



The United Church of Canada General Council

GC44 Summary Report from the Indigenous Church for October 2023

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The National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering was held on July 28-30, 2023, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The gathering space and time were significant based on the theme "Our Strong Voices" and the placement of the beaver – a teacher of wisdom. The discussions and workshops gave a fundamental time together to discern ways of supporting our suffering Indigenous communities across Canada. Suicide prevention, testamur, and sexual orientation within the Two spirited understanding were some of our topics. The youth came together to lead a panel discussion on the state of emergency calls in our communities. We engaged in discussion on the "Bringing the Children Home" campaign within the United Church. We also honored our membership, leadership and elders in various ways through the gathering time. We lifted up the newly appointed National Indigenous Council and named additional members to the National Indigenous Elders Council. The members of the National Indigenous Council elected at the National Indigenous Spiritual gathering were:

- Leeann Shimoda
- Teresa Burnett-Cole

- Gloria Cook
- David Fiddler
- Janet Root
- Wayne Monague
- William Joseph Harasymow
- Keetah Levac
- Delores Kenny
- Rev. Kimberly Roy
- Ronald Wayne Hoekstra
- Kaileigh Dumont
- Nathaniel Grieves
- Ashley Keeping (Youth Alternative)
- Grant Qeskekapow
- Robert Patton

These members were nominated by their regions.

The National Indigenous Council are set to meet in person in Toronto this November to start their work and engage in orientation as the new council. With this work they will look to various needs that include the Indigenous church structure, the placement of the current Remit vote and the Strategic plan platform on the Indigenous pathway strategy. At the same time the council will begin their relationship building with General Council Executive in Toronto, as this is the shift and work laid within the process of the Indigenous church structuring as two canoes paddling side by side down the same river.

The National Indigenous Elders Council have continued to meet monthly to invest in their vision of the Indigenous church structure and work within advocacy work on residential school commitments of the United Church, support to the GCE and the support of our sacred bundle. The council continuously responds to various requests from members and groups within the church asking for their support or advice on various matters. They will continue to commit their time to support within the structure of the Indigenous church with the National Indigenous Council.

As we look towards the Remit process ending in March 2024, the Indigenous church is looking to create a foundation that will need to be committed to as an Indigenous United church. The work on the Indigenous Pathways objectives of the Strategic Plan of the United Church is now part of the workplan and vision of the Indigenous church.

Some of this focus will be geared to Youth mentorship and our vision of Ministries and training for the Indigenous church.

Our sacred bundle is now being led into our structure and a spiritual pathway for the Indigenous church. We honoured the hand off of our sacred bundle from the late Grafton Antone, to the new keeper, the Executive Minister of Indigenous Ministries & Justice. With the support and guidance of the Elders Council and support from our local traditions and spiritual giftedness, we will ensure our bundle will guide us, befriend us and continue to lead us to what we call ourselves to be on these great lands, people of the Earth.

Rev. Murray Pruden
National Executive Minister

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