031

1. Nia Bentayen – Lay Person, Pacific Mountain
2. Katherine Brittain – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
3. Luke Haisa – Ordained Minister, Chinook Winds
4. Deepak Nitesh Yohan – Ordained Minister, First Dawn Eastern Edge
5. Luc Noubissi – Lay Person, Shining Waters
6. Hillary Van Spronsen – Ordained Minister, Chinook Winds
7. *TBD –The National Indigenous Elders Council has been invited to recommend a person for this position*

Members serving until the 46th General Council, 2028 (for information)

8. Michael Caveney – Ordained Minister, Pacific Mountain
9. M Chorney – Lay Person, Prairie to Pine
10. Catherine Glover – Lay Person, Antler River Watershed
11. Wilson Gonese – Ordained Minister, Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters
12. David Leyton-Brown – Lay Person, Shining Waters
13. Alcris Limongi – Ordained Minister, Prairie to Pine
14. Kathleen (Kit) Loewen – Lay Person, Living Skies
15. Thea Sheridan-Jonah – Lay Person, Horseshoe Falls

Positions by office (for information)

16. *To be elected, Moderator*
17. Carmen Lansdowne, *Immediate Past Moderator*
18. Michael Blair, *General Secretary*

4. Background information:

The nominations call for the Executive requested people who are able to see the big picture, manage risks, and appreciate the impact of decisions on the people and communities of faith of the United Church. Collectively the Executive requires expertise in areas such as finance, pension, human resources, governance, global or ecumenical experience, different forms of ministry, participation in the francophone church, and theological leadership as well as the knowledge to contribute to governance-level conversations.

The Nominations Committee considered 21 nominations for the six positions on the General Council Executive, with the National Indigenous Elders Council invited to recommend a seventh. We are blessed by an abundance of excellent, dedicated leadership in this church.

The Nominations Committee considered the gifts of each person, their relational-abilities, their ability to engage in discussions of strategy, performance, and risk, the needs of the Executive, and the gifts and perspectives present in those whom these six will be joining. Above all, the Nominations Committee opened itself to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to discern whom God is calling to these leadership roles at this time.

No group of 18 people could ever reflect the full diversity of the United Church. It will be the responsibility of the Executive to recognize who is not at the table and actively seek them out in understanding issues and the impact of decisions.

With gratitude to each of them – and to all who were willing to take on this role – the Nominations Committee confidently recommends these six members to serve on the General Council Executive.

As always, members absented themselves from any discernment where they or members of their family had expressed interest.

About the recommended members:

Koinonia “Nia” Bentayen is a second-generation Filipino-Canadian, born and raised in British Columbia. She is a young adult balancing two jobs: a Behaviour Interventionist in Burnaby, and a Youth Ministry Coordinator at Crossroads United Church in Delta, BC. Questions on her mind right now are: "How do you know that you are loved by God?", "How do you love those around you, with the same love that God has for them?", and "How can we collaborate together to nurture the church for the next 100 years?"

Katherine Brittain is an Ordained minister, currently serving Brechin United Church on Vancouver Island. She has served in congregational ministry in Saskatchewan, Toronto and British Columbia, as well as volunteering in many positions at the wider church level. She brings an understanding of the gifts and challenges of all three council-levels of the church. Katherine served on the Executive for a short-span in 2024-2025 to complete the remainder of a resigning member's term. She contributed effectively to the Executive during that term and in her own words is "longing to learn more." Katherine and her wife, Beth, are moms to two amazing daughters and Benji the dog.

Luke Haisa's academic background and roles in various church leadership positions, in the Reformed Church In Zimbabwe and the United Church of Canada have equipped him with strategic planning, governance, and ecumenical collaboration skills; making him well-prepared for the General Council Executive. Luke has experience serving in governance roles with the Regional Council, the Board of Regents at St. Andrew's College, and the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Luke holds a Master's in International Relations and, at the time of writing, was about to receive a Masters of Theological Studies.

Luc Noubissi - Luc Noubissi is a dedicated lay leader within the French Ministries of the United Church of Canada. He recently served on the Anti-Racism Common Table and brings over 23 years of executive experience in the banking and insurance sectors. Passionate about faith in action, Luc states: "I am committed to being a faithful and vibrant witness of God in society—by standing with the most vulnerable and working toward a more just distribution of wealth in the world." His leadership spans religious and social initiatives across several countries, including Cameroon, Gabon, and Canada.

Hillary Van Sponsen is an ordained minister serving as the Associate Minister at Symons Valley United Church in Calgary, Alberta, where she focuses on pastoral care, community engagement, and creating a welcoming and inclusive faith community. A lifelong member of the United Church, she brings deep experience in governance, leadership, and visioning at all levels of the church. "I bring a holistic approach to ministry, always looking at the bigger

picture – how our faith, our communities, and our governance intersect to create a church that is both faithful and forward-thinking.”

Deepak Nitesh Yohan is a minister from Norman's Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador. He has had the privilege to serve churches in two different countries and with two global partners of the United Church and National Council of Churches In India (NCCI) before coming to Canada. He served as a Cross Culture Missionary Lecturer at the United Church of Zambia Theological College. “Due to my past experience of serving on contemporary issues like, LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion, Ecumenism, interfaith dialogue, justice for marginalized and oppressed, I strongly feel my experience and understanding on issues will add to the work of the United Church”.

5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

The membership of the General Council Executive aims to reflect the broad diversity of the United Church, with particular attention to its equity commitments and the presence of both lay people and ministry personnel from across the geography of the church.

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. In addition, the committee upholds the church's commitments to the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; those who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+; Indigenous; racialized; Francophone or active in French ministries; those who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from marginalized communities not named here.

Many of those recommended personally hold one or more of these identities. Collectively within this group of 16 Executive members, each of the seven equity-commitment identities are present, usually through more than one person. All members of the General Council Executive are expected to uphold the United Church's commitments to equity in their practices and in their decisions.

General Council: [GC45](#)

Originating Body: [Nominations Committee](#)