

**Fall Gathering of  
Antler River Watershed Regional Council**

Friday, October 27 – Saturday, October 28, 2023  
Online Meeting Workbook

**A Time of Renewal: Rebuild, Reconnect,  
Revitalize**



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**Antler River Watershed  
Regional Council  
Fall Online Gathering 2023**

October 27th-28th

 **ARWRC**  
ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
[www.arwrcucc.ca](http://www.arwrcucc.ca)

***REBUILD  
RECONNECT  
REVITALIZE***

***A TIME OF  
RENEWAL***



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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**      **A Time of Renewal: Rebuild, Reconnect, Revitalize**

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

**PRIORITIES**

Assessment	Mission & Support
Pastoral Relations	Social Justice and Outreach; Living out our Affirm Mandate
Communities of Faith Support including Indigenous Communities of Faith	Camps and Youth
Communications	Living into Right Relations

*Table of Priorities under headings Assessment funds and Mission & Support funds*

### Format and Process: Decision Making

The format for General Council proposals is being used for the regional meeting to help familiarize Antler River Watershed with it. 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 ...

**B**eing accountable for the impact of both our words and our silence

**R**eflecting on and naming our own biases

**A**ctively listening

**V**ocalizing questions that arise from our learning

**E**ncountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

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## 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.

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## 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



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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.

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## Section One: Check-In

### President Cheryl Bolton's Message

Our focus over the next two years is

## A Time of Renewal: Rebuild, Reconnect, Revitalize

*Based on Romans 12:2*

I don't know about you but I am so tired of being tired and anxious all the time, for at least three years now. I'm tired of looking woefully around, not just at the church, but at the world and feeling helpless. So what if we took a different approach by taking our inspiration from Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

So instead of, "conforming to the pattern the world," and being negative about everything that has been going wrong, what if we approached these challenges as an opportunity to renew the Church? Romans 12 challenges us to renew our minds and seek God's perfect will for our Church. What if we looked at our decline in membership as an opportunity to build new relationships with another congregation, another denomination or another demographic that we never thought to reach out to before — when things were the "status quo." Let us take the opportunity to shake up the status quo, to listen for God's voice and do God's good, pleasing and perfect will!

During this journey of renewal, we are not only rebuilding and reconfiguring our physical buildings but we also need to look at our Spiritual keystones. We are way more than just a bunch of buildings, we are living stones, and together, WE are the Church. Our faith and unity are the keystones upon which we need to rebuild our Church. Let us work together, investing our time, resources and prayers to ensure that our Regional Council is a welcoming sanctuary for all.

Over the course of this meeting, when we are faced with a challenge, I would invite you to flip your thinking and look for the opportunities; share the possibilities in our community building time; or jot down your thoughts; pray over them and share them. Together, let us seek God's will and renew our minds as we rebuild the Church!

Peace and Blessings,



Rev. Cheryl Bolton  
President, Antler River Watershed Regional Council

As at October 2023

## **In Memoriam**

Rev. Dr. Grafton Antone, OM

Rev. Lorne Thrower, OM



## **Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes**

### **Disbanding**

With thanks for their legacy and faithful service

Belle River United Church,

Final worship service Sunday, October 29, 2023

### **Amalgamations and Name Changes**

*With thanks for their continuing service*

Guilds Pastoral Charge name changed to Rondeau Pastoral Charge

Parkhill United Church and Thedford United Church

amalgamated to form Ausable United Church

Zion United Church and Thorndale United Church

amalgamated to form Thorndale United Church

### **Working towards amalgamation**

Bryanston United Church and Villages United Church, Granton

Kerwood-Bethesda United Church and Strathroy United Church

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Wesley United Church, sold their building and nesting with Charing Cross United Church

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## Section Two: Information

### Congregational Support Commission

As we gather for our Fall Gathering, the big focus is "Rebuilding," based on Romans 12:2. This theme really gets to the heart of what we do at the Congregational Support Commission. We often get called in when churches are going through big changes — sometimes it's tough, sometimes it's exciting, but most times it's a mix of both. But we're not just here for the bumps in the road; we also love celebrating the exciting and creative things your congregations are doing.

#### Achievements and Highlights

- **Faithful Choices in Transitions**

In the past year, we've seen communities of faith facing substantial changes — selling buildings and engaging in partnerships that defy traditional paradigms. Some of these partnerships resulted in amalgamation, others in "nesting" arrangements, where one congregation resides within another's space. These aren't just logistical choices; they are leaps of faith. The stories emanating from these transitions are powerful testimonies of hope and resilience, demonstrating what it truly means to rebuild communities and recommit to our shared mission.

#### Current Initiatives

##### Growing into Our Mandate

The Commission itself is in a phase of self-discovery and growth. Our aspiration is not just to be your emergency contact but also to serve as a consistent source of support and inspiration. To that end, we invite congregations to engage with us openly — not just when the waters are stormy, but also when they are calm. Your stories of joy and success are as important to us as your challenges. Together, let's explore how we can better know and support one another. And let's not overlook the incredibly exciting **Vibrant Community Engagements** that some of our congregations are already involved in:

- **Addressing Food Insecurity:** Several congregations have initiated programs to combat food insecurity, creating an immediate impact in their communities.
- **Freedom Beyond Buildings:** Some have sold their aging structures and discovered newfound liberation, along with its own set of unique challenges and opportunities.
- **Ecumenical Partnerships:** Some are breaking down denominational barriers, with shared worship services and cooperative outreach projects.
- **Cultivating the Arts:** Others are turning to the arts as a form of community outreach and expression, nurturing local talent and providing spaces for creativity.
- **Social Advocacy and Justice**
- **Housing Crisis Solutions:** Initiatives aimed at providing affordable housing are not only compassionate but also deeply transformational for the communities involved.
- **Holistic Inclusivity:** Numerous congregations are active in areas such as 2SLGBTQIA+ support, right relations with Indigenous communities, racial equity, healthcare and elderly care.

These examples underscore our collective resilience and creativity, exemplifying how faith communities are living into the call to live into Jesus' teaching and example in ways that touch on social, spiritual, and physical needs. What exciting things are you doing?

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## Challenges and Opportunities

- **The Gap in Human Resources**

One of the most common challenges faced by congregations is a dwindling pool of leaders and volunteers. This is not merely a short-term hiccup, but a structural issue affecting the long-term vitality of our communities. The Commission recognizes this as both a challenge and an opportunity to rethink how we inspire and equip a new generation of church workers, both at the congregational and regional levels.

- **Building and Deepening Connections**

As we acknowledge this challenge, our focus shifts to community building. We plan to curate and share stories from congregations taking bold steps in faith, whether that's innovative outreach projects, collaborative worship experiences, or initiatives that nurture spiritual growth. These stories can serve as catalysts, encouraging others to step into their divine potential.

- **Engaging the Community**

We are proactively working on ways to deepen our connections with congregations. Our top proactive goals are to get to know you better and to encourage communities of faith to share, learn and engage with one another in meaningful ways. When you get together with your neighbours, you'll learn how much you have in common and be reminded that *you are not alone*.

- **Closing Well**

We are in a time when some communities of faith are making the decision to disband or join forces with another congregation. This isn't a sign of failure but a faith-filled response to the natural life cycle of churches. By choosing this path, they're showing a deep care for each other, recognizing the limits of their volunteers and resources, and focusing on what they can do well together. Together they are finding ways to create a meaningful legacy. These good and faithful servants go forward in hope, trusting in the God of resurrection. We give thanks for their ministry.

## Acknowledgements

A special word of thanks to our indefatigable regional staff support, Rev. Lynne Allin and Pretima Kukadia-Kinting. Your wisdom and resilience have been invaluable. To the Pastoral Charge Supervisors who serve on the front lines, walking with congregations through seasons of calm and storm, your ministry is deeply appreciated.

We walk this journey as a resurrection people, reminded by Paul's letter to the Romans that transformation and renewal are intrinsic to our faith. As we navigate the complexities of our time, let's remember that God is persistently at work among us, shaping possibilities and futures that we might not yet see. Together, in faith and community, we can rebuild and renew.

Respectfully submitted,

# Greg Simpson

Greg Simpson

Chair, Congregational Support Commission

## Pastoral Charge Supervisors



**ARWRC**  
ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
www.arwrucc.ca



**WOWRC**  
WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
www.wowrucc.ca



**HFRC**  
HORSESHOE FALLS  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
www.hfrucc.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);
- Racial justice training;
- Boundaries training

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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**

Earlier this year, as part of the movement to decolonize, make the United Church more welcoming and to be in tune with the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Report, there was concern for the name "Mission" & Discipleship Commission and thus we had a name change in all three regional councils (Horseshoe Falls, Western Ontario Waterways and Antler River Watershed) to Discipleship and Justice Commission.

Our commission has evolved since The United Church of Canada moved to Regional Councils, with a greater understanding of our role, and our involvement in the life of the church. One of our primary roles has been to evaluate and award Mission Support Grants and other grants (*Note: name change forthcoming nationally*). The regional council's three priorities help us focus our discussions, and we are pleased that we have distributed over \$500,000 to regional council ministries since 2020. That is your donations to Mission & Service of the United Church put into action, in camping ministries, youth ministry & chaplaincies, and the Windsor and London Missions.

As we move forward it is good to know that we have a solid base of individuals leading the way. Thanks to commission members Linda Badke, Tabitha Carey, Robert Harris, Jim Hatt, Jim Haupt, Joshua Lawrence, Lillian Patey, Doug Peck and Anthony Smith. Thanks also to our staff support Kathy Douglas, John Egger, Stephen Iverson, Ruthanna Mack, Elizabeth Marshall and Thérèse Samuel.

Respectfully,

**Richard Auckland**

Richard Auckland  
Chairperson, Discipleship and Justice Commission

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## Human Resources Commission

Your Human Resources Commission (HRC) carries responsibility for:

- The formation and nurturing of healthy pastoral relationships;
- The equipping and licensing of licensed lay worship leaders,
- The resourcing of liaisons to walk with search committees,
- The celebration of covenanting for calls and long-term appointments.

The Antler River Watershed Regional Council's HRC, continues to evolve as we work with and are supported by Micol Cottrell, Minister, Pastoral Relations, in all things related to pastoral relations. We have heart-felt discussions regarding policy and how to interpret The Manual of The United Church of Canada and the various handbooks that are resource materials for communities of faith as they begin or are on the journey to search for new clergy. We are honoured to celebrate with the communities of faith that covenant with their new clergy and the regional council. We encourage all to celebrate with those communities of faith and the commission is endeavouring to find ways to publicize covenanting services, so more of you from the regional council can join in the covenanting celebrations.

Tri-Regional information online sessions are conducted for congregational search committees by Micol. It is important that all members of search committees receive the same information prior to starting their respective search. Search Committees have access to a trained HRC Liaison that is available as a resource and will assist as needed. Note: HRC is in need of Liaisons, who can be order of ministry or lay persons (training provided). It does not require the time commitment of the former Presbytery Representatives, who were required to be present for all meetings and interviews. If you are interested in becoming a liaison, please reach out to Micol Cottrell or myself for further information.

The Licensed Lay Worship Leader Resource Team oversees the program for the initial and ongoing training of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as the support and supervision for LLWLs. If you know of anyone that has an interest in becoming a licensed lay worship leader, have them get in contact with us. LLWLs play an important role as they can provide pulpit supply for those communities of faith with a vacancy or when a clergy person is away from their respective community of faith.

There has been great interest in the [United Fresh Start](#) program, for communities of faith entering or renewing their covenantal relationship. The program is well worth the time and effort (*my biased opinion*) for both clergy and the community of faith. Micol is the person to contact to learn more about this program.

The Human Resources Commission meets every month on the second Tuesday. Our minutes are uploaded to the Antler River Watershed Regional Council website for your reading pleasure: <https://arwrucc.ca/human-resources-commission-minutes/>.

In faith and in peace

## Kerry Stover

Kerry Stover

Chair, Human Resources Commission



## Section Three: Meeting Materials

### Agenda for the Fall Gathering 2023 Online Meeting

<b>Friday, October 27</b>	<b>6:00 PM – 8:30 PM</b>	<b>--- ONLINE ---</b>
<b>6:00 PM</b>	Gathering Music Welcome & Constitute Meeting Proposal 1: Opening & Procedural Motion BRAVE, Affirming Statement Introduction of Meeting Leadership Opening Worship and Land Acknowledgement Welcome to ARWRC Remit Education Update & Questions for Clarification: Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations & Social Justice, and John Egger, Minister Social Justice Remit Vote	
<b>Break</b>	5-minute break Congregational Support Commission: <i>Paying Pastoral Charge Supervisors Discussion</i> Discipleship and Justice Commission Engagement Human Resources Commission Engagement In Memoriam and Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes Closing Prayer	
<b>Saturday, October 28</b>	<b>9:00 AM – 2:30 PM (includes 1-hour lunch)</b>	<b>--- ONLINE ---</b>
<b>9:00 AM</b>	Gathering Music Welcome Back Worship <i>Going Deeper on the Regional Council Evaluation: Conversation Groups</i> Introduction of Candidate Janine Lunn and Candidate Addresses the Court Proposal 2: Budget 2024	
<b>11:30 AM</b>	<b>Grace and Lunch</b>	
<b>12:30 PM</b>	Gathering Music Congregational Support Commission Engagement Proposal 3: GC45 Commissioners Election in 2024 Community Building: <i>“What’s On Your Heart?”</i> Unfinished/New Business Save the Dates Courtesies Thanking the President Proposal 4: Closing Motion Closing Worship	
<b>Saturday, October 28</b>	<b>4:00 PM (livestreamed)</b>	
	Celebration of Ministries Service – <b>Celebrant Janine Lunn</b> St. Andrew’s United Church, 60 West Avenue, St. Thomas	

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## 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, Cheryl Bolton, in July: [ARWRC Regional Council Evaluation letter from President, July 2023](#)

As the ARWRC 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 of our Fall Meeting to dig deeper into the evaluation in affinity groups.

### The Process for the Fall Meeting

During the Saturday 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 ARW 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 ARW 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*).

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## 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 ARWRC?
- 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 ARWRC purpose statement - "Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith" 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?

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## 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 2023-05-12-13;
3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the
  - i. Executive  
2023-09-13  
2023-06-15  
2022-04-12
  - ii. Congregational Support Commission  
2023-06-07  
2023-05-10  
2023-05-03  
2023-04-05
  - iii. Human Resources Commission  
2023-06-06  
2023-05-09  
2023-04-11  
for information.  
*Note: Minutes are posted on the website [www.arwrcucc.ca](http://www.arwrcucc.ca) "About" page*
4. Appoint Brad Morrison as Parliamentarian;
5. Appoint Kerry Stover as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name George Bozanich to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
7. Name President Cheryl Bolton, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Kerry Stover, Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird, and Executive Assistant Sue Duliban, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
8. Name regional council staff members as scrutineers;
9. Set the bounds of the meeting as the Zoom call, the Best Western Stoneridge Inn & Conference Centre, 6675 Burtwistle Lane, London, Ontario and the sanctuary of St. Andrew's United Church, St. Thomas, 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 p.m., Friday, October 27, 2023.
13. Receive all written reports in the workbook.
14. 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.

### 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	ARW's Share of the following Positions
Regional Operations	Operation of the regional council	Executive Minister Executive Assistant .5 Administrative Assistant (AA), Discipleship and Office Site Management .4 AA, Finance
Communities of Faith	Partnering with congregations	Minister, Congregational Support



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 .5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations .25 AA, Discipleship and Office Site Management
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 2023 operating statement to date for information;
2. Receive the 2022 Auditors' Report;
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 LLP 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	YTD at Aug 31	2024 Budget
<b>Income</b>			
Assessment	325,000	233,308	325,000
Mission and Service	240,000	182,979	180,000
Salary Support	67,000	44,667	68,340
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	13,333	20,000
Other Revenue		3,340	
Investment Income	27,000		65,000
<i>Transfers from Property Fund</i>	18,045	11,958	19,076
<i>Transfers from General Fund</i>	77,954	11,630	88,330
<i>Transfers from Operating Fund</i>			
Transfers	95,999	23,588	107,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>774,999</b>	<b>501,215</b>	<b>765,746</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<u>Regional Operations</u>			
Staff	102,037	71,548	102,782
Travel	6,500	1,917	6,500
Staff Support	2,000		2,000
Exec Meetings	17,500	1,003	5,000
Exec Events	5,000	882	5,000
Archives	40,000	26,667	40,000
Corporations	8,000	4,600	8,000
Legal	10,000	301	10,000
Learning Fund	30,000		30,000
Professional Fees	20,000		25,000
Section J		1,028	
<b>Total</b>	<b>241,037</b>	<b>107,946</b>	<b>234,282</b>
<u>Communities of Faith</u>			
Staff	54,408	36,811	55,585
Travel	3,000	367	3,000
CSC Meetings	5,000	81	3,000
CSC Events	10,000	331	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,408</b>	<b>37,590</b>	<b>71,585</b>
<u>Pastoral Relations</u>			
Staff	46,519	32,241	49,097
Travel	3,000		3,000
HRC Meetings	5,000	205	3,000
HRC Events	10,000	302	10,000
Emergency Fund	1,000		1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,519</b>	<b>32,748</b>	<b>66,097</b>
<u>Connecting</u>			
Staff	37,868	26,014	40,108

Figure 1 - Budget 2023 page 1

Travel	2,000	665	2,000
RC Meetings	30,000	14,901	34,500
*Mission Support Grants			
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,868</b>	<b>41,580</b>	<b>76,608</b>
<u>Communication</u>			
Staff	26,007	20,005	35,338
Travel	1,500	148	1,500
*Mission Support Grants		3,038	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,507</b>	<b>23,191</b>	<b>36,838</b>
<u>Social Justice and Outreach</u>			
Staff	38,983	19,074	32,508
Travel	3,500		3,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500	125	1,500
D & J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	1,687	5,000
*Mission Support Grants		42,840	
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,983</b>	<b>63,726</b>	<b>42,508</b>
<u>Faith Formation</u>			
Staff	46,983	31,155	42,053
Travel	2,500		2,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500		1,500
D&J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	1,550	5,000
*Mission Support Grants		72,900	
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,983</b>	<b>105,605</b>	<b>51,053</b>
<u>Chaplaincy</u>			
*Mission Support Grants		13,973	
<u>Right Relations</u>			
Staff	17,045	11,958	18,076
Travel	1,000		1,000
Other	500		500
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,545</b>	<b>11,958</b>	<b>19,576</b>
<u>Office and Admin costs</u>			
GCO Acctg & IT	40,000	24,493	40,000
Office Operations	15,000	13,331	15,675
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>37,824</b>	<b>55,675</b>
<u>Building Expenses</u>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>9,360</b>	<b>12,500</b>
<u>Mission Support Grants</u>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000</b>		<b>150,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>818,850</b>	<b>485,501</b>	<b>816,722</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-43,851</b>	<b>15,714</b>	<b>-50,976</b>

Figure 2 - Budget 2023 page 2

**DRAFT 6**

**Updated Oct 18, 2023**

Financial statements of

Antler River Watershed Regional Council of  
**The United Church of Canada**

December 31, 2022

Antler River Watershed Regional Council  
**The United Church of Canada**

**DRAFT 6**

December 31, 2022

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# Statement of financial position

updated Oct 13, 2023

as at

(amounts in Canadian dollars)

	December 31, 2022	December 31, 2021			
	Operating Fund	Restricted Funds (Schedule 1)	Property Funds	Total	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>					
Current					
Cash	73,814	-	-	73,814	1,038,317
Accounts receivable (note 5)	206,097	-	-	206,097	91,447
Prepays (note 6)	2,079	-	-	2,079	2,079
	<b>281,990</b>	-	-	<b>281,990</b>	1,131,843
Due from/to other funds	<b>(1,099,909)</b>	<b>239,022</b>	<b>860,887</b>	-	-
Investments (note 7)	1,642,322	-	-	1,642,322	759,102
Loan receivable (note 8)	24,943	-	-	24,943	-
	<b>849,346</b>	<b>239,022</b>	<b>860,887</b>	<b>1,949,255</b>	<b>1,890,945</b>
<b>Liabilities and fund balances</b>					
Current liabilities					
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 9)	123,051	-	91,538	214,589	475,903
Fund balances					
Internally restricted - Schedule 1	-	86,981	-	86,981	86,581
Externally restricted - Schedule 1	-	152,041	-	152,041	122,305
Unrestricted	726,295	-	769,349	1,495,644	1,206,156
	<b>849,346</b>	<b>239,022</b>	<b>860,887</b>	<b>1,949,255</b>	<b>1,890,945</b>

Approved on behalf of the Regional Council Executive

Regional Executive Minister

President

Statement of operations  
for the year ended  
(amounts in Canadian dollars)

updated Oct 13, 2023

	<b>December 31, 2022</b>				December 31, 2021
	<b>Operating Fund</b>	<b>Restricted Funds (Schedule 1)</b>	<b>Property Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenues (note 11)</b>					
General Council assessment grants	440,825	-	-	440,825	401,375
Mission and support grants	240,000	-	-	240,000	240,000
Ontario archive grants	19,476	-	-	19,476	19,476
Net proceeds from disbanding congregations	-	-	1,026,496	1,026,496	562,568
Donations, grant and other revenue	6,614	37,097	-	43,711	14,265
	<b>706,915</b>	<b>37,097</b>	<b>1,026,496</b>	<b>1,770,508</b>	<u>1,237,684</u>
<b>Expenses (note 11)</b>					
Salaries, benefits and continuing education	352,640	-	-	352,640	340,256
Grants	170,462	2,971	643,751	817,184	522,710
Meetings and travel	28,876	-	-	28,876	11,576
Office administration	28,243	770	-	29,013	13,349
Ontario Regional Council Archive fees	38,952	-	-	38,952	38,952
General Council Office service fees	41,391	-	-	41,391	42,093
Professional fees	57,019	-	-	57,019	28,263
Resources	8,416	2,800	-	11,216	18,300
Property and insurance	9,609	820	-	10,429	14,139
Bank charges	575	-	-	575	103
	<b>736,183</b>	<b>7,361</b>	<b>643,751</b>	<b>1,387,295</b>	<u>1,029,741</u>
Net revenues (expenses), before items below	<b>(29,268)</b>	<b>29,736</b>	<b>382,745</b>	<b>383,213</b>	207,943
Adjustment to fair market value of investments	<b>(95,322)</b>	-	-	<b>(95,322)</b>	65,914
Investment income	<b>28,329</b>	-	-	<b>28,329</b>	27,628
Investment expenses	<b>(9,922)</b>	-	-	<b>(9,922)</b>	<u>(9,911)</u>
Investment returns (note 7)	<b>(76,915)</b>	-	-	<b>(76,915)</b>	83,631
<b>Net revenues (expenses)</b>	<b>(106,183)</b>	<b>29,736</b>	<b>382,745</b>	<b>306,298</b>	<u>291,574</u>

# Statement of changes in fund balances

updated Oct 13, 2023

for the year ended

(amounts in Canadian dollars)

December  
31, 2022

December  
31, 2021

	Operating Fund	Restricted Funds (Schedule 1)	Property Funds	Total	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Fund balances, beginning of year</b>	<b>819,552</b>	<b>208,886</b>	<b>386,604</b>	<b>1,415,042</b>	1,340,623
Net transfers (to) from existing and former church related entities (note 12)	<b>13,326</b>	-	-	<b>13,326</b>	(217,155)
Net revenues (expenses)	<b>(106,183)</b>	<b>29,736</b>	<b>382,745</b>	<b>306,298</b>	291,574
Interfund transfers (note 13)	<b>(400)</b>	<b>400</b>	-	-	-
<b>Fund balances, end of year</b>	<b>726,295</b>	<b>239,022</b>	<b>769,349</b>	<b>1,734,666</b>	1,415,042



**The United Church of Canada**

Statement of cash flows  
for the year ended  
(amounts in Canadian dollars)

**DRAFT 6**

updated Oct 13, 2023

	<b>December 31, 2022</b>	December 31, 2021
	<b>Total</b>	Total
	\$	\$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Net revenues (expenses)	<b>306,298</b>	291,574
Non-cash items		
Investment returns	<b>76,915</b>	(83,631)
	<b>383,213</b>	207,943
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	<b>(114,650)</b>	(91,269)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	<b>(261,314)</b>	151,799
<b>Total cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>7,249</b>	268,473
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Net (contributions) withdrawals to/from investments	<b>(960,135)</b>	(500,703)
Loan receivable	<b>(24,943)</b>	-
<b>Total cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(985,078)</b>	(500,703)
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Transfer of funds from former presbyteries and conferences	<b>13,326</b>	(217,155)
<b>Total cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>	<b>13,326</b>	(217,155)
Total cash used	<b>(964,503)</b>	(449,385)
Cash, beginning of year	<b>1,038,317</b>	1,487,702
<b>Cash, end of year</b>	<b>73,814</b>	1,038,317

# Antler River Watershed Regional Council

Schedule 1

## The United Church of Canada

**DRAFT 6**

### Schedule of Restricted Fund Balances

updated Oct 13, 2023

for the year ended

(amounts in Canadian dollars)

	January 01, 2022 Balance	Revenue	Expenses	Transfer (to) from Operating Fund	December 31, 2022 Balance	December 31, 2021 Balance
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Internally Restricted</b>						
Engaging Stewardship Fund (formerly M & S Projects Generation Fund) (formerly	11,485	-	-	-	11,485	11,485
Investment in Leadership Fund Congregational Learning Grants Fund)	38,013	-	-	-	38,013	38,013
Ministry with Youth and Young Adults	30,067	-	-	400	30,467	30,067
Vision Fund	7,016	-	-	-	7,016	7,016
	<b>86,581</b>	-	-	<b>400</b>	<b>86,981</b>	<b>86,581</b>
<b>Externally Restricted</b>						
Rural Ministry Leadership Fund	6,376	-	(151)	-	6,225	6,376
Fairfield Museum Fund	(24,018)	37,062	(1,476)	-	11,568	(24,018)
The Oxford Legacy Fund	57,336	-	(4,934)	-	52,402	57,336
Middlesex Resource Centre Fund	48,670	-	(800)	-	47,870	48,670
The Elgin Presbytery Student Fund	11,468	-	-	-	11,468	11,468
Westminster Weekend Fund	22	-	-	-	22	22
Institute for Specialized Ministry (formerly Westminster Institute Fund)	22,451	-	-	-	22,451	22,451
Ethel Child's Scholarship Fund	-	35	-	-	35	-
	<b>122,305</b>	<b>37,097</b>	<b>(7,361)</b>	-	<b>152,041</b>	<b>122,305</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>208,886</b>	<b>37,097</b>	<b>(7,361)</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>239,022</b>	<b>208,886</b>

1. *The Antler River Watershed Regional Council, The United Church of Canada*

The purpose of Antler River Watershed Regional Council, The United Church of Canada (the "Regional Council") is to be responsible for providing leadership and resources to the pastoral charges within its assigned geographical boundary in order that the life and work of Jesus Christ may be known in The United Church of Canada ("The Church") and in the world.

The Regional Council is the regional headquarters, in western region of southern Ontario, for The Church. The Regional Council was established as a result of the restructuring of The Church on January 1, 2019. The Regional Council is an unincorporated entity and, as a Canadian registered charity, is exempt from income tax.

The Regional Council is a partner in a cost sharing agreement with Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council ("Western") and Horseshoe Falls Regional Council ("Horseshoe"), which includes sharing costs for regional operating activities, events, workshops and, property capital and operating expenses at various rates of participation (note 10).

2. *Basis of presentation*

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations ("ASNPO") established by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada").

*Fund accounting*

The Regional Council uses the restricted fund method of reporting restricted donations. The funds are described as follows:

*Operating Fund*

This fund records the day-to-day operations of the activities under the control of the Regional Council, which include governance and, development and delivery of programs to support: pastoral relations; local faith communities; social justice and outreach ministries; faith formation; and right relations ministries. This fund includes contributions, donations, bequests, grants and other receipts of the Regional Council for specific and general purposes. These resources are unrestricted.

*Internally Restricted Funds*

Internally restricted funds (see Schedule 1) account for transfers, approved at meetings by the executive, to various reserve accounts and the individual transactions charged to these reserves in support of selected ministries. These funds are included in the statement of financial position under the caption "Restricted Funds".

*Externally Restricted Funds*

Externally restricted funds (see Schedule 1) have specific restrictions placed by the donors on the initial contributions ("capital") and the use of investment income accruing to these funds. These funds are included in the statement of financial position under the caption "Restricted Funds".

*Property Funds*

These funds account for net proceeds from disbanding congregations and allocations from the Operating Fund. These funds are used to provide assistance by grants to The Church's ministries, communities of faith, learning events and, other church related entities and programs. These funds also support staffing of the various ministries of the Regional Council.

### 3. *Significant accounting policies and practices*

The significant accounting policies followed by the Regional Council with respect to its regional accounts are as follows:

#### *Cash*

Cash includes cash held for liquidity purposes in bank accounts and term deposits or similar instruments that can be redeemed at any time for face value plus interest accrued to the redemption date.

#### *Financial instruments*

Financial assets and financial liabilities are initially recognized at fair value, adjusted for transaction costs. Except for investments, the Regional Council subsequently measures all its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost. Financial assets measured at amortized cost include, accounts and loans receivables. Financial liabilities measured at amortized costs include accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

Investments are carried at fair value. The purchase and sale of investments are accounted for using settlement date accounting. Investment management fees are expensed as incurred.

The funds held with an investment manager are part of the Regional Council's long term investment strategy and are classified as long-term investments, irrespective of liquidity.

#### *Loans receivable*

Loans receivable are made to support existing ministers and candidates for ministry in their pursuit of education and leadership development. The loans, recorded at cost, are generally non-interest bearing with no specific terms of repayment unless otherwise specified.

#### *Revenue Recognition*

Revenue consists primarily of grants from The General Council Office of The United Church of Canada ("the GCO") and contributions from disbanding congregations as they dispose of their property and distribute their net assets. Grants received from the GCO are recognized in the fiscal year in which they are received. Net proceeds from disbanding congregations are recognized as revenue when received or receivable based on the date of the passing of the Regional Council motion to disband the congregation. Registration fees from the semi-annual general meetings, workshops and events are recognized in the period in which they occur. Interest income on loans receivable is accrued and recognized as specified in the loan agreements. Net investment returns are recognized as earned and comprise: interest and dividend income; fair value changes; and investment management fees.

#### *Use of Estimates*

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect: the reported amounts of assets and liabilities; disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements; and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. The Regional Council makes estimates in determining significant accrued liabilities and the recoverability of loans receivable. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

#### 4. *Financial instruments risk disclosures*

The main risks the Regional Council's financial instruments are exposed to consist of market risk (including interest rate risk, price risk and currency exchange risk), credit risk and liquidity risk. The investment committee was formed by the Executive Committee and has established a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures ("SIPP"), which it uses to manage the above-noted risks. There have been no significant changes to the above noted risk exposures from 2021.

The following describes the various risks and how the Regional Council addresses such risks:

##### *Market Risk*

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Management manages this risk with a diversified investment portfolio.

##### *Interest Rate Risk*

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the fair value of financial instruments and future cash flows associated with the instruments will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. The Regional Council's exposure to interest rate risk arises from its interest-bearing assets.

##### *Currency Risk*

Currency risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate due to changes in foreign exchange rates. The Regional Council does not have investments denominated in foreign currency.

##### *Other Price Risk*

Other price risk refers to the risk that the fair value of the financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from currency risk or interest rate risk), whether those changes are specific to the individual instrument or its issuer or factors affecting all similar instruments trading in the same market. The Regional Council is exposed to market risk through its investment in mutual funds and short term securities. Management manages this risk by selecting mutual funds that are diversified as to industry and geography.

##### *Credit Risk*

The Regional Council is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that counterparties default on their financial obligations, or if there is a concentration of financial obligations which have similar economic characteristics that could be affected by changes in economic conditions, such that the Regional Council could incur a financial loss. The Regional Council's maximum exposure to credit risk is represented by the carrying values of its cash, accounts and loans receivable, and money market instruments. The Regional Council's cash is on deposit with a Canadian Chartered bank and therefore the Regional Council is not subject to significant credit risk. The Regional Council's accounts receivable includes amounts due from related parties and HST rebates. The loan receivable is due from a related party. There is no significant exposure to credit risk.

#### 4. *Financial instruments risk disclosures (continued)*

##### *Liquidity Risk*

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Regional Council cannot meet its commitments when they become due. Liquidity risk also includes the risk of the Regional Council not being able to liquidate assets in a timely manner. The Regional Council's management manages this risk by reviewing expected cash flow requirements through its budgeting process, anticipating investing and financing activities and holding assets that can be readily converted into cash.

#### 5. *Accounts receivable*

The accounts receivable totaling \$206,097 (2021 - \$91,447) includes net proceeds from disbanding congregations received within four weeks after the fiscal year end.

#### 6. *Prepays*

Prepays totaling \$2,079 (2021 - \$2,079) consists of a deposit for a study on camp ministries.

#### 7. *Investments*

As at year-end, the Regional Council has investments totaling \$1,642,322 (2021 - \$759,102) consisting of: mutual fund units in a diversified portfolio totaling \$677,086 (2021 - \$756,602); cash and short-term investments totaling \$952,603; and social investments totaling \$12,633 (2021 - \$2,500). The mutual fund investments are managed by Frontier Capital, which at year end was in the process of being transferred to BMO Nesbitt Thompson, the new investment manager, who will manage all investments using a long-term strategy as the Regional Council has sufficient liquidity. There is no foreign currency exposure. The negative investment returns are \$76,915 (2021 - positive investment returns \$83,631) and are separately disclosed in the statement of operations and included in investments in the statement of financial position.

#### 8. *Loan receivable*

Loan receivable totals \$24,943 (2021 - \$nil) and is from a related party. This interest free loan is being repaid over the next 7 years. No provision has been made for this loan.

#### 9. *Accounts payable and accrued liabilities*

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities totaling \$214,589 (2021 - \$475,903) of which \$193,447 (2021 - \$475,096) are payables to related parties comprising: grants payable to The GCO and the United Church of Canada Foundation ("the Foundation") of \$103,990 (2021 - \$401,279); fees payable to The GCO totaling \$5,473 (2021 - \$5,044); and shared costs and other payables to other regional councils totaling \$83,984 (2021 - \$68,773).

#### 10. *Capital assets*

At year-end, the Regional Council has no capital assets. As part of the church restructuring, effective January 1, 2019, the Regional Council agreed to fund 33.33% of the annual operating costs of the former Hamilton Conference property, in which its offices are located, and building improvements. As such, the Regional Council expenses its share of the annual property costs (2022 - \$9,609; 2021 - \$9,423) and any building improvements in the statement of operations.

## 11. *Related party transactions*

### *Grant revenue*

The Regional Council received: \$680,825 (2021 - \$641,375) of grant revenue from The GCO; \$19,476 (2021 - \$19,476) from the Ontario Regional Council Archive Fund, a joint program of The GCO and the Ontario regional councils, for 50% of the annual archive fees; and \$37,062 (2021 - \$13,987) from the Foundation for the Fairfield Museum Fund.

### *Net proceeds from disbanding congregations*

Net proceeds from disbanding congregations totaling \$1,026,496 (2021 - \$562,568) were received from disbanding congregations, and represent 67% of funds raised by the congregations. These net proceeds are subject to The Regional Council's policy requiring such proceeds to be distributed and retained as follows:

- a. 15.0% to the Indigenous Ministries of The Church;
- b. 12.5% to the Mission & Service Fund of The Church;
- c. 12.5% to the Mission & Service Endowment Fund managed by The Foundation;
- d. 2.0% to the Ontario Regional Council Archives Fund; and
- e. 25.0% retained by The Regional Council.

The disbanding congregations distribute 33.0% of the funds raised to local ministries and these funds are not included in the statement of operations.

### *Expenses*

Grant and fees were paid to related parties as follows from:

- 1) Operating Fund
  - a) \$170,462 (2021 - \$160,000) of mission support grants to church related entities;
  - b) \$41,391 (2021 - \$42,093) of fees to The GCO for accounting services, information technology support and incorporated ministries administration; and
  - c) \$38,952 (2021 - \$38,952) of fees from the Ontario Regional Council Archive Fund for archive services.
- 2) Restricted Funds (see Schedule 1)
  - a) \$1,476 (2021 - \$33,907) of funding to the Fairfield Museum, a church related entity.
- 3) Property Funds
  - a) \$643,751 (2021 - \$352,655) of grants from the Property Funds were accrued or issued to The Church and The Foundation as a result of the above noted distribution policy for disbanding congregations.

## 12. *Net transfers (to) from existing and former church related entities*

The Regional Council received funds from two former presbyteries and a social justice investment from another former presbytery in connection with the church restructuring in 2019.

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**13.** *Interfund transfers*

An interfund transfer totaling \$400 was made to the Ministry with Youth and Young Adults from the Operating Fund.

**14.** *Comparative figures*

Certain comparative figures in the statement of financial position and statement of cash flows were reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.



## 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 45<sup>th</sup> 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 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 27 - October 28, 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 Antler River Watershed Regional Council in accordance with *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and the Governance Handbook of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council; and
5. Close the October 27-October 28, 2023 meeting of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council at the close of the Celebration of Ministries Service on Saturday, October 28, 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 (*click the title above*).

***Here are some of the questions, raised in ARWRC, HFRC and WOWRC, 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.*

***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.*

*John Egger and Thérèse Samuel*

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

#### ***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.

Thérèse Samuel *she/her*, Minister, Right Relations and Social Justice [TSamuel@united-church.ca](mailto:TSamuel@united-church.ca)

John Egger, *he/him*, Minister, Social Justice; [JEgger@united-church.ca](mailto:JEgger@united-church.ca)

*Antler River Watershed, Western Ontario Waterways, 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"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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; ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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; ...</li> </ul>
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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](http://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](mailto:remits@united-church.ca), or contact your Regional Council Executive Minister (contact information is available on [united-church.ca](http://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](http://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](http://united-church.ca):

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

Available in the “Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice” section on [united-church.ca](http://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: