

**Fall Gathering of
Horseshoe Falls Regional Council**

Friday, October 13 – Saturday, October 14, 2023
Online Meeting Workbook

Renewal and Transformation ... A Season of Hope!



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[Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization](#)

Click link for Remit 1 information, videos and background

Those of you who have Regional Council voting privileges, if you were not at the Remit education session at the Spring 2023 meeting, please try to attend a Remit Foundations Workshop or watch the Remit Foundations video online **before** our Fall Regional Council gathering.

We encourage anyone who was at the Spring 2023 meeting, but might like a refresher, to watch the video again. The video can be viewed on the Remit 1 Information Page on the website. Workshop dates are also on that same webpage.

Workbook Introduction

THEME *Renewal and Transformation ... A Season of Hope!*

PURPOSE **Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith**

PRIORITIES

Assessment	Mission & Support
Communities of Faith Support/Pastoral Relations	Children and Youth
Communications and Resources Support	Chaplaincy
Connecting/Meeting	Social Justice

Format and Process: Decision Making

The format for General Council proposals is being used for the regional meeting. The General Council approach involves three distinct stages in the decision-making process:

1. Listening/learning;
2. Discussion;
3. Decision.

In our regional council meeting we do not have the space or time to mirror these stages in the same way the General Council practices them.

In our proceedings, the steps will be:

1. The Presenter will outline:
 - a. What is the issue? And,
 - b. The suggested way in which the regional council might respond to the issue.
2. The President will inquire if there are questions for clarification. Please note this is for clarification only.
3. The President will then ask if there are changes or additions being suggested for the proposal.
4. Once there is significant agreement, the President will invite the Presenter to move the motion at which point the regional council enters the formal debate process.



Holy Manners

The following acronym offers us a way to have faith-filled conversations on important topics.

For our time together, we commit to being brave by ...

Being accountable for the impact of both our words and our silence

Reflecting on and naming our own biases

Actively listening

Vocalizing questions that arise from our learning

Encountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

***A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer.
It sings because it has a song.***

Maya Angelou



Participation in a Virtual Meeting

If joining by Zoom, please review the following. How Zoom presents depends upon the device being used. Every participant is expected to know:

- 1) How to **mute** and **unmute** themselves;
- 2) How to turn their **video on** and **off**;
- 3) How to **rename themselves**;
- 4) How to **raise their hand**.

If you are not familiar with these options, there are zoom information tips on our website at: [Zoom resources](#).

Please ensure you have updated to the latest version of Zoom. Otherwise, some meeting options might not work for you.

Waiting Room

When you first log into the meeting, you will be placed in a waiting room. As soon as the meeting is ready to start, you will be automatically admitted.

Participants

When you are admitted to the meeting, please go immediately to the **Participants list**. You will see your name listed BUT sometimes you are identified by the type of device you are using. The President will be recognizing people on the basis of the name that is shown. So, please change your name to read **First Name/Surname** by hovering over the mic and camera icons, click on **More**, then **Rename**.

*For example, Acting Executive Minister, Mark's iPhone might read: Mark's iPhone. Mark would need to go to the **Participant list** and **change his name** to: Mark Laird (he/him). All participants are encouraged to **add their pronouns** after their name.*

Those who are at the meeting as a guest (not a voting participant) please add an x in front of your name. THIS IS IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE A NON-VOTING GUEST.

For example, if Mark was a guest, he would write his name as:

x-Mark Laird. This helps us with vote counting.

Mute

All participants will be automatically muted when they enter the meeting. Please ensure your microphone remains off. This reduces background noise and feedback and improves the quality of sound for everyone.

You will need to click on the **Mute** button to turn on your microphone if you are recognized by the President to speak in debate and when you move into breakout rooms.

Video

Please have your video on as you join the meeting! It is lovely to see everyone as the meeting begins. Once the meeting begins, please turn off your video. That way, you have some privacy if you move around and are not in danger of sharing unintentionally. This also helps with the stability of the Zoom call especially in places with unstable internet.

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

There may be times when the President wishes to informally poll the regional council concerning a proposed change. The President may ask for a thumbs up or thumbs down. These two icons are found under reactions.

Being recognized to speak

To be recognized to speak in the discussion time, first **please raise your hand** by clicking on the button labeled **Raise Hand**. Your digital hand will then be raised. The Zoom host will draw the President's attention to your hand. The hand will be lowered by the meeting hosts after you have spoken.

Remember when the President calls you by name to:

1. **Unmute** your microphone
2. Turn on **video**
3. **State your name**; and
4. Your **community of faith** – be sure to add the location as we have a few Trinity United Churches, Emmanuel United Churches, St. John's United Churches ...

Voting

This will be explained in the meeting. If you are a guest, please remember you do not vote.

Chat Box

Please reserve the chat box for the following:

1. Questions of **clarification**;
2. **Procedural concerns** and questions;
3. **Matters of privilege** (for example someone uses a term that is insulting to another who then wishes to bring that to the President's attention re the conduct of the council).

Many of us have experience of meetings where the chat box served as the discussion space, which in fact turns it into commentary. Discussion happens among participants when the President recognizes the speaker. The Chat Box is a side conversation that is distracting and disruptive.

If you see a friend among the participants with whom you wish to chat, please feel free to **send a private message** to them. Go to Participants, enter their name or scroll to their name & click on it and then you can send them a private note!

Breakout Rooms

Participants will be invited to move into a breakout room at various times during the meeting. To join the breakout room, participants must accept the **join invitation**. Once you enter the breakout room, unmute your microphone and turn on your video.

Equity Support Team Member Position Description

The members of the Equity Support Team are two or more individuals who might volunteer to be active participants at a United Church meeting or event. The Equity Support Team members are part of the leadership of a meeting or an event, and have responsibilities before, during, and after a gathering.

Equity realizes that in order to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all peoples, we need to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some people and groups. Equity moves closer to justice, and it is part of the work of the church.

While working toward equity is a collective responsibility of everyone, the members of the Equity Support Team have a particular role in helping to name equity issues at gatherings.

Responsibilities

Before the meeting

- Attend planning team meetings, when possible, to help offer advice about equity- related issues and to help shape the planning process for the event or meeting.
- Receive background education and training on equity and receive an orientation to the Equity Support Team role.
- Offer advice about Web content, meetings, workshops, or events so that they follow established protocols for equity, accessibility, and communication-related issues; and that PowerPoint slides comply with an established font size protocol (as suggested by the 43rd General Council), and communicate a set of best practices for online and in- person meetings.
- Along with the planning team, clarify that the role of the Equity Support Team is different from the role of theological reflectors, chaplains, Elders, and other leadership roles that are present at a meeting or event.
- Share a contact phone number or equity e-mail with participants so they can be in touch with the Equity Support Members during the gathering.
- Be introduced to participants of the meeting in advance (by short video and/or by e-mail with a bio) so participants at the meeting might get to know the team members before the gathering takes place.

During the meeting

- At the beginning of the meeting, offer a covenant, equity agreements, intercultural lens questions, or other related protocols that can help work toward equity at the gathering.
- Be available (by phone or e-mail) to participants at the meeting who would like to share about any equity-related issues over the course of the meeting (including affirmation of processes, or hearing particular challenges that people are experiencing).
- Help work toward the full participation of peoples of all identities.
- Be attentive to microaggressions, unhelpful power dynamics, harm, intercultural

conflicts, oppressive practices, and/or other inequities.

- If hurt or harm has been done in the course of a meeting, in most cases do not offer a direct intervention or interjection in the moment, but rather be in touch with the moderator or chair of the meeting and ask them to address the issue at another point during the gathering.
- Partway through the gathering and/or at the end of the gathering, offer advice and feedback on how the meeting has been functioning in terms of equity. It is helpful to offer some affirmation about what has been going well, and suggestions for a subsequent gathering.
- When reporting back to the meeting, point out any issues in a general way, and not specifically target individual people.

After the meeting

- Meet with staff and/or the planning team to offer feedback about equity for a subsequent meeting. These could name what has worked well and what should continue, as well as suggestions for improvement at a subsequent meeting.
- If possible, offer a written report of their insights and recommendations for a future meeting.

Background

The United Church of Canada, through its General Council, has made several commitments around equity in recent years. These commitments include the following:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) as the basis for a new relationship
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church
- committing to becoming [an intercultural church](#)
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#)
- [working toward functional bilingualism](#) and ensuring that francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision
- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity, and
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

All of these commitments are part of ongoing and sustained efforts for the United Church to continue to work toward equity, creating better places of belonging for people of all identities, to challenging power and privilege, and to live into God's call to be the church.

Section One: Check-In

President Lennox Scarlett's Message: *Into the Season of Hope!*



There is no mistaking knowing what season we are in. With the beautiful transformation of leaves from green to yellow, amber, crimson and purple, it's clear we have entered the fall season. Or in other places, it's called autumn. This is very much like the yellow poui tree, which when it starts blooming, is a reminder to students to get ready, because exams are in the air. It has been my tendency to look out for moments and embrace them, as life journeys on.

One big moment that is not easily missed is Thanksgiving:

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 reminds us ...

***In all circumstances give thanks,
for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.***

Irrespective of where people are from, every language has a way of saying "thank you." This is because gratitude is an inherent quality that resides within each human being, and is triggered and expressed spontaneously in a variety of different contexts. Gratitude crosses all boundaries — creed, age, vocation, gender, race, and nation — and is emphasized by all the great religious traditions. Very often, gratitude is expressed in response to receiving a gift. The connection to the concept of gifts is a natural one.

As a regional council, we have been given a gift of an opportunity to rewrite our future and change the trajectory to one of HOPE. I am aware that there are many communities of faith that are struggling to keep your doors open because of diminishing numbers and increasing expenses, or an inability to innovate and create new paths that lead to growth. But always know that our hope does not spring from our own ability to manufacture it, it comes from God. The Holy Spirit continually ministers to us in all our need. And among the things offered to us is hope. Our task is to remain open to it. Because Hope is a gift from God. Pray for that gift, for the renewal of hope, and then, look for the opportunities your community of faith to the wider community. Be imaginative and creative. And trust God. Remember,



We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

HEBREWS 6:19A NIV

The theme over the next two years is:

Renewal and Transformation ... A Season of Hope!

It is my desire that over our Fall Gathering scheduled for Friday, October 13 and Saturday, October 14 that we can huddle together and hope together for the Lord's direction.

Remember always the words of *PSALM 121*:

From whence comes my help?

My help comes from the Lord,

who made heaven and earth....

The Lord is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;

The Lord shall preserve your soul.

Blessings,



Rev. Lennox Scarlett

President, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council



As at October 2023

In Memoriam

Rev. Sylvia Bethune, DLM
Rev. Lorna MacQueen, OM
Rev. Walter Marttila, OM
Rev. Ha-Kyoo Park, OM
Rev. Arthur Tobey, OM



Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes

Disbandments

With thanks for their legacy and faithful service

Cawthra Park United Church, Mississauga
People's Memorial United Church, Ridgeway
Mt. Carmel United Church, Troy



Section Two: Information

Congregational Support Commission

The Congregational Support Commission (formerly Covenant Commission, name changed January 1, 2023) carries primary responsibility for the relationship between communities of faith and the region and their partnership on matters requiring a decision by both the community of faith and the regional council, other than the pastoral relationship. The responsibilities of the Commission include:

- The articulation of ministry (Community of Faith Profile);
- The use of financial and property resources;
- Local governance;
- The overall health and well-being of communities of faith, such as changes in the life cycle, dealing with real property etc.

If you have questions about any aspects of the life and work of your church, the congregational support toolkits will provide answers to many of your questions: This is a good first step to seeking the information you need: <https://hfrucc.ca/congregational-support/congregational-support-toolkits/>

Some of the work we have been involved in since the last Fall meeting of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council includes the review and evaluation of Annual reports submitted by Communities of faith in order to identify strengths and vulnerabilities. A policy is currently being developed around remuneration for Pastoral Charge Supervisors. A presentation at the Regional meeting will provide opportunity for your input into the formation of this policy. We have also been working for communities of faith who are disbanding, working toward a collaborative ministry, selling property as well as those visioning for the future. A good amount of is spent reviewing Community of Faith Profiles, some of which require the consent of the Commission prior to entering into the search process for call or appointment.

Please take the time to look over the special message which follows this report about the search process and “steps to follow” from Pat Tooley, Human Resources Chair, and Adrienne Robertson, Congregational Support Chair.

COMMUNITY OF FAITH PROFILES

The Community of Faith Profile is a wonderful tool to help your congregation evaluate and articulate your own unique ministry. Who are you? What are your strengths? Assets? Goals? Vision for the future?

We are asking each congregation to complete their Community of Faith Profile and submit it to the Congregational Support Commission by the end of 2023. Here are the links to the profile worksheet:

The Profile Preparation Handbook can be found here:

<https://hfrucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CoF-Profile-Preparation-Handbook-1.pdf>

The Living Faith Story, which will offer a detailed description of your ministry:

<https://hfrucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Living-Faith-Story-Worksheet.docx>

The Financial Viability worksheet will offer a thorough snapshot of your current & future financial well being: <https://hfrucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Financial-Viability-Worksheet.docx>

The Demographic Worksheet asks the questions ‘who are we?’ and ‘who are our neighbours?’: <https://hfrucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Demographics-Worksheet-2.docx>

IF you have any other property (other than the church building) please include this form: <https://hfrucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Real-Property-Worksheet-1.docx>

Once completed, the community of faith profile can be reviewed annually and updated. Most changes in the lifecycle of your community of faith (collaboration, amalgamation, disbanding, calls and appointments, sale of property etc. will require an updated Profile BEFORE consent is given by the Congregational Support Commission to proceed.

Amalgamations

- Old Windham United Church, Simcoe and Mount Zion United Church, Renton now Colborne Village Pastoral Charge, Simcoe
- Binkley United Church, Hamilton and St. Mark’s United Church, Dundas
- Freelton United Church and Strabane United Church

Collaborative Ministry Agreements

- Bethesda United Church and Ryerson United Church, Ancaster
- Rockton United Church, Sheffield United Church, Lynden United Church & Southampton United Church
- Stoney Creek United Church and Pioneer Memorial United Church, Hamilton (also affirmed 2016 Ecumenical shared ministry with St. Columba Presbyterian Church)
- Ecumenical Shared Ministry agreement between St. Mark’s United Church, Dundas and Knox Presbyterian Church

Sales of Property

- Mt. Zion United Church, Renton
- Freelton United Church, Freelton
- Trinity United Church, Thorold

Disbanded Communities of Faith

- Garnet United Church, Hagersville
- People’s Memorial United Church, Ridgeway
- Mount Carmel United Church, Troy Pastoral Charge

Workshops Held from November 2022-September 2023

Pastoral Charge Supervisor Gathering – November 2022

Deficit Dilemma – January 2023

Lay Representatives Gatherings – November and August 2023

Collaborative Ministry Workshop – June (at Lynden United Church) and September

Property workshop – November 15, 2023

Online training is now available for Pastoral Charge Supervisors. Email Lynne Allin for more information at lallin@united-church.ca.

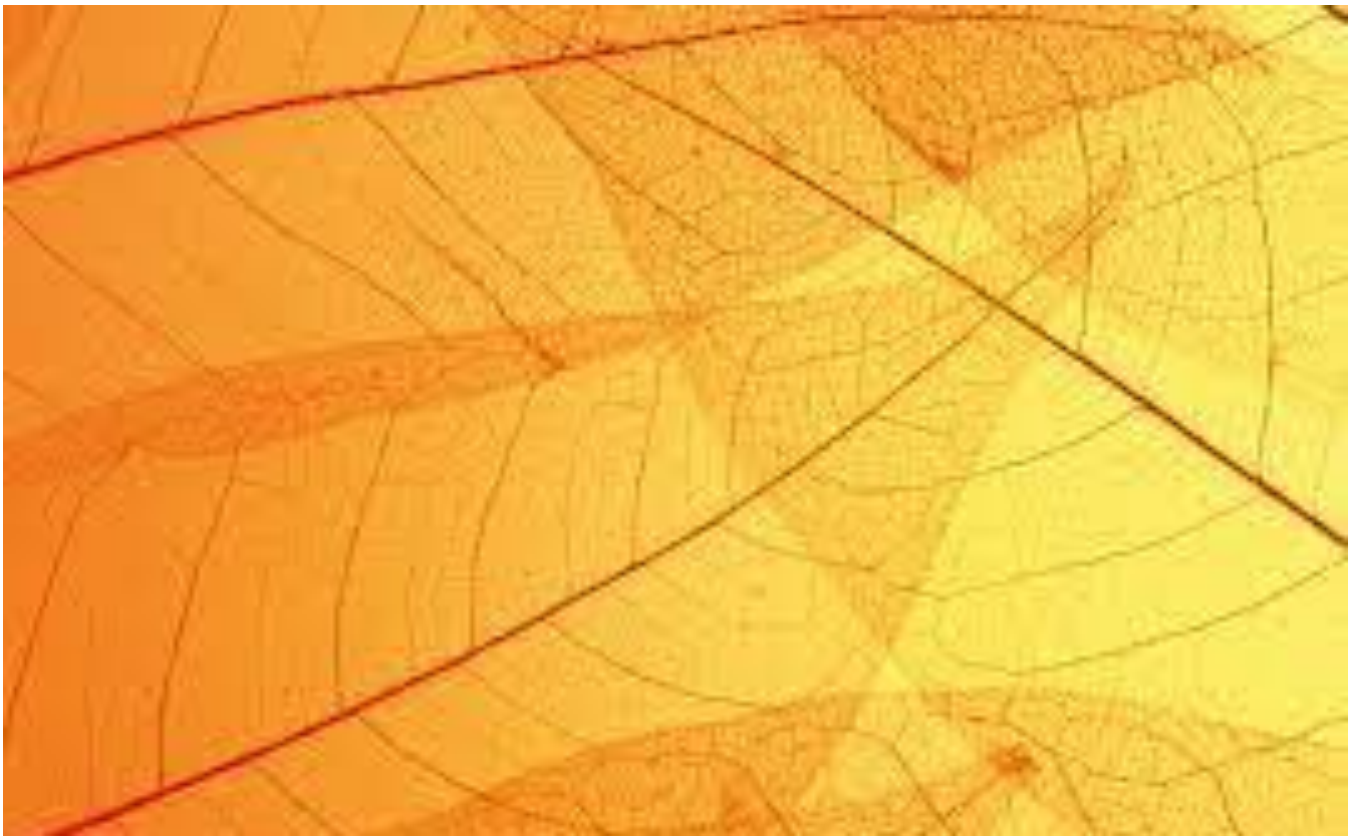
The Commission meets monthly on the second Tuesday. All documentation that is needing approval must be sent to the Congregational Support Minister for the commission's review no later than the first of the month.

Many thanks to Lynne Allin for her dedication and commitment to her role as Congregational Support Minister. The commission values her expertise and guidance and we seek to support, connect and empower Communities of Faith in Horseshoe Falls. Thank you as well to Ruthanna Mack for providing administrative support. Commission Members include: Mary Anderson, Shawn Bausch, Jane Capstick, Judy Chartrand, Ross Gowan, Steve Lowden, Karen Tobey, Jane Wyllie.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne Robertson

Adrienne Robertson
Chair, Congregational Support Commission



An Important Message from the Chairs of the Horseshoe Falls Human Resources Commission and Congregational Support Commission

It is important to connect with both the Human Resources Commission AND the Congregational Support Commission AS YOU BEGIN THE SEARCH PROCESS. HERE ARE THE STEPS to follow:

FIRST, the pastoral charge(s) decides whether to search for a supply minister (6-month Appointment, renewable twice) or move directly to searching for a “permanent” minister

If the decision is to search for a SUPPLY MINISTER, the pastoral charge(s) follows these steps:

1. The governing body contacts the Minister, Pastoral Relations and copies the Minister, Congregational Support, indicating a desire to create a short-term appointment. In order to streamline the process no documentation is required for the Congregational Support Commission.
The search process continues with the support of the Human Resources Commission and Minister, Pastoral Relations.
2. The Human Resources Commission will appoint a liaison to support the search process.
3. The governing body, or its designate, drafts a position description based on the number of hours of ministry it feels appropriate. A position description template is available from the Minister, Pastoral Relations.
4. The governing body of each community of faith approves the position description.
5. Once approved by the governing body, a copy of the position description is sent to the Minister, Pastoral Relations for approval by the Human Resources Commission. The Minister, Pastoral Relations confers with the Minister, Congregational Support to ensure the number of hours of ministry time is reasonable.
6. The governing body/bodies selects a search team and arranges training by consulting with the Minister, Pastoral Relations.
7. The Search Team posts the position description on ChurchHub, which will be activated by the Minister, Pastoral Relations.
8. The Search Team proceeds with the search process.

When the decision is to search for a permanent minister, the congregation follows these steps:

1. The governing body of each community of faith completes/updates all Community of Faith Profile worksheets (to be approved by the Congregational Support Commission) *If this is a multi-point pastoral charge, each congregation completes the profile.* Include any additional financial information for the pastoral charge.

You MUST complete the last page of the financial viability worksheet which asks for the number of hours and category (A-F) of ministry personnel for the position.

If this is a multi-point pastoral charge or collaborative ministry, please indicate the hours each congregation can afford and the total hours for the position.

2. The governing body reviews the completed Community of Faith Profile and is encouraged to send a draft to the Minister, Congregational Support for review.

3. The governing body, or its designate, drafts a position description using the information in the community of faith profile as a reference to identify the responsibilities of the ministry position and necessary gifts and skills. The Minister, Pastoral Relations provides a position description template and appoints a liaison to work with the congregation, if one has not already been appointed.
4. The governing body reviews the completed position description and is encouraged to send a draft to the Minister, Pastoral Relations for review.
5. The governing body(ies) call a congregational meeting to approve the community of faith profile and position description.
6. The governing body sends the approved community of faith profile and position description to the Minister, Congregational Support and to the Minister, Pastoral Relations for approval by the respective commissions.

Once approved you will be notified.

The search process now continues with the support of the Human Resources Commission and Minister, Pastoral Relations.

7. The governing body/bodies selects a search team and arranges training by consulting with the Minister, Pastoral Relations.
8. The Search Team posts the Community of Faith Profile and Position Description on ChurchHub, which will be activated by the Minister, Pastoral Relations.
9. The Search Team proceeds with the search process.

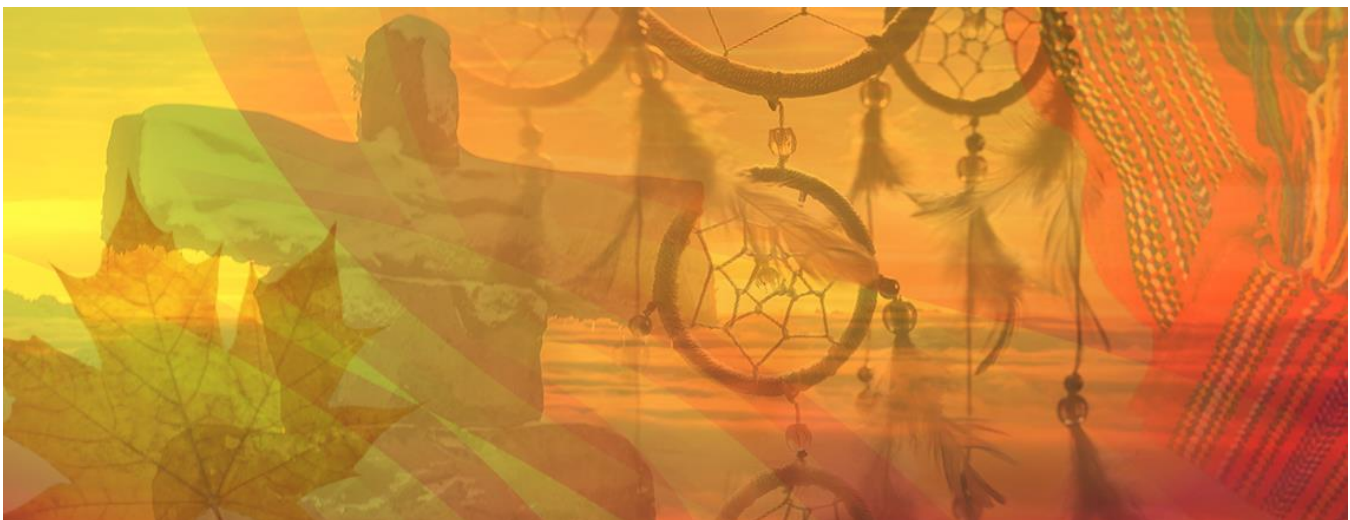
If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to either of us.

Pat

Pat Tooley
Chair, Human Resources Commission

Adrienne

Adrienne Robertson
Chair, Congregational Support Commission



Pastoral Charge Supervisors



WOWRC
WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.wowrcucc.ca



ARWRC
ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.arwrcucc.ca



HFRC
HORSESHOE FALLS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.hfrcucc.ca

** Suggested effective date for this Tri-regional council policy: January 1, 2024*

Costs of Pastoral Charge Supervision to the Community of Faith

A Community of Faith receiving supervision is responsible to provide an honourarium based on \$30 per hour to the Pastoral Charge Supervisor. This includes meetings of the Governing Body, Trustees, Congregation and Pastoral Charge. In a multi-point pastoral charge the communities of faith will have to determine how pastoral charge supervisors are paid.

Travel time to and from a Community of Faith is not covered by the hourly rate.

Pastoral Charge Supervisors are to submit their hours to the community of faith on an agreed upon frequency and not less than 2 times per year.

Given that in most cases the pastoral charge is without clergy or receiving reimbursement for restorative care these expenses should not be burdensome. If it is anticipated to result in financial difficulties in the Community of Faith, a request may be made in writing from the governing body of the Community of Faith to the Regional Council Congregational Support Commission for further conversation (potentially about assistance from the Regional Council with payment or about the viability of the Community of Faith).

It is both expected and encouraged that supervision will take place by electronic means, or phone as much as possible.

- the community of faith will be responsible for preparing a T4A according to Canada Revenue requirements.

Note: Pastoral Charge Supervisors mileage is covered by the regional council.

In the rare case where regional council staff are the Pastoral Charge Supervisors, the congregation is expected to donate to Mission and Service in the equivalent amount of the hours supervised. Please note that this is only when a staff member is the assigned Pastoral Charge Supervisor.

The Congregational Support Commission will pick up the cost for applicant for admission as part of its commitment to diversity.

Remuneration: if a Pastoral Charge Supervisors does not wish to receive the remuneration they should donate it to Mission and Service.

Qualifications

A Pastoral Charge Supervisor may be a lay person or ministry personnel (ordained, diaconal or a designated lay minister). They will be approved for service by the Congregational Support Commission. All are required to have up-to-date:

- Police Records check (vulnerable sector);

- ii. Racial justice training;
- iii. Boundaries training
- iv. Pastoral Charge Supervisor (PCS) CHURCHx Course

If the supervisor is not currently serving in active ministry or is a lay person, the costs of these requirements will be paid by the Regional Council.

Discipleship and Justice Commission

Sula Kosacky

Chairperson, Discipleship and Justice Commission



Bead Your Province Final Map - made by Indigenous artists across Turtle Island:

<https://www.facebook.com/KooteenCreations/photos/a.920323851672702/1164197543951997/?type=3>.

Amanda Laliberte, Canoe Lake Cree (Saskatchewan/Yukon), Ashley Copage, Sipekne'katick First Nation (Nova Scotia), Ashley McKenzie-Dion, Métis (Manitoba), Didi Grandjambe, Cree (Alberta), Jennelle Doyle, NunatuKavut (Labrador), Joelle Charlie, Gwich'in/Kaska Dena (Northwest Territories), Kyla Woodward, Kawacatoose (British Columbia), Lenore Augustine, Mi'gmaq/Maliseet (New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island), Marissa Magneson, Cree/Métis (Ontario), Mellz Compton, Qalipu Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland), Monique Jolly, Cree (Quebec), Rena Laboucan, Woodlands Cree (Nunavut).

Human Resources Commission

The Human Resources Commission carries primary responsibility for the formation and nurturing of healthy pastoral relationships and the equipping and licensing of lay worship leaders (LLWL).

The Commission will meet with representatives from a community of faith before acting on requests from the community of faith. Pastoral Relations Liaisons offer leadership as a community of faith seeks out a new pastoral relationship through a new call or appointment.

The responsibilities of the Commission include:

- Finding a new minister
- Resources for transition times
- Licences to administer the Sacraments
- Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL)
- Sabbaticals
- Short-term supply ministers
- United Fresh Start Peer Mentoring Groups

More information for these and more topics, can be found on the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council [website](http://hfrucc.ca/pastoral-relations-toolkits). Our pastoral relations toolkits will provide answers to many of your questions, hfrucc.ca/pastoral-relations-toolkits.

The majority of our work involves the approving of changes in pastoral relationships, approval of position descriptions, calls, appointments, and congregational designated positions. A pattern has been developing in the past few years:

- An almost equal number of requests for part-time positions as full-time and this is increasing
- As a result, many of our congregations are relying on the services of retired ministers and almost 80% of these are part-time ministries

Some of our other work includes:

- An increase to \$250.00, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per budget for facilitators of the Fresh Start Program in new pastoral relationships
- Receive reports on the work of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders
- The development and mailing of a survey to new ministers and one to all other ministry personnel
- Development of a working group to respond to the results of the survey of ministry personnel (*report follows*)
- Discovered a need to address the concerns of retirees (*report follows*)

I would like to thank the members of the Commission for their work on behalf of the ministry personnel of HFRC. Members are Doug Caldwell, **Cathy Dilts, *Barbara Duffin, Joanne Hedge, *Lennox Scarlett, Sandra Litt, Mòrar Murray-Hayes, Allison Playfair, Ted Smith, Sue Stephen, Pat Tooley and **Michael Veall.

** *Joined during the past year*

* *Resigned during the past year*

We extend our appreciation and thanks to Micol Cottrell, Minister, Pastoral Relations, for his support and guidance and Pretima Kukadia-Kinting, Administrative Assistant, Communication and Records for recording our meetings.



Pat Tooley
Chair, Human Resources Commission

I The Human Resources Commission Working Group Report

During the regular work of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Human Resources Commission, we started noticing an increase in ministry personnel leaving calls, and calls changing from full-time to part-time at a greater degree than in the past. While in attendance at other meetings, many of us also heard ministers talk about their difficulties, and during exit interviews we heard about the high levels of stress and discontent with the vocation. We decided that we needed to be proactive and to find ways to respond that offered support, solutions and resolutions.

To ensure we truly understood the issues, we designed and launched surveys for new and continuing ministers. This survey was designed to reach out to ministers to listen and learn. We wanted to hear about their challenges and to identify where additional support, advocacy, training, information and/or education might be beneficial to ministry personnel, their congregation, governing body and Ministry & Personnel committees. It was our goal to support a mutually rewarding relationship between ministers and their congregations.

The results of the surveys were upsetting. The information that was provided in the survey responses clearly identified a high need for more support, caring and compassion. Since the work of HRC was already very time consuming, there was concern we didn't have the time as a commission to develop proactive tools. As a result, in March of 2023, we struck a working group to specifically focus on developing new resources and tools to support a more caring and compassionate environment and to support HRC's primary responsibility which is "for the formation and nurturing of healthy pastoral relationships."

The working group has met a few times and have started to plan the work we need to do. We believe a combined working group is needed since so many of the issues cross over between both HRC and the Congregation Support Commission. However, CSC members do not have time to join our Working Group; therefore, we welcome help from others who are interested.

Key Findings and Recommendations

We believe there is a high need to find ways to provide more practical advice, tools and training for congregations so that the pastoral relationship is characterized by gratitude and generosity, in response to the challenges mentioned in the survey.

We are providing a summary of a few of the themes:

- Congregations with no money for supply ministry for sabbatical leaves – resulting in limited time away for ministry personnel.
- Less ministry staff hours but still expecting the delivery of the full depth and breadth of ministry.
- We were informed that practices in many congregations do not meet standards for compensation, vacation, sabbaticals, study leave and basic days off during the week.
- We are seeing changes in position descriptions of roles in the church that affect ministry personnel without compliance with United Church polity.
- Lack of knowledge of how to navigate with generosity not scarcity during a time of declining finances and volunteers – we need to ensure that church leaders and M&P Committees have the understanding and skills to support with compassion and continued love and caring, for their minister.
- A more formal process for annual review of job expectations and responsibilities for ministry personnel.

We have made recommendations to the HRC to improve the commission's ability to support personnel and congregations in the pastoral relations process.

- To support liaisons and lay representatives on search committees so that they are the representatives of the HRC and fully resourced to be the presence of the regional council, answering questions, helping to resolve obstacles and moving processes ahead in a timely manner.
- To explore ways in which communication may be improved between the HRC and ministry personnel and community of faith, including referring to other parts of the regional council as fits their areas of responsibilities.
- To encourage retired ministry personnel to support active ministers in the congregations that they attend.
- To consider including in part-time position descriptions a limit to the number of Sundays proportionate to the hours.
- To prepare a much-needed package of alternate worship resources (live, livestreamed, recorded and written) for liaisons, lay representatives on search committees and all ministers and Ministry and Personnel committees to ensure that every congregation knows that they have what they need to continue to worship while giving full-time ministers time off and part-time ministers the possibility of holding more than one position.

It is our commitment to communicate back to our commission monthly. As well, we will provide an update to all of you at the Spring Meeting of Regional Council. If you would like to assist our Working Group, please send an email to: morarmur@gmail.com.

As well, if ministry personnel who haven't done so would like to complete our survey, we share the link: https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/survey_ministry_in_cofs.

II Report on Connecting our Retired Ministry Personnel to the Regional Council

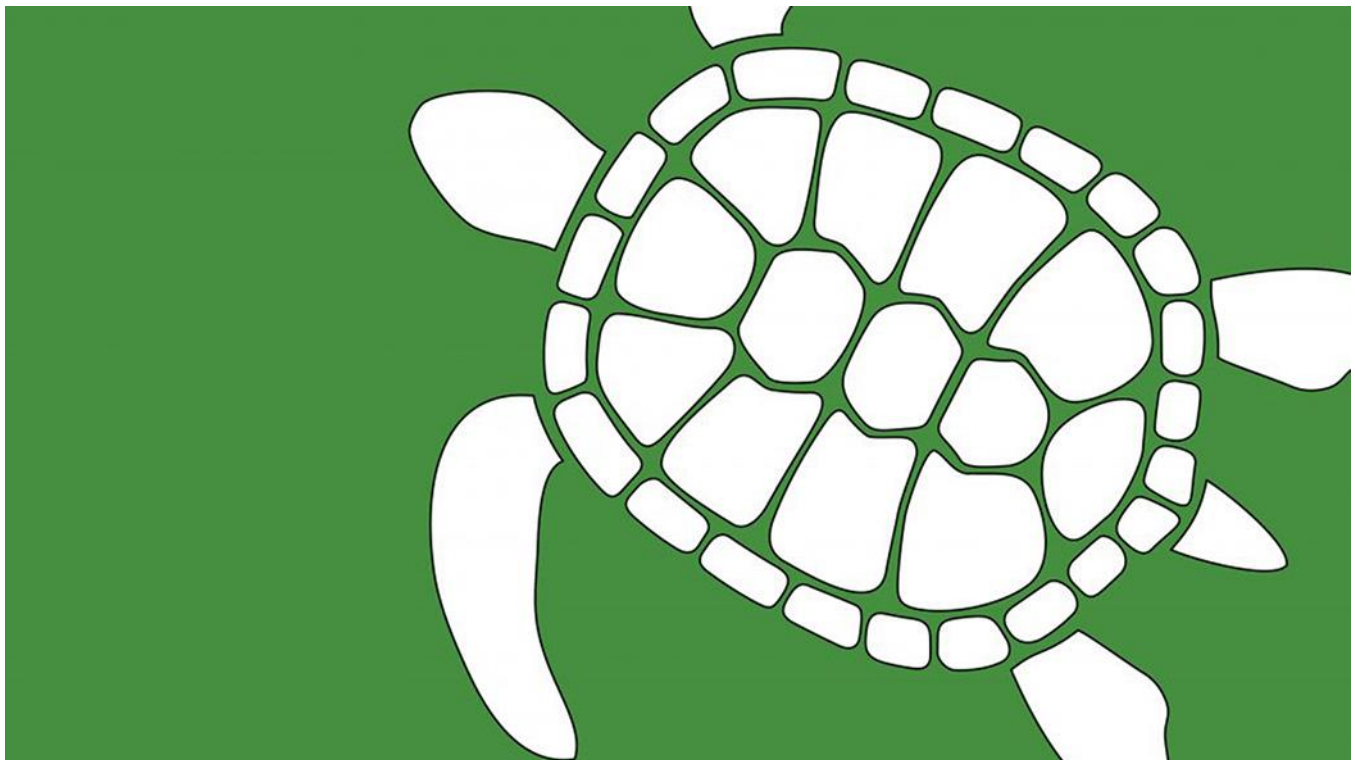
The Human Resources Commission discovered retirees do not have a connecting link in the new structure at the regional council or national level (outside of the Pension Department). We have worked to create an updated contact list, and an initial mailing resulted in many responses that indicated a disconnection with the wider church.

The HRC has responsibility for retired ministers who are in active ministry and have agreed to assume responsibility for all retired ministry personnel, as well as providing administrative support as needed, within reason. Kevin Steeper, Minister, Pastoral Support, has agreed to provide pastoral support and help as we connect with retirees to discern how we can best serve them.

There is a feeling that in-person meetings would be best located within the boundaries of the old presbyteries. There may be the possibility of funding such gatherings through the extension councils.

Kevin and I are planning an initial Zoom meeting of all those who can participate and we are hoping to have someone from General Council present, as a way of honouring retirees, listening to them and reestablishing a relationship with both regional and national councils.

If you have retirees in your congregation, particularly if they moved into the regional council after retiring, please ask them if they agree to share their contact information? Please forward this information to morarmur@gmail.com.



Section Three: Meeting Materials

Agenda for the Fall Gathering 2023 Online Meeting

Friday, October 13

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Welcome, Constitute Meeting, Land Acknowledgement

Proposal 1: Opening & Procedural Motion

BRAVE, Affirming Statement

Introduction of Meeting Leadership

Welcome to HFRC

Opening Worship

Break: 5 minutes

Discipleship and Justice Commission Engagement

Human Resources Commission Engagement

Remit Education and Discussion/Questions: Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations & Social Justice, and John Egger, Minister Social Justice

Reminder: New Business Deadline Saturday, October 14, 9 AM

Closing Prayer

Saturday, October 14

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Welcome Back

Opening Worship

Remit Vote

Going Deeper on the Regional Council Evaluation: Conversation Groups

Break: 10 minutes

In Memoriam and Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes

Introduction of Candidates & Candidates Heather Myers and Russ Myers Address the Court

Day of Fellowship

Proposal 2: Budget 2024

Congregational Support Commission Engagement: *Paying Pastoral Charge Supervisors Discussion*

Proposal 3: GC 45 Commissioners Election in 2024

Unfinished/New Business

Save the Dates

Courtesies

Thanking the President

Proposal 4: Closing Motion

Closing Blessing and Adjournment

Sunday, October 15

4:00 PM

Celebration of Ministries Service

Pelham Community Church, 461 Canboro Road, Pelham

Going Deeper Into the Regional Council Evaluation Conversation Groups

Background

When the Regional Councils of Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls and Western Ontario Waterways were formed, the three regional councils decided to work together with shared staffing and a common governance model and committed to evaluating that governance and staffing model after three years. Bill Allen and Jenny Stephens conducted that evaluation for us in 2023. Thank you to everyone who shared feedback as part of that evaluation process.

In June, Bill and Jenny reported on their findings to the Tri-Region Executives and Staff. The Executive Summary of their findings was shared with the Regional Council by our President, Jennifer Irving, in July. If you missed that or want to take another look, it can be found here: [HFRC Tri Regional Evaluation Summary](#).

As the HFRC Executive reviewed the recommendations from the evaluation, we identified several areas where we thought that additional input from the Regional Council might help us to clarify what is needed, brainstorm possibilities and identify priorities for moving forward to address some of the concerns raised. With this in mind, we are dedicating a significant chunk of time on the Saturday morning of our Fall Gathering to dig deeper into the evaluation in affinity groups.

The Process for the Fall Meeting

During the Saturday morning session, you will be invited to choose one of the topics below that you are interested in discussing further and self-select that breakout room for in depth conversation about that area of the evaluation. By self-selecting which topic you want to explore, we hope that everyone can be involved in a conversation about an aspect of the work of the HF Regional Council that interests them personally or has particular relevance to the life of their community of faith.

Our goal with this time is to focus on how we might move forward with this recommendation. While it may be helpful to clarify some of the challenges, we don't want this to be a complaint session. We're looking for input and ideas that help us strengthen our work together as the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

Each breakout group will have a facilitator and a recorder. While it will not be possible to have a detailed report back, all of the notes taken will be available to the Executive and Commissions and Staff whose work they relate to so your ideas can help guide our follow-up on the evaluation.

Please consider which of these groups excites you most (*and no, you cannot be in two groups at the same time, sadly* 😞).



Breakout Groups

1. Connecting communities of faith to the Regional Council

The evaluation found that many communities of faith are feeling disconnected from the regional council. Recommendation 1 suggested that we *“develop a strategy to be more pro-active in engaging with communities of faith and to keep them informed of activities and decisions of the regional council”*. Recommendation 2 proposed that we *“ensure that all communities of faith are represented on their regional council.”*

Please note that Group 2 will focus on communications so the intention for this breakout group is to focus on connection.

- a. How can we foster a greater sense of connection between local communities of faith and HFRC?
- b. How can we encourage communities of faith to appoint regional representatives?

2. Communicating with communities of faith

We live in a challenging time in terms of communications. Getting information to people in a form that they can digest amid our busy, information-overload world is not easy especially when we have folks with varying levels of engagement with technology and social media. We encourage you to consider all our communication channels – newsletter, YouTube, website, Facebook, etc.

Recommendation 1 suggested that we *“develop a strategy to be more pro-active in engaging with communities of faith and to keep them informed of activities and decisions of the regional council”*. Recommendation 5 suggested that we *“reorganize the information and toolkits so that they are intuitive from a communities of faith standpoint. For example, in conducting a search, the community of faith should be able to ‘follow the steps’ in a linear fashion independent of the regional council structure”*.

Please note that Group 1 is focusing on Connection and Group 3 is focusing on Support to Communities of Faith Searching for a New Minister. The intention for this breakout group is to explore our communication strategies specifically.

- a. How do we communicate in a way that people can see and digest the information we are trying to share without it getting lost in a sea of information out there?
- b. Communicating via multiple channels takes lot of time and energy particularly for staff. How do we maximize the return on investment of staff time to communicate well with communities of faith?

3. Support to communities of faith searching for a new minister

Frustration was expressed with the process of conducting a search for a new minister. This is a time in the life of a community of faith when support from the Regional Council is frequently needed. Recommendation 4 identified that *“the process for conducting a search should be reviewed with a view to streamlining and clarify the commissions’ responsibilities and improving communication*

between pastoral charge supervisor and liaison". Recommendation 5 suggested that we "reorganize the information and toolkits so that they are intuitive from a communities of faith standpoint. For example, in conducting a search, the community of faith should be able to 'follow the steps' in a linear fashion independent of the regional council structure".

Group 2 is looking at the broader communications issues. The intention for this group is to specifically focus on how to support congregations searching for a new minister.

- a. What are some of the challenges communities of faith experience interacting with the Regional Council when searching for a new minister?
- b. How can the Regional Council support communities of faith most effectively during such transitions?

4. Networking communities of faith

Some are grieving the loss of relationships developed through the presbytery/conference system. Recommendation 3 suggests that we *"facilitate networking among area communities of faith. Explore more deeply what the communities of faith believe they are missing under the regional council system and endeavour to address."*

- a. What is missing?
- b. How could the regional council support networking?

5. Enhancing "health, joy and excellence in ministry practice"

30-40% of ministry personnel who responded to surveys do not feel positive about the regional council. Recommendation 7 is *"we recommend a consultation around strategies to network ministry personnel including retirees and to enhance 'health, joy and excellence in ministry practice' for all ministry personnel."* Recommendation 8 is that *"the Business committee of each regional council consider more effective ways to honour the vocation of ministry"*.

This breakout group will focus on ministry practice broadly. Group 6 will focus specifically on retirees.

- a. How can we better support the work of ministry personnel and honour the vocation of ministry?
- b. What might help forge closer, more positive ties between ministers and HFRC?

6. Connecting with retired ministry personnel

The evaluation found that retired ministry personnel felt particularly disconnected.

Recommendation 7 is *"we recommend a consultation around strategies to network ministry personnel including retirees and to enhance 'health, joy and excellence in ministry practice' for all ministry personnel."* Recommendation 8 is that *"the Business committee of each regional council consider more effective ways to honour the vocation of ministry"*.

Group 5 will focus on ministry personnel broadly. The intention of this group is to focus on the specific experience of retired ministers.

- a. How can we improve the sense of connection between retired ministry personnel and the regional council?
- b. In what ways can we support/honour the continuing call to serve of retired ministry personnel?

7. Supporting justice work in communities of faith

Given the many important social justice initiatives that are part of how we live out God's call in the world, the evaluation noted that it is a challenge for the Discipleship and Justice Commission to know how to support the work of local communities of faith. Recommendation 11 suggested that we *"determine how the Discipleship and Justice Commission might support the discipleship and justice work in communities of faith and the commitments of the regional council."*

Recommendation 12 encouraged the *"Discipleship and Justice Commission build relationships with networks and consider the kind of relationship to establish to support God's call in the world"*.

- a. How can the regional council (and in particular, the Discipleship and Justice Commission) better connect with, support and encourage justice work at the local level?
- b. What role might you see for social justice focused networks to connect communities of faith to support God's call in the world?

8. What is our purpose and how will we know we are living it out?

Consider our HFRC purpose statement - "connecting, supporting, transforming" and the denomination call/vision statements "deep spirituality, bold discipleship, daring justice".

Recommendation 18 suggests that *"There should be a review of the purpose statements to determine whether there is a need to have individual purpose statements or if it more effective to have one statement for the three regions or adopt the denominational call/vision statement. In addition, it is important to define what delivering on the purpose statement looks like and periodically assess if it is being achieved."*

- a. Which statement should we adopt as a regional council?
- b. What would delivering on that purpose statement look like (be as specific as possible)?

9. Equipping the church for "such a time as this"

- a. What role could the Regional Council play in helping local communities of faith to be ready to respond to the times in which we are living?
- b. What supports/resources do ministry personnel and communities of faith need most in times like this?



Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion

Title: Opening and Procedural Motion

Origin: Acting Executive Minister

What is the issue?

The regional council must establish the procedures by which it will conduct business.

Why is this issue important?

This clarifies and confirms the way in which decision-making will happen.

How might the regional council respond to the issue?

The regional council might adopt the following as a consent docket:

1. Adopt the agenda as circulated and authorize the Agenda and Business Committee to make any changes as necessary;
2. Approve the minutes of the meeting of 2023-06-08-10;
3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the
 - i. Executive
2023-08-09
2023-06-28
2022-06-15
2022-05-24
 - ii. Congregational Support Commission
2023-05-16
2023-04-11
 - iii. Human Resources Commission
2023-05-24
for information.
Note: Minutes are posted on the website www.hfrcucc.ca "About" page
3. Confirm the appointment of James Grunden to the Executive (to honour his original expression interest)
4. Confirm the appointment of Debbie McMillan to the Executive;
5. Appoint Paul Shepherd as Parliamentarian;
6. Appoint Wendy Lowden as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
7. Name Yvonne Wright to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
8. Name President Lennox Scarlett, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Wendy Lowden, Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird, and Executive Assistant Sue Duliban, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
9. Set the bounds of the meeting as the zoom call, and the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Office, 1552, Hwy 6 N., Hamilton, Ontario, and the sanctuary of Pelham Community Church, Pelham, Ontario;

10. Make the designated representative from any United Church ministry, other than a congregation, which has been invited to become a community of faith by entering into a covenant with the regional council, a member of the regional council for this meeting (Section C.1.2 c);
11. Make all guests corresponding members;
12. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as 9:00 a.m., Saturday, October 14, 2023.
13. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline

- A) What is the issue? And
- B) The suggested way in which the regional council might respond to the issue.

Step Two:

The President will inquire if there are questions for clarification. Please note this is for clarification only.

Step Three:

The President will then ask if there are changes or additions being suggested for the proposal. Using warm and cool signals, the regional council will seek to come closer to agreement on how to respond to the issue.

Step Four:

Once there is significant agreement, the President will invite the Presenter to move the motion at which point the regional council enters the formal debate process.



Proposal #2 – Budget 2024

Title: Reviewing 2023 Year-to-Date and Adopting 2024 Operating Budget

Origin: Treasurer

What is the issue?

Transparency and accountability are key elements of financial management in any charity. It is important that the regional council is guided by these principles and models these practices for the communities of faith within its bounds. The regional council needs to understand both the strengths and challenges of its financial situation to be able to function effectively in the present and to ensure it is well positioned for the future.

Establishing a budget for 2024 is one step in this process and will guide the Executive in its management of regional council resources.

Why is this issue important?

The regional council is still becoming familiar with its financial situation and its financial reporting.

Income

The regional council receives two grants to fund its operation:

Assessment Grant: For Governance and Shared Services

Mission and Service Grant: For Mission and Ministry

The regional council also receives funds from:

1. Investment income
2. 50% grant from Archives Reserve to cover its costs
3. Regional council share (25%) of proceeds of disbanding congregations.

The regional council is proposing continuing to use a portion of its Net Revenue Grant from PTCC (Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation).

Expenses

Expenses are reported according to the ministry they support to help illustrate how the regional council is using its assets to meet its priorities. The budget categories and the staff positions assigned to each are listed below. AA refers to Administrative Assistant.

Ministry	Purpose	HF's Share of the following Positions
Regional Operations	Operation of the regional council	Executive Minister Executive Assistant .5 Administrative Assistant (AA), Mission and Finance .4 AA, Finance
Communities of Faith	Partnering with congregations	Minister, Congregational Support and Mission

Pastoral Relations	Supporting the formation and nurture of healthy pastoral relationships	Minister, Pastoral Relations .5 AA, Communication and Records
Communication	Newsletters, Websites	.5 AA, Communication and Records .5 AA, Website Management
Connecting	Providing opportunities to come together including regional council meetings	Minister, Pastoral Support
Faith Formation	Nurturing discipleship	Minister, Faith Formation .25 AA, Mission and Finance
Chaplaincy	Supporting ministries in post- secondary settings	
Social Justice	Seeking to be faithful in the world	.5 Minister, Social Justice (vacant) .5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations .25 AA, Mission and Finance
Right Relations	Deepening understanding and relationship with Indigenous Ministries	.5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations
Office Operations	Office supplies and equipment	
Building Expenses	Cost to maintain building	
Emerging Ministries	Unbudgeted expenses responding to an emerging situation or to the regional council's exercise of discipline.	

The regional council has established an investment policy and created an investment portfolio that it anticipates will help address the gap between increasing expenses and diminishing grants.

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might:

- 1. Receive the internal 2023 operating statement to date for information;**
- 2. Direct the Executive to deal with the 2022 Auditors' Report OR Receive the 2022 Audited Financial Statements for information;**
- 3. Endorse the following principles for the 2024 budget:**
 - a. Operating expenses increased by 4.5% for inflation and as the basis for investment income.**
 - b. Prioritize Mission & Service grants.**
- 4. Appoint KPMG.LCP as auditors for the 2023 Financial Year.**
- 5. Adopt the proposed 2024 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary within the above guidelines.**

	2023 Budget	as at Aug 31	2024 Budget
Income			
Assessment	325,000	216,667	325,000
Mission and Service	240,000	186,935	180,000
Salary Support	67,000	44,667	68,340
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	13,333	20,000
Other Revenue		3,620	
Property Fund	18,045	11,956	19,076
Investment Income	66,000		66,000
Transfers	77,954	11,688	88,330
Total	813,999	488,866	766,746
Expenses			
<u>Regional Operations</u>			
Staff	102,037	65,337	102,782
Travel	6,500	191	6,500
Staff Support	2,000	2,292	2,000
Exec Meetings	17,500	2,007	5,000
Exec Events	5,000	2,932	5,000
Archives	40,000	26,667	40,000
Corporations	8,000	5,367	8,000
Legal	10,000		10,000
Learning Fund	30,000		30,000
Professional Fees	20,000		20,000
Section J		1,780	
Total	241,037	106,573	229,282
<u>Communities of Faith</u>			
Staff	54,408	36,811	55,585
Travel	3,000		3,000
CSC Meetings	5,000		3,000
CSC Events	10,000	2,329	10,000
Total	72,408	39,140	71,585
<u>Pastoral Relations</u>			
Staff	46,519	32,267	49,097
Travel	3,000		3,000
HRC Meetings	5,000		3,000
HRC Events	10,000		10,000
Emergency Fund	1,000		1,000
Total	65,519	32,267	66,097
<u>Connecting</u>			
Staff	37,868	26,009	40,108
Travel	2,000	665	2,000
RC Meetings	30,000	17,400	30,000

*Mission Support Grants			
Total	69,868	44,074	72,108
<u>Communication</u>			
Staff	26,007	20,033	35,338
Travel	1,500		1,500
*Mission Support Grants		21,000	
Total	27,507	41,033	36,838
<u>Social Justice and Outreach</u>			
Staff	38,983	22,270	32,508
Travel	3,500		3,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500		1,500
D & J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	1,100	5,000
*Mission Support Grants		94,625	
Total	49,983	117,995	42,508
<u>Faith Formation</u>			
Staff	46,983	34,249	42,053
Travel	2,500		2,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500		1,500
D&J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	1,734	5,000
*Mission Support Grants			
Total	56,983	35,983	51,053
<u>Chaplaincy</u>			
*Mission Support Grants		15,000	
<u>Right Relations</u>			
Staff	17,045	11,956	18,076
Travel	1,000		1,000
Other	500		500
Total	18,545	11,956	19,576
<u>Office and Admin costs</u>			
GCO Acctg & IT	40,000	24,493	40,000
Office Operations	15,000	6,488	15,000
Total	55,000	30,981	55,000
<u>Building Expenses</u>	12,000	9,359	12,500
Total			
<u>Mission Support Grants</u>	140,000		140,000
Total	808,850	484,361	796,547
Difference	5,149	4,505	-29,801

Proposal #3 – Election of General Council Commissioners

Title: Election of General Council Commissioners

Origin: Executive

What is the issue?

In the spring of 2024, the regional council will elect its Commissioners to the 45th General Council in Calgary in July 2025.

This will be the second time the regional council has elected Commissioners. The first time, the regional council adopted a method for electing Commissioners at its fall meeting, 2020. There were some problems with this process. For starters, in naming specific diverse groups the regional council overlooked that individuals may have multiple ways of identifying, i.e. racialized and queer, youth and Indigenous, etc.

Secondly, the deadline for nominations was during the meeting resulting in a scramble to distribute sufficient background information on nominees for regional council representatives to feel ready to make informed decisions.

Thirdly, the balloting was difficult. The practices were based on previous experience where all present were in person. Even though all were online in the fall of 2020, the voting did not go smoothly. The regional council staff are not confident they can manage a series of ballots with changing names on each ballot for a hybrid meeting involving three regional councils.

Lastly, despite its good intentions, this system does not provide for a diverse slate of commissioners. It unfolds quickly relying on the nominations in hand. There is little opportunity to consider the slate as a whole or to recruit people not already nominated to broaden diversity.

Why is this important?

The decisions of the General Council impact all communities of faith and ministry personnel. It is important the Commissioners be people of vision and commitment who can bring diverse perspectives to lead to bold and daring decisions (to borrow from the Call of the Strategic Plan).

Regional Council representatives were frustrated with voting last time and no one wants to repeat that experience.

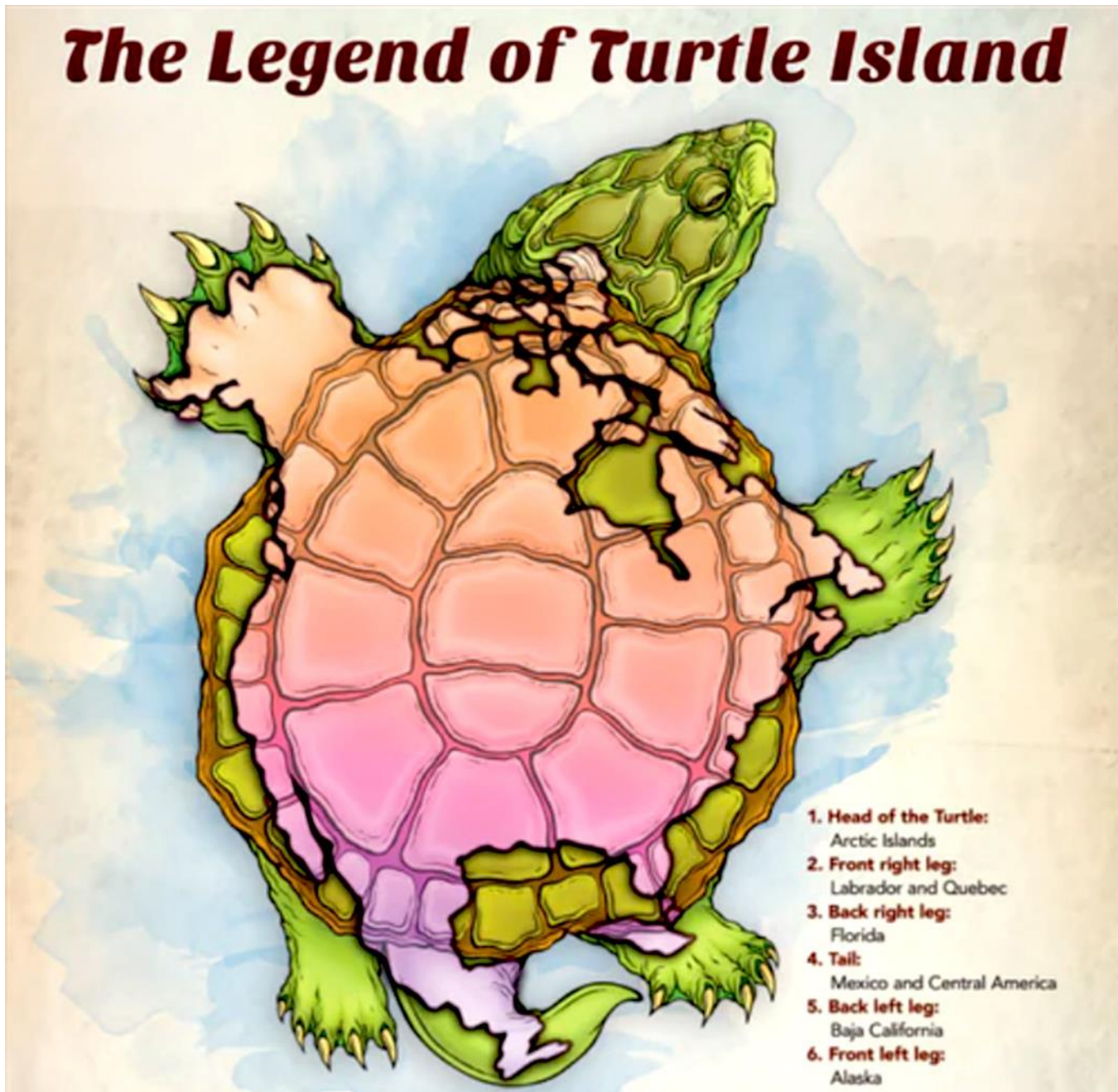
Lastly, GC 45 will mark the 100th Anniversary of the United Church. Chinook Winds is hosting. Past experience would suggest that more people are interested when General Council involves travel further afield. For the last GC, we were short of alternates and one of our three regional councils had a vacant Commissioner spot.

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might agree to:

- a) **To close nominations for Commissioners to GC 45 as of midnight April 15, 2024; to publicize the deadline in advance (website, newsletter, with registration materials).**

- b) To direct the Recruiting Team authorized by the spring 2023 meeting and appointed by the Executive to review the nominations with a view to:
- i) Ensure a diverse cohort of Commissioners and alternates who bring both experience and new energy to the role and who are committed to the preparation and online prior requirements for General Council;
 - ii) Recruit nominees to address gaps in representation.
- c) To vote on the slate as a whole at the spring 2024 regional council meeting.



Proposal #4 – Closing Motion

Title: Closing Motion

Origin: Acting Executive Minister

What is the issue?

The work of the regional council continues between regional council meetings.

Why is this issue important?

The regional council must be clear how the work will continue.

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might

1. Entrust any unfinished business from its October 13 - October 15, 2023 meeting to the Executive;
2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next spring regional council meeting;
3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the spring of 2024;
4. Entrust the Executive and Commissions with the responsibilities and authority of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council in accordance with *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and the Governance Handbook of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council; and
5. Close the October 13-October 15, 2023 meeting of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council at the close of the Celebration of Ministries Service on Sunday, October 15, 2023.



REMIT 1: RESOURCES

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

An Invitation toward Decolonizing the Structure of The United Church of Canada

Dear Friends,

Those of you who have Regional Council voting privileges, if you were not at the Remit education session at the Spring 2023 meeting, please try to attend the Remit Foundations Workshop before the or watch the Remit Foundations video online **before** our Fall RC gathering.

We encourage anyone who was at the Spring 2023 meeting, but might like a refresher, to watch it again. The video can be viewed on the Remit 1 Information Page on the website. Workshop dates are also on that same webpage.

Here are some of the questions, raised in ARWRC, HFRC and HFRC, and our responses. There are so many questions, and no quick answers. Whether you read all of this, or look to the question that is most pressing for you at this time, we hope it is helpful in your remit deliberations.

John Egger and Thérèse Samuel

with input from Cathy Hird, Kathy Douglas, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa and Tim Hackborn

A colonial way to look at the remit question is:

This remit is really just about changing The Manual, and changing our structures.

A decolonizing way to look at it is:

The remit is about changing the way we relate with one another, and through reconciliation we can strengthen our relationships.

Why can we not know all the details of the new structure before the remit is voted on?

As non-Indigenous people writing this, it seems to John and Thérèse that Indigenous leaders within the church, in seeking an autonomous structure within The United Church of Canada, are inviting the rest of the church into a deeper, more meaningful relationship as the church. Some of the historic ways that we have been church have put up blocks that limit Indigenous people's authentic engagement in the church. This remit is a beginning to remove those blocks. Relationship can only be healthy if each of the parties in the relationship is honoured and respected and able to be authentically who they are. This remit would be one step toward journeying together in reconciliation as equals, as those in a committed relationship.

The remit is about letting go of colonial structure. Instead of wanting to know where we are going before, we set out, in relationship we can discover it together on the way. The remit is about people who hold power releasing control, so that power can be shared more equitably. That can be an uncomfortable thing for a church that has been structured around some people having power over others, but it is a necessary part of the journey.

Tim Hackborn reminds us that, as stated in the [Caretakers' Calls to the Church](#) (page 3), "We have faith that the Spirit of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of creation, and the love of God will move us forward on the road of true reconciliation so that we can know 'the beloved community' of 'All Our Relations.'"

How would an autonomous Indigenous Organization impact doctrine and spiritual expression?

The United Church of Canada has agreed upon statements of faith and each congregation is free to determine their way of living out that faith. This is true for Indigenous and non-Indigenous congregations. Our statements of faith come out of dialogue and prayerful discernment of the church. This prayerful discernment will surely continue, and the hope is that if this remit passes, it will allow for Indigenous voices to be more authentically present in our ongoing discernment as a church.

How will this remit impact 2S-LGBTQIA+ Inclusion?*

In The United Church of Canada, it is up to each congregation to determine where they stand on the inclusion of 2S-LGBTQIA+ people. That will not change with this remit. Please note that the [Caretakers' Calls to the Church](#) (page 11) speaks to the inclusion of people of all gender and sexual identities with an Indigenous United Church perspective.

** 2S-LGBTQIA+ stands for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other sexual and gender minorities.*

If the remit doesn't pass, what recourse is available for the Indigenous Church to establish a structure that suits their needs?

The United Church of Canada is committed to moving toward right relations. Whether the remit passes or fails that work will continue. On that pathway there will be many conversations that need to happen, some of which might be quite uncomfortable. This will be true whether the remit passes or fails. If it does not pass, a future General Council could issue a new remit if that is something the Indigenous Church wishes, but it is not known what the future response might be.

If the remit passes, will it mean the end of the non-Indigenous Church's relationships with Indigenous Churches.

No. On the contrary, it will mark the beginning of a new era of relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in The United Church of Canada. The shape that relationship will take is not yet known, and will unfold as we move forward in relationship. It should be noted that the Indigenous Church is representative of many different nations, and this is an opportunity to honour the complexity and diversity of those relationships.

If the remit passes, will the National Indigenous Organization be its own church?

We sometimes have heard people talk about the proposed National Indigenous Organization and The United Church of Canada, as if these would be separate. They would not. There has always been an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous church in The United Church of Canada. What this remit does is makes changes to the governance structure of the Indigenous church.

This might be a difficult conversation. What if this raises disagreements within our church?

It is important to acknowledge that the deepening of any relationship will always include disagreements and unexpected perspectives. Even so, engaging in an uncomfortable conversation is worth it, and it's better than not having had the conversation. Ultimately, whether the remit passes or is defeated, we as a church will continue to be called to engage in uncomfortable conversations as we seek to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ in our time and place. This is part of living into our commitment toward right relations.

In deciding whether to vote yes or no:

Consider these questions:

- Will this remit move the church in a meaningful way toward decolonization?
- Will it create conditions for more just relationships?
- Will it move the church closer to our call as disciples of Jesus Christ, and as the church of Jesus Christ in this time and place?
- Is this what you believe the Spirit is calling the church to do at this time?

Study, share, discuss, ask, listen, and pray.

Know that whatever you decide, there will be many more conversations ahead.

And trust that wherever the future takes us, God will continue to be with us.

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Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, Horseshoe Falls Regional Councils



Remit 1: Study Guide for Category 3 Remit Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

As authorized by the 44th General Council, in 2022

Between March 15, 2023 and March 31, 2024, every regional council and each pastoral charge's governing body will be asked to approve an amendment to the Basis of Union of *The Manual* establishing an autonomous Indigenous Church structure. An amendment to the Basis of Union requires a category 3 remit.

There is one question to be voted on, as follows.

Does the regional council/pastoral charge agree to amend the Basis of Union to reflect:

- a. That The United Church of Canada will be organized as follows: (1) a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council*; and (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization; and
- b. That once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established within The United Church of Canada, it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes, and, therefore will not be subject to the remit process under section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union**; and
- c. The changes required for the establishment of the autonomous National Indigenous Organization.

* The "Denominational Council" and the "General Council" are often used interchangeably.

** The detailed proposed changes to the Basis of Union are listed in a chart on page 5 of this document, under the section heading "Frequently Asked Questions".

What is this remit about?

1. At General Council 44, the National Indigenous Circle asked for the removal of any structural barriers that would prevent the development and sustaining of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada. When any requested change in church structure will alter the Basis of Union of *The Manual*, then a category 3 remit is required. This document is the study guide for this remit.
2. In 2019, General Council 43 approved the creation of a National Indigenous Organization, as a body equivalent to, and having the same power and responsibilities as, a regional council. This is currently reflected in *The Manual* in Section C-NIO.
3. This remit proposes that the already-existing National Indigenous Organization would become autonomous, within The United Church of Canada.
4. The creation of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada would be consistent with the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle's *Calls to the Church* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Approval of this remit will enable the Indigenous Church to define its own structure and processes within The United Church of Canada. It acknowledges Indigenous peoples' rights to their own spiritual identities and to self-determination. This has the potential to create a new kind of relationship: in the words of the National Indigenous Council, moving "from 'missions to Indians' ... towards being 'partners in God's call to all the earth.'"

Background

The Idea of a Self-Determining Indigenous Church

5. The idea of a self-determining Indigenous Church has a very long history in The United Church of Canada, dating back to at least the 1960s. From that time until now, Indigenous peoples have been organizing to bring their vision of church to life, whether that was achieving the Apology in 1986 for the church's role in colonization; building Indigenous systems of governance and theological education; or asserting its long-standing call to the church to acknowledge and atone for its actions at residential institutions.
6. The United Church pledged to uphold (among others) the rights to spiritual identity and self-determination in 2016 when it adopted the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation as a response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The church stated at that time that it was "not sure [of]

what lies ahead,” but that it was committed to “a new identity, a new relationship, and a new way of being” with the Indigenous Church.

Apologies to Indigenous Peoples

7. With the establishment of residential institutions, health care facilities, and missions in the 19th and 20th centuries, and as named in the 1986 Apology, the United Church and its predecessors “confused Western ways and culture with the depth and breadth and length and height of the gospel of Christ, [and] imposed [Western] civilization as a condition of accepting the gospel”.
8. As named in the United Church’s 1998 Apology, as the church continues its long and painful healing journey from its complicity in colonization, we are committed “to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority”. This is an essential component of our intention to become not just a reconciling but also an actively anti-racist church.
9. The United Church’s 1986 Apology, given only after Indigenous peoples called for it, was one way of atoning for the church’s forced assimilation practices and the intentional destruction of Indigenous spiritualities, cultures, and languages. Another way forward came in 2015 with the statement acknowledging the value of Indigenous spiritualities, avowing that “holding both your spirituality and ours is possible through listening and learning with open hearts”. The United Church has also committed to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

The Restructuring of the United Church in 2019

10. In 2019, the Comprehensive Review process was implemented throughout The United Church of Canada. This Comprehensive Review process resulted in substantive changes to the structure of the United Church, including the creation of a three-court model from a four-court model. As a result, the Aboriginal Ministries Council (AMC) began to explore how the Indigenous Church could structure itself within (or alongside) the three-court model of the church created by the Comprehensive Review.
11. The Aboriginal Ministries Council appointed and enabled the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Church to help define this direction, and they did so through a document entitled *Calls to the Church*. This document envisioned a self-determining Indigenous Church founded on Indigenous knowledge and teachings, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and “the desire to live into right relations with a repentant church and pursue the original Indigenous desire for friendship, peace and the strength that comes from respect”.

The Calls to the Church

12. The *Calls to the Church* were accepted at the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering of the United Church in 2019, and by General Council 43 in its annual meeting that same year. Since then, a new Indigenous governance structure (the National Indigenous Council); the National Indigenous Elders Council; and the Indigenous Office of Vocation have been created alongside the Indigenous Ministries and Justice Unit at the General Council Office to shape and guide the work of self-determination.
13. In July 2022, the National Indigenous Council brought forward General Council 44 Proposal NIC-01, naming its vision of the two parts of the church (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) working side-by-side, and recommending the identification and removal of “all the structural barriers to developing and sustaining an autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada”.

Decolonizing our Approach to Structural Changes

14. In our current process, and depending on the type of change that is needed to be made, the Indigenous Church would require a new remit for continued changes to its developing structure. This means that the Indigenous Church would be constantly seeking approval from the rest of the church to make those structural changes. This kind of dynamic—where the Indigenous Church would always be asking for consent from the non-Indigenous church—reflects continued colonial thinking and practices. As named in the United Church’s 1998 Apology, as the church continues its long and painful healing journey from its complicity in colonization, we are committed “to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority”. This is an essential component of our intention to become not just a reconciling but also an actively anti-racist church.
15. The General Secretary’s proposal to General Council 44, GS-10, is an attempt to begin a process of decolonizing our approach to structural change. It is asking for the church to give pre-emptive remit approval for whatever the Indigenous Church determines in the future as the place it will have in the United Church, guided by the *Calls to the Church*—and without the need for further remit approvals.

Frequently Asked Questions

What particular sections of The Manual are proposed to change?

The sections that are proposed to change are all in the Polity section of the Basis of Union. The proposed changes are under the headings of “The Church” (Section 4.2) and “The Denominational Council” (Section 7.4.1).

Current	Proposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4.2: The United Church of Canada is organized as a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council, as follows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4.2 of the Basis of Union will be amended and state: The United Church of Canada is organized as follows: (1) a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council; and (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization. Section 4.3 will be added to the Basis of Union and state: In its own time and through its own processes, the autonomous National Indigenous Organization will determine its structure and processes. Section 4.4 will be added to the Basis of Union and state: Once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established, it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes, and, therefore will not be subject to the remit process under section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union. Section 4.5 will be added to the Basis of Union and state: The final wording describing the structure and processes of the autonomous National Indigenous Organization will be recorded here.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 7.4.1: changing the Basis of Union—the Basis of Union may only be changed through the remit process, which requires the approval of a majority of the Regional Councils and also, if the Denominational Council considers it advisable because the change is substantive or denomination-shaping, pastoral charges; ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union will be amended and state: changing of the Basis of Union—with the exception of section 4.4 (under section II “The Church”), the Basis of Union may only be changed through the remit process, which requires the approval of a majority of the Regional Councils and also, if the Denominational Council considers it advisable because the change is substantive or denomination-shaping, pastoral charges; ...
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What might an autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada mean?

The Indigenous Church is asking to develop and sustain an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada.

The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle’s *Calls to the Church* notes that:

“The Indigenous ministries of The United Church of Canada have been about the work of ministry since the beginning in 1925 with roots in the 19th Century work of Methodist and Presbyterian ministries. 2018 marks the 193rd Anniversary of the Grand River Methodist Mission.

“Indigenous people have met regularly over many decades and held deep and ongoing conversations about matters relating to our Indigenous work and our relationship with the United Church. We have been evolving, struggling, adapting and growing since that time and even losing ground too. We do not want to lose the gains we have achieved through the years in any future developments.”

“The UN Declaration [on the Rights of Indigenous People] is about establishing and maintaining respectful relationship, Indigenous self-government, and Indigenous land rights in their traditional territories. This means the Indigenous faith community must exercise a truly Indigenous self-determination and possess a sustainable land-based support.”

The full statement is available on united-church.ca; search “Calls to the Church.”

Can we vote “yes” to some parts of the question in the remit and “no” to other parts?

No. It is not possible to vote for parts (a), (b), and (c) of the remit question separately. The remit is one overall question, broken up in three parts.

Who can I ask questions about this remit?

Please send any questions to remits@united-church.ca, or contact your Regional Council Executive Minister (contact information is available on united-church.ca; search for “Regional Council”).

What is a category 3 remit?

A category 3 remit is required for substantive, denomination-shaping changes to the Basis of Union (*The Manual*, s. F2). A category 3 remit also requires that information and study materials be prepared and sent out with the remit. The proposed change must be sent to the governing body of every pastoral charge and regional council for a vote.

The timeline for information sharing, study, and voting is 12 months.

The General Secretary and the Executive of the General Council are responsible for ensuring the final wording of any change to the Basis of Union is consistent with the by-laws of *The Manual*.

Note: If a regional council or a pastoral charge does not register a vote, that it is considered a vote AGAINST the proposal.

Where can I access additional background information?

The proposals directly related to this remit that were brought to General Council 44 can be accessed through the United Church Commons (commons.united-church.ca), in the folder called “Nurture the Common Good”. Those two proposals are called:

- GS 10 Living into Reconciliation
- NIC 01 National Indigenous Circle – Restructuring of Indigenous Church

The following may also be helpful to reference.

Available in the “Indigenous Ministries” section on united-church.ca:

- The Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle’s *Calls to the Church* (on united-church.ca, Indigenous Ministries/Calls to the Church)

Available in the “Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice” section on united-church.ca:

- The United Church's *Commitment to UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (on united-church.ca: Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice/UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- The United Church's *Statement on UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the Framework for Reconciliation* (on united-church.ca: Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice/UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- *Affirming Other Spiritual Paths*, the United Church's statement acknowledging the value of Indigenous spiritualities (on united-church.ca: Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice/The Apologies)
- The United Church of Canada's Apologies to Indigenous Peoples (on united-church.ca: Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice/The Apologies)

Available on united-church.ca:

- Contact information for Regional Council Executive Ministers (search for "Regional Council")
- *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* (under "Handbooks and Guidelines")



Notes:

Renewal and Transformation ... A Season of Hope!



Image by [Varun Maharaj](#) from [Pixabay](#)