

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Fall Meeting

Friday Nov. 21 – Saturday Nov. 22, 2025

Meeting Workbook

“Visions and Dreams”



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Workbook Introduction

Theme: ***"Visions and Dreams"***

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.

HFRC Fall Meeting Support Team

Agenda & Business Committee—Wanda Backus-Kelly (Chair), Sula Anne Kosacky (President), Mark Laird (Executive Minister), Max Watkinson, (Secretary)

Chaplain—Laurie Stevenson

Equity Support—Tessica Hackshaw and Jess Swance

Parliamentarian—Doug Caldwell

Tech Team—John Neff, Michele Petick

Worship Team—Gabby Heidinger and Ryk Brown



BRAVE: Commitment to Community Safety

We strive, in this time of co-learning, to be brave by

B – being accountable for the impact of both our words and our silence

R – reflecting on and naming our own biases

A – actively listening

V – vocalizing questions that arise from our learning

E – encountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Affirming Ministry Vision Statement

SAFETY. SANCTUARY. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Striving to be faithful followers of Jesus in our time and place, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council will continue to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of the regional council and society, committing ourselves to be open to the Spirit. Resisting all forms of oppression, we welcome and celebrate people of any sexual orientation and gender identity, and all others who are marginalized. The Regional Council, Staff, Executive, Commissions, networks, and members commit to working toward fulfilling the vision statement by:

- A. Continuing to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.
- B. Continuing to remove barriers to participation in society.
- C. Committing to be open to the Spirit.
- D. Resisting oppression.
- E. Welcoming and celebrating people of any sexual orientation and gender identity.

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 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, 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:

Meeting Agenda

Friday, November 21 st	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement Opening Motions Introduction of New Staff and Meeting Leadership Opening Worship Human Resources Commission Presentation Community Building Closing Prayer
Saturday, November 22 nd	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
	Welcome back Opening Worship, Covenanting with Beverly Tyhurst GC45 Presentation Financial Report Proposed Budget for 2026 Towards 2035 Break Towards 2035 cont'd Congregational Support Commission Report GC 45 Presentation cont'd Stewardship Presentation Lunch Discipleship and Justice Commission Report GC45 Presentation cont'd Proposal #3 – First Thirds Ministry grant Proposal #4 – Collaborative Ministry grant Break Seasons of Growth Presentation – Greg Smith-Young Proposal #5 – Capital Projects grant GC45 Presentation cont'd Moderator's Message In Memorial, CoF Life Cycle Changes Closing motions

President Sula Anne Kosacky's Welcome



President's Report - HFRC Workbook Fall 2025

Dear Siblings in Christ,

A few months ago, the United Church's 45th General Council met in Calgary. It was mostly dreary weather: damp and overcast, not really cold, but not warm. It was my first General Council and so I was excited to go. The theme for GC45 came from Joel 2:28, "And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." I've always loved that bit of scripture, and so I looked forward to gathering with my United Church family and talking about our visions and our dreams.

And then for 5 very long days packed into a room filled with unfamiliar faces, we focused on injustice and suffering in the world. The work was hard, and I wouldn't say that it was fun. We talked about Gaza, and heard raw and painful stories from Palestinian partners. We talked about colonialism and residential schools, hearing stories of ongoing injustice. We talked about failing churches, and the need to work on change in the church and the feeling that we don't have enough human or financial resources. We talked about the struggles facing youth. We grew tired to be sure, and it seemed that trust in the unfamiliar faces eroded over time rather than building up. The drearier Calgary's weather got outside, the more our own disposition darkened. We grumbled some acknowledgement about the fascist South of the border, which was just another terrible thing in the current terrible state of all things.

We didn't yet know we were about to lose the World Series.

And all of this seems to place us exactly on track as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In chapter 4 of Mark's gospel, the disciples struggle with fear in the face of a powerful storm. The wind stirred up violent waves and the boat was taking on water. I imagine that the wind and rain made it impossible to see the safety of the shoreline either ahead or behind. And so it makes some sense that they were in such great distress that they woke Jesus with cries of "We are perishing!"

The spiritual call to the faithful always seems to lead to danger, fear, and trouble. Maybe we could say that the spiritual call to the faithful seems to lead us to the cross. Whether a stormy sea, or 40 days of rain, or Pharaoh's army, genocidal war, colonialism and injustice, or climate change – the spirit calls us to action that leads into the valley of the shadow of death and perhaps our own cross to pick up and carry. But waiting for us there, we find Jesus.

Jesus, we remember, woke up and rebuked the storm. The waves calmed and the sea was at peace. He then questioned his disciples, asking what they had been so afraid of.

This scripture is one of those stories that reminds us of the true size and power of Word of God made flesh: Jesus who's power to give peace to the world is so much greater, so much more powerful than a raging storm on the sea, that he doesn't really know why anyone would be afraid.

Let us remember that His peace is our peace, and that the dark and threatening storm clouds we see are only temporarily obscuring a bright sun and calm blue sky. Whatever mission we are called to, He is with us. We are the church, we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Sula

Rev. Sula Anne Kosacky

President, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council of the United Church of Canada

In Memoriam:



Rev. Lorraine Davis OM

Rev. Stephen Huntley OM

Mel Matthias

Rev. P. Keith Hawkes

Hansina Otterspoor

John Durfey

Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes:



HFRC Community of Faith life Cycle Changes Report

Collaborations: (Official Motions):

1. Collaboration agreement between Central United Church, Welland and Southminster United Church, Niagara Falls which will come into effect on September 1, 2025.
2. Collaborative agreement between Richwood UC (ARW) and St. Paul's, Paris UC from October 1, 2025 to October 1, 2026.
3. Collaborative covenant among St. Andrew's UC, Brantford, Harmony UC, Brantford and Fairview UC, Brantford effective September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026.
4. South Coast Collaboration (collaborative covenant among Bethel UC, Central UC, Morgan's Point and Fork's Road Pastoral Charge). All four congregations have now approved the collaborative covenant. Effective date of the agreement will depend on the hiring of a minister.
5. Collaborative agreement between Stoney Creek United Church and Pioneer Memorial United Church from November 1, 2025.
6. Collaborative agreement between St. John's United Church (Oakville) and St. Paul's United Church (Oakville) from October 1, 2025.

Disbandments: (Official Motions):

1. Congregational Support Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, with gratitude for their faithful ministry, set the date of disbandment for Vineland United Church as May 31, 2025.

Section Two:

Congregational Support Commission

The Congregational Support Commission (CSC) 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;
- Guidance and support for 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 toolkits on the Horseshoe Falls website are a great place to start!**

<https://hfrucc.ca/toolkits>

Resources and Policy

Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM)

Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) (Toolkit #6) was added this quarter. The toolkit gives congregations information on developing, finding, and troubleshooting local parish ESMs. For any communities thinking about entering an ESM with another denomination, this is a good place to start.

Evaluating Access to Restricted Funds

A new policy was published in September 2025. The policy and guide to its application can be found in Toolkit #5. This resource should be useful to Communities of Faith wishing to use their restricted funds. It provides guidance as to how the CSC evaluates applications for the use of restricted funds and the data required in any application to access those funds. Regional council approval by the CSC is required for a Community of Faith to use this type of funds.

A reminder:

Effective June 26, 2024 funds from the sale of a manse are no longer restricted. This includes past, present and future sales. These funds may be used for any purpose decided by the congregation. However, if the

amount being withdrawn in a year equals \$250,000 or 50% of net revenue used for assessment purposes (whatever is lower) this is a major asset transaction requiring regional council approval by the CSC.

In addition, regional council approval by the CSC is required if your Community of faith is entering into a lease of your property, applying for a loan from an extension council or any other party, as well as any “major renovation” (repair, work, addition, upgrade or capital improvement or like project) to your real property that is estimated or expected to cost the lower of 50% of net revenue used for assessment purposes for the prior calendar year or \$250,000.00 or more. Detailed information can be found in Toolbox #5 using the Toolbox link above.

Conflict of Interest (Re-posting of UCC Policy)

The United Church of Canada has a nationwide policy regarding the management of conflicts of interest within committees and governing bodies in all courts of the church. This policy can be found as Toolkit #26. This is a valuable resource speaking to the need to identify perceived as well as real conflicts of interest.

COMING SOON:

Tax (CRA) and Financial Tasks Related to Amalgamation

A new resource Toolkit is in development to assist those communities in dealing with the sundry tax and financial details of amalgamation (i.e., notifying the CRA, the bank, processing payroll in the new entity). For any questions at this time, please contact the CS Minister, Beverly Tyhurst, directly (btyhurst@united-church.ca)

Communities of Faith

Pastoral Charge Supervision

Thank you (!) A big thank you to those individuals who have taken on the role of Pastoral Charges Supervisors over the past year. Your time and dedication to this important role is appreciated and valued. We are always looking for those who would like to serve in this capacity! *If you are interested in becoming a Pastoral Charge Supervisor and are a member of the order of ministry or a lay representative to the region, please fill out and submit the interest form found in Toolkit #10.*

Collaborative Ministry Agreements

- Central UC, Welland and Southminster UC, Niagara Falls UC
- Richwood UC (ARW) and St. Paul's, Paris UC
- St Andrews UC, Harmony UC, and Fairview UC (Brantford)
- Southcoast Collaboration Bethel UC, Central UC, Morgan's Point and Fork's Road Pastoral Charge (south Niagara)

- Stoney Creek and Pioneer Memorial
- St. John's United Church (Oakville) and St. Paul's United Church (Oakville)
- St. Paul's United Church (Oakville) & the Hub Community Network

Congratulations to these communities on their new and continued work, building and sharing ministry together !

Sales of Property

- The former Oakland United Church property (following the amalgamation)

Disbanded Communities of Faith

With gratitude for their faithful ministry, set the date of disbandment for Vineland United Church as May 31, 2025.

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 faithful dedication and expertise in her role as Congregational Support Minister. Lynne is on Sabbatical from September to November 2024 and we are grateful to Ann Harbridge and John Neff who are supporting the work of the commission during this time.

In May we said goodbye to Lynne Allin. After years of faithful service to the Tri-Regions and the Commission as the Congregational Support Minister, Lynne retired in June, 2025. We wish you a happy retirement Lynne!

In August we welcomed our new Congregational Support Minister, Beverly Tyhurst. Beverly brings invaluable experience from the United Church National Office. Welcome Beverly!

In June we said Jane Wylie and our chairperson Adrienne Robertson finished their terms and Doug Caldwell transferred to Human Resources. The current members of the CSC include: Ross Gowan, Steve Lowden, Karen Tobey, Barb McGill, Kate Young, and co-chairs Jane Capstick and Shawn Bausch.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Capstick
Shawn Bausch

Rev. Jane Capstick, Co-Chair
Shawn Bausch, Co-Chair

Discipleship and Justice Commission

Horseshoe Falls Discipleship and Justice Commission 2025

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is fortunate to have a team of dedicated people who offer their passions, gifts and hopes for the church as commissioners serving on the Discipleship and Justice Commission. This team meets most months to discern how to share the resources of time and money in supporting various ministry programs, and the people in our communities of faith doing the work of Christ.

We would welcome new members and encourage you to send an expression of interest should this work fit for you. <https://hfrucc.ca/expressions-of-interest/>

Please thank our commissioners when you meet them.

Jake Girton, Joe Hopkins, Wendy Lowden, Parker Neale, Jess Swance, Geoff Thompson, Lahring Tribe, and Donalee Williams.

The D&J Commission is dedicated to helping communities of faith live out their ministry of faith formation, mission and justice. Their mandate includes working in right relations with Indigenous partners, supporting Affirming ministries with LGBTQ2SIA+ members, making safe space for all, opening dialogue and strengthening relationships everywhere in our churches and world. With an understanding of the need to be a multigenerational, multiracial and multicultural denomination, reflecting the world around us, this commission helps to articulate why Christian faith matters and where it makes a difference.

Highlights for 2025 include:

- Mission and Service Grants. We were able to award \$140, 000.00 to the following ministries for 2025. Check them out and consider learning more about these ministries and the wonderful work they do. Perhaps your community might like to apply for a grant next year.
 - 5 Oaks Retreat Centre
 - Brock University Chaplaincy
 - Delta United Church, Hamilton- Sunday School Coordinator
 - Delta United Church, Hamilton-Edith's Pantry
 - Grand River Spiritual and Education Resource Centre
 - McMaster University Campus Ecumenical Chaplaincy
 - St John's & Glen Williams United Churches, Georgetown- Food for Life
 - Trinity United Church, Kitchener- The Hub
 - Wesley Urban Ministries, Hamilton
 - Cave Springs Camp- Grow the Mission
 - Silver Spire United Church, St Catharines -Queer Kid Bible Camp
 - Silver Spire United Church, St Catharines -Community Kitchen

- A few examples of some Events and Programs supported through D&J

- **Preaching with an Ecological Lens** with Rev. Dr. Hye Ran Kim-Cragg
Addressing the climate crisis from the pulpit. This event was for Ministry Personnel, LLWLs and others who lead in worship
- **Strawberry Thanksgiving & Communion** The gathering was led by Adrian Jacobs, Cayuga Nation of the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Adrian lead a reflection on the Spiritual Covenant, which is a symbolic agreement that helps a faith community take steps towards mutual respect and financial repair. In Haudenosaunee culture, strawberries are celebrated as the first fruit of the season in ceremonies of gratitude, and we will share strawberry juice together in communion
- **Tri Region Palestine Network** This recently formed network offers resources, education and advocacy for justice in Israel and Palestine. Consider hosting a Palestine Land Exercise (PLE) in your community of faith, where trained leaders provide an experiential educational event.
- **Worshiplude 2025** Funds from the former Niagara Youth Festival helped to subsidize a bus trip to Ottawa for 38 participants. Youth and their leaders enjoyed Winterlude activities, built community, and attended a large worship service over a three-day weekend. There is hope that this program grows each year.
- **Cave Springs Camp and Ryerson Camp**
- **Kids Across the Regions at Camp Bimini** A fun, faith-filled overnight retreat for children (grade 4 to 7/8) with youth leadership as Cabin Leaders (high school) & Jr Cabin Leaders (grade 8). This event also offers a great opportunity to build community and share resources among adult leaders
- **Great Lakes Creation Collaborative Retreat** An initiative between the United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ where representatives of our region attended a weekend event in Michigan with representatives from communities surrounding the Great Lakes. The theme speaker, theologian Ched Myers, reminded the church of the urgency to- learn about, become intimate with and love our watersheds in our quest for creation care.
- **There is much more. Learn more about HF D&J Commission by contacting commission members or staff supporting this work.**

- Staff Support for HF D&J Commission
Kathy Douglas, Faith Formation Minister
John Egger, Social Justice Minister
Krista Ford, Administrative Assistant, Finance
Thérèse Samuel, Right Relations and Social Justice Minister

Human Resources Commission

The Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is active and alive throughout the Region. Currently chaired by Rev. Richard Bott and Sue Stephen, and supported by Micol Cotrell, the Commission's Mandate is outlined on the Region's website as being responsible for

- "The formation and nurturing of healthy pastoral relationships;
- The equipping and licensing of lay worship leaders."

<https://hfrcucc.ca/human-resource-commission/>

The Commission meets monthly September through June on the fourth Wednesday afternoon of the month at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Summer meetings are held as needed. On occasion the Commission is called for special meetings to respond to time sensitive issues.

A sub group of the Commission is a working group of Clergy, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs) and Lay people. Most recently this group designed and led a well-attended Day Away learning opportunity for LLWLs . Currently there is an opportunity for 2 Lay members to join this dynamic group. Please contact Richard or Sue about your interest in filling one of those vacancies.

The Commission is similar to the "tip of the iceberg" in that an incredible amount of the work nurturing Pastoral Relationships is done by Liaisons who work with communities of faith in times of transition, especially when a search is needed for new pastoral leadership. The majority of Liaisons are not Commissioners, but some are: lay and ordered ministry alike. There is always a need and welcome for additional Liaisons. Contact Micol Cotrell or check the newsletter for dates and registration for Liaison training opportunities.

During this Fall meeting we will be highlighting one tool (time study) that has been developed, and has proven to be useful to communities of faith and the Liaisons working with them as they write position descriptions and discern whether they are looking for a minister in a full or part-time position.

United Church Apology to the 2 Spirit and LGBTQIA Communities

An Update from

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations and Social Justice

John Egger, Minister, Social Justice

The southwestern Ontario tri-regional councils, Antler River Watershed (ARW), Horseshoe Falls (HF) and Western Ontario Waterways (WOW), are Affirming Ministries with a shared commitment and action plan. The apology offered by the United Church of Canada to 2 Spirit and LGBTQIA communities on August 8, 2025, was an apology by the church and to the church. There are implications to our regional councils as Affirming Ministries. An apology might start with words, but without meaningful action it becomes empty words.

Many may wish to have the action complete immediately, but this is a marathon, not a sprint. Action will be an ongoing process, and with our faithful engagement and the Spirit's help we can live into the apology over the coming months and years.

As a first step, we encourage individuals and congregations in each of ARW, HF and WOW Regional Councils to be aware of the apology and begin to ask the questions:

- How does this apology impact me?
- How does this apology impact others in my congregation and wider community?
- How does this apology impact the Regional Council?
- What is God calling us to do, be or change to live into this apology?

For more information, and links to the apology and background go to:

Apology Link: <https://united-church.ca/news/apology-offered-today-united-church-2s-and-lgbtqia-communities>

Watch for more follow-up activities in the spring. If you have any suggestions, comments or questions for follow-up, please reach out to the Social Justice Ministers:

John Egger, Minister, SJ jegger@united-church.ca

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, RRSJ tsamuel@united-church.ca

Section Three: Meeting Materials

Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion

Title: Opening and Procedural Motion

Origin: 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 2025-06-14;
3. Receive the minutes of the following meetings of the
 - i. Executive
25-06-25
25-09-
 - ii. Congregational Support Commission
25-05-20
25-06-10
25-07-22
25-08-14
25-08-21
25-09-09
25-09-17
25-10-14
 - iii. Human Resources Commission
25-05-21
25-06-25
25-09-24
 - iv. Discipleship and Justice Commission
25-04-24
25-05-15

Note: Minutes are posted on the website www.hfrcucc.ca "About" page

4. Appoint Doug Caldwell as Parliamentarian;
5. Appoint Wanda Backus-Kelly as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name Tessica Hackshaw and Jess Swance to serve as Equity Support Team Members;

7. Name Laurie Stevenson as Chaplain;
8. Name President Sula Anne Kosacky, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Wanda Backus-Kelly, Executive Minister Mark Laird, Executive Assistant and Recording Secretary Max Watkinson, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
9. Set the bounds of the meeting as the Zoom call, and the Regional Council office (1552 Highway 6, Carlisle, ON)
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, November 22nd, 2025.
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 – Finance Budget & Auditor’s Report

Title: Reviewing 2025 Year-to-Date and Adopting 2026 Operating Budget

Origin: Treasurer and EM

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 2026 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 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.

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 .65 AA, Finance, Office Site Operations
Communities of Faith	Partnering with congregations	Minister, Congregational Support .05 AA, Finance and Office Site Operations
Pastoral Relations	Supporting the formation and nurture of healthy pastoral relationships	Minister, Pastoral Relations .25 Minister, Pastoral Support .15 Communication and AA
Communication	Newsletters, Websites	.85 AA, Communication and AA
Connecting	Providing opportunities to come together including regional council meetings	.75 Minister, Pastoral Support
Faith Formation	Nurturing discipleship	Minister, Faith Formation
Social Justice	Seeking to be faithful in the world	Minister, Social Justice .5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations

		.3 AA, Finance
Right Relations	Deepening understand 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 2025 operating statement to date for information;
2. Approve the 2024 Auditors' Report
3. Appoint KPMG LLP as auditors for the 2025 Financial Year.
4. Adopt the proposed 2026 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary.

Auditor's Report

[Click here for the Auditor's Report for 2024](#)

HFRC Operating Budget 2026

	2024 Budget	2024 Actuals	2025 Budget	2025 Q3 YTD	2026 Budget
Income					
Assessment	325,000	334,375	325,000	243,750	325,000
Mission and Service	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000
Salary Support	68,340	67,000	69,707	50,250	70,049
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	38,558	20,000	15,000	20,000
Other Revenue		30,693		8,556	
Property Fund	19,076	19,076	19,892	14,827	19,934
Investment Income	66,000	49,838	70,000		70,000
Transfers from Unrestricted Reserves	88,334	8,692	89,322	37,227	92,154
Total	766,750	728,232	773,921	549,610	777,137
Expenses					
<u>Regional Operations</u>					
Staff	102,782	101,606	98,409	75,267	94,420
Travel	6,500	4,566	6,000	7,759	8,000
Staff Support	2,000	1,389	2,000	3,877	2,000
Exec Meetings	5,000	4,138	5,000	360	3,000
Exec Events	5,000	14,448	5,000	5,142	10,000
Archives	40,000	45,117	40,000	15,000	40,000
Corporations	8,000	8,775	8,000	5,569	9,000
Legal	10,000	117	10,000		10,000
Learning Fund	30,000	2,122	30,000		30,000
Professional Fees	20,000	36,480	20,000		25,000
Section J		26,111		9,918	
Total	229,282	244,869	224,409	122,892	231,420
<u>Communities of Faith</u>					
Staff	55,585	60,604	58,094	60,808	102,271
Travel	3,000	444	3,000	304	3,000
CSC Meetings	3,000	234	3,000	184	3,000
CSC Events	10,000	10,216	10,000	1,160	10,000
Total	71,585	71,498	74,094	62,456	118,271
<u>Pastoral Relations</u>					
Staff	49,101	42,847	50,959	27,461	50,835
Travel	3,000	314	3,000	423	3,750
HRC Meetings	3,000		3,000	220	3,000
HRC Events	10,000	1,849	10,000	1,334	10,000

Emergency Fund	1,000	3,481	1,000		1,000
Liaison		2,840			
Total	66,101	51,331	67,959	29,438	68,585
<u>Connecting</u>					
Staff	40,108	39,960	41,887	11,452	25,197
Travel	2,000	102	2,000	25	2,000
RC Meetings	30,000	51,481	32,000	21,201	34,000
Total	72,108	91,543	75,887	32,678	61,197
<u>Communication</u>					
Staff	35,838	33,583	36,617	21,467	24,934
Travel	1,000		1,000		1,000
Total	36,838	33,583	37,617	21,467	25,934
<u>Social Justice and Outreach</u>					
Staff	32,508	33,353	33,605	22,629	43,266
Travel	3,500	1,955	3,500	1,252	3,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	1,500	771	1,500	196	1,500
D & J Commission Events (50%)	5,000		5,000	1,558	5,000
				1,132	
Total	42,508	36,079	43,605	26,767	53,266
<u>Faith Formation</u>					
Staff	42,054	41,993	42,881	32,971	34,217
Travel	2,500	130	2,500	1,657	2,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	1,500		1,500		1,500
D&J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	2,562	5,000	2,546	5,000
Total	51,054	44,685	51,881	37,174	43,217
<u>Living into Right Relations</u>					
Staff	18,076	18,476	18,892	14,827	19,934
Travel	1,000		1,000	1,165	1,000
Other	500		500		500
Total	19,576	18,476	20,392	15,992	21,434
<u>Emerging Ministry</u>		3,581			
<u>Office and Admin costs</u>					
GCO Acctg & IT	40,000	37,194	40,000	27,127	40,000
Office Operations	15,675	9,470	16,380	3,471	17,000
Total	55,675	46,664	56,380	30,598	57,000

<u>Building Expenses</u>	12,500	10,128	13,062	9,739	13,650
Total					
<u>Mission Support Grants</u>	140,000	140,000	140,000	112,485	140,000
Total	797,227	792,437	805,286	501,686	833,974
Difference	-30,477	-64,205	-31,365	47,924	-56,837

Proposal #3 – First Thirds Ministry

HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL 2025 11 22

Title: First Thirds Ministry Fund

Originating Body: EM

What is the issue?

When congregations disband and sell their property, a portion of the proceeds comes to the Regional Council to be used to enable it to provide ongoing support and resources to Communities of Faith (CoF) and for new church development. The issue is that this statement is vague enough to be able to do a lot of things, but it is vague enough that it becomes challenging to act upon it.

Why is this issue important?

As a Regional Council we want to honor the legacy of those who have paved the way before us, and to be able to continue to help serve active communities of faith.

What might Horseshoe Falls do?

The Regional Council might create the following fund setting it up with a transfer of \$200,000 from the property fund:

The First Thirds Ministry Fund

Terms of Reference

Available Funds

Available funds per year: maximum of \$40,000 in total with a maximum of \$10,000 per application/program. When new money comes into the Property Fund the Executive in consultation with the Discipleship and Justice Commission will assess if funds need to be added to The First Thirds Ministry Fund.

Granting Body and Oversight

HFRC Discipleship and Justice Commission

The Discipleship and Justice Commission to report annually to the Regional Council on how the funds have supported CoF First Thirds initiatives

Criteria

For ministry or programs with Children, Youth or Young adults (up to 30ish years of age)

- 1) Grants will normally be one-time grants to a maximum of \$10,000;
- 2) Grants in excess of this amount or for a multi-year project will require the applicant to meet with the Discipleship and Justice Commission.
- 3) Future grants for the same program/application are not guaranteed to be at the same level as past grants.
- 4) Some examples are, but not limited to: Money to help run a vacation bible school, assistance for funding of a new position for a church or collection of churches who is working in first thirds ministry, a grant to help with food costs for a year for a first thirds program, funding to help put on a one time event for children, youth or young adults, funding to put on a training event for first thirds ministry leadership for multiple communities of faith, funding to help send first thirds participants to experience wider UCC events.

Procedure

Applications to be completed by a Community of Faith and submitted to the HFRC Discipleship and Justice Commission.

Proposal #4 – Collaborative Ministry Fund

HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL 2025 11 22

Title: Collaborative Ministry Fund

Originating Body: EM

What is the issue?

When congregations disband and sell their property, a portion of the proceeds comes to the Regional Council to be used to enable it to provide ongoing support and resources to Communities of Faith (CoF) and for new church development. The issue is that this statement is vague enough to be able to do a lot of things, but it is vague enough that it becomes challenging to act upon it.

Why is this issue important?

As a Regional Council we want to honor the legacy of those who have paved the way before us, and to be able to continue to help serve active communities of faith.

What might Horseshoe Falls do?

The Regional Council might create the following fund setting it up with a transfer of \$100 000 from the property fund:

The Collaborative Ministry Fund

Terms of Reference

Available Funds

Available funds per year: maximum of \$20,000 in total with a maximum of \$5,000 per application/program. When new money comes into the Property Fund the Executive will assess if funds need to be added to The Collaborative Ministry Fund.

There will be 2 granting cycles, with application deadlines of May 1st and November 1st. All accompanying application documentation must be received by those dates at 4pm.

Half of the yearly maximum will be available to be granted in May, the other half along with any carry over will be available to be granted in November.

Granting Body and Oversight

HFRC Executive

The Executive to report annually to the Regional Council on how the funds have supported CoF collaborative initiatives

Criteria

To be given to communities of faith who are working together. There must be a minimum of 2 CoF working together, having both CoF names on the granting application.

- a) The grants are to be used for operations of the collaboration, not capital projects.
- b) A maximum of \$5,000 can be granted per grant application/program each year.
- c) A CoF may only put in one application per year.
- d) Future grants for the same program or CoF are not guaranteed to be at the same level as past grants.
- e) Priority will be given to projects that can articulate how this grant can help to create a future impact on their ministry.
- f) Depending on demand not all grants may receive all requested funding.

Procedure

Applications to be completed by a Community of Faith and submitted to the HFRC Executive.

Proposal #5 – Capital Projects Fund

HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL 2025 11 22

Title: Capital Projects Fund

Originating Body: EM

What is the issue?

Our churches require maintenance and repair to keep them functional. Sometimes the repairs come as a surprise or become so big that a community of faith (CoF) cannot afford the repairs.

Why is this issue important?

As a Regional Council we want to honor the legacy of those who have paved the way before us, and to be able to continue to help serve active communities of faith.

What might Horseshoe Falls do?

The Regional Council might create the following fund setting it up with a transfer of \$400,000 from its unrestricted reserves:

The Capital Projects Fund

Terms of Reference

Available Funds

Available funds per year: maximum of \$100,000 in total with a maximum of \$50,000 per application. After 4 years (2030) the Executive will assess if funds need to be added to The Capital Projects Fund.

There will be 2 granting cycles, with application deadlines of May 1st and November 1st. All accompanying application documentation must be received by those dates at 4pm.

Half of the yearly maximum will be available to be granted in May, the other half along with any carry over will be available to be granted in November.

Granting Body and Oversight

HFRC Executive

The Executive to report annually to the Regional Council on how the funds have supported CoF.

Criteria

For capital projects for communities of faith:

- 1) Grants may be given up to the amount requested.
- 2) Applications need to show viability of the ministry and how this grant will help support that viability.
- 3) A preference will be given to applications that have been able to find supplemental sources of funding. (Not looking for this grant to fund the entire project)
- 4) The maximum request is \$50,000.
- 5) If the grant given is over \$25,000 half of the money will be given as a 3 year pay it forward loan at 0% interest, with a six-month opening grace period. Allowing for more opportunities for other CoF to access the fund. Example: \$40,000 is given out, \$20,000 of that is a grant, \$20,000 is asked to be paid back at \$555.55 each month for 3 years (starting 6 months after the grant is given).
- 6) If a CoF has over \$250,000 in reserves they are ineligible for this grant.

Procedure

Applications to be completed by a Community of Faith and submitted to the HFRC Executive.

Proposal #6 – Closing Motions

Title: Closing Motion

Origin: 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 November 21st / 22nd, 2025 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 2026;
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.
5. Close the November 21st / 22nd, 2025 meeting of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

Notes: