



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GCE45 Moderator Accountability Report for November 2025

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This has been a time of transition for me.

New jobs always mean growth, learning and transition. I'm grateful to those who have helped me to settle in and understand more fully the role of the Moderator and the work of The United Church of Canada. The early days were spent meeting with staff and teams of the UCC in person and online. I quickly realized that where I needed significant orientation was with the systems we use for our communication and work.

In the old days, orienting to the physical space and to people doing the work would have been the bulk of the orientation but the General Council Office at 3250 Bloor St. W. is not the place most people work anymore – thanks in part to the pandemic that moved many of us to working from home and to the fact that the office is in the process of physically moving. I needed orientation to Microsoft Office, Teams, SharePoint, Narthex and delightful apps such as Chrome River and Egencia. I am still finding my way around this space though my proficiency is increasing.

General Council and General Council Executive

One of the first tasks of significance was chairing the recall of General Council 45, which took place on September 13. Thanks to the Way Forward, the Governance and other teams, the business was conducted smoothly, and we accomplished more than we had anticipated. From my perspective, the technology worked well; commissioners participated with minimal challenges.

On September 25-28, the GCE met in person. It was good to put names to faces and to get to know this leadership team better. The team-building exercise in an escape room was a highlight. The meeting was a good orientation to our roles, responsibilities and commitments, as well as to the governance model we use to facilitate our decision-making.

Once again, it was an occasion for me to learn how, as a chair, to effectively move us into good discussion and debate, but also to help navigate the process for coming to a decision. I am grateful to the Governance Team for their leadership in this area.

External invitations to the Moderator

The first invitation I received was from the Islamic community in Brockville. On August 22, I was invited to address the community that gathered for Friday prayers. Over the years, Wall Street, the pastoral charge at which I served, had developed a good relationship with the Islamic community and so I was grateful for the invitation; it was clear they were honored that I was able to accept.

Reflecting the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, I was invited to bring greetings and to speak to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dorval, QC, on September 22-23. It was a rich experience, and my message was well received.

I attended the ceremony for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on September 30. I helped to carry the Memorial Cloth on which was printed the names of the children who are known not to have returned home from residential school. By chance, I ended up holding onto the cloth for a section of names of students attending a United Church-run school. To see the names of real children is moving but to carry those names in the capacity of the spiritual head of a denomination that was one of the partners and architects in this brutal history is heavy and sobering. I will carry those names with me as I journey through my time as Moderator.

The invitation to be the Paul Scott Wilson preacher for the Lester Randall Preaching Fellowship, October 26-28, came before I was elected Moderator; however, they are very much lifting up my new position and have invited me to participate in some panel discussions while at the conference.

Connecting with the wider UCCan

Along with the General Secretary, I met with and spoke to the National United Church Women's conference in Toronto on September 16. They are a hospitable, energetic and engaged group of women.

I participated in the English and French Cross-Country Check-ins online. For the latter, it became apparent that I need to practice my casual spoken French. While I read and understand quite fluently, I struggle to put thoughts together and to find the right

vocabulary and expressions when speaking unscripted in French. Connecting with the francophone community and lifting our commitment to being “functionally bilingual” is a priority for me and therefore, I plan to spend some time honing this ability.

On weekends off, I have taken the opportunity to attend local United Churches (Alderwood UC in Toronto, Toledo and St. John’s in the Brockville area) and to be present during worship.

I was invited to preach at St. Williams, part of the Long Point Bay Pastoral Charge in Horseshoe Falls for their 155th anniversary. They were so appreciative that a moderator would visit them.

On October 26, I am preaching at Timothy Eaton in Toronto as part of the Lester Randall Preaching Fellowship.

I was invited to be present for part of the Office of Vocation in-person meeting in Toronto, where I spoke to the gathered community and connected with the more than 100 people from across the country. I was impressed by the content and the connections.

I’ve also had the opportunity to connect online with National Elders of the Indigenous Church.

Media and church engagement

With the Communications team, I recorded an introduction video and an Advent video, each with an additional video in French. I will be recording another 3 or 4 videos (each with companion French video) in early November.

There have been written and live interviews with Broadview and other media.

Other endeavors

Mostly, my work has been responding to various requests. However, I felt called to initiate a prayer vigil during the month of October for peace in Palestine and Israel. One proposal that came to the GC in August was an emergency proposal on this dire situation. One of the recommendations in COM06 was to “Declare a time of fasting, prayer and protest.” When I saw this in August, it struck me as different and needed.

We are quick to send letters to the government but sometimes we don’t connect our justice work to our faith work. When I presented the idea of a weekly prayer vigil on Wednesdays during the month of October to some staff, I was expecting them to support it but tell me it might have to wait until after Christmas. However, it was clear that the moment for such an

initiative was now, and the staff rallied to make it happen in a very short time frame. These prayer circles have so far been well attended (around 50 people gathered) and appreciated.

Other thoughts

I am still finding my sea-legs in this role and part of my challenge is likely because we are in transition between the time when the Moderator had an Advisory Committee and the formation of the new Accountability Committee for both the Moderator and General Secretary. The reasons for making the shift are good and clear but I am feeling the vacuum.

In hindsight I wonder if there should have been a transition time of a Moderator's Advisory Committee for one year while the other comes into being. I also wonder whether the new Accountability committee will offer as much support and wisdom for the Moderator as the previous model. It continues to be challenging to discern not only which visits the Moderator should make but even more which staff initiatives should have higher or lower priority for my involvement.

Conclusion

It is a real honour to be in this role. I am so grateful for the many connections I am making with people and ministries across this church, and I am grateful to the staff, the GCE, and the many who are supporting all that I am called to do.

Transitions are always disruptive and challenging, but they are necessary as we move into a new place. As God has called me to this new role and as They continue to lead the church into its Call and Vision, we say with faith that we are not alone:

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. – Philippians 1:6

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