

## **ARW Regional Council September 2025**

### **Proposal #4**

#### **Title: Camping Ministry Support Fund**

**Origin:** United Church Incorporated Camp Ministries of ARW with dedicated efforts from Lambton Centre and Kenesserie Camp.

#### **What is the issue?**

Camps need financial support to keep registration cost for campers/families affordable, attempt to pay staff a living wage and meet the other operational expenses. As costs rise, camps can not increase fees exponentially as many campers would not be able to come. This will be a considerable loss to many.

Camps need financial support from their regional councils to cover general operations. Financial support builds a connection and offers intentional supportive relationship between the regional camps and the regional council.

Even though congregational ministries are in decline, many camps are seeing growth--making them the primary UCC experience for many families & communities

When property sells in ARW, the region receives a percentage of those sales. Our camps would like to be able to access a portion of those resources each year for general operations.

#### **Why is this issue important?**

Camping ministry (part of First Third Ministry of the United Church of Canada) continues to be the front line for Christian Education and Leadership Development with children, youth and young adults. We need our camps to offer faith filled communities of faith to build life long learners, activists and disciples.

ARW Regional council names "Camps and Youth" along with, "Social Justice and Outreach-living out our Affirm mandate" & "Living into Right Relations" as priorities for the ministry and calling of our church. Camps meet all of these priorities.

Camps exist to bring safe, fun and meaningful life experiences to children, youth and their families. Our camps offer programming and build relationships toward meeting the Calls to the Church ([The Calls to the Church | The United Church of Canada](#)) and building their Affirming capacity for campers and staff. And in fact, too much of the energy of camp leadership is spent on finding financial resources to operate the camp, sometimes at the expense of focusing on these justice issues.

Camps are good at finding grants/subsidies sources but many of these sources are 'project specific' and not for ongoing programming and property expenses such as food, maintenance, insurance, taxes. Donations are not a guaranteed source of funding which creates a constant need for steady income for general operations. Although, it is imperative that camps create new programming and staff positions to address diverse needs and to generate enticing activities some expenses never change and are constantly increasing in cost. General operation costs must be met and finding grants to cover these costs is exhausting work and not always successful.

Communities of Faith (churches) are declining in their ability to donate to camps but their heart and passions have always been to support camping ministry. Many congregations have closed and when they do, their property sells, with a percentage of that resource going to ARW Regional Council. Some of this money could be 'given' to the camps in the region to help with general operating expenses, without the cumbersome need to write a grant application. In the past presbyteries gave a grant every year to their local camps simply as a regular practice and those funds have been greatly missed. Camping is a valid opportunity to be a legacy for any of our Communities of Faith.

### **What might the regional council do?**

*This proposal asks that an automatic 5% of sale price from regional property sold be put into a Camping Ministry Support Fund and each year those dollars be distributed evenly between the 5 camps of ARW Regional Council. Changing the policy to the following:*

that in accordance with Manual Section C.2.6(a), Antler River Watershed Regional Council adopts the policy that funds received from the property of a disbanding congregation be disbursed in the following manner:

- Reimbursement of holding/maintenance/disposal costs
- Covering unpaid past assessments and current year assessment
- Repaying any congregational indebtedness
- 33% for the congregation to direct to United Church of Canada ministries such as neighbouring congregations, United Church outreach ministries, United Church camps, United Church extension councils, The United Church of Canada Foundation or any of the following:
  - 15% designated for Indigenous ministries
  - 12.5% designated for Mission and Service (current year)
  - 12.5% designated for Mission and Service Endowment Fund
  - 2% designated for Archives
  - 20% designated for regional council
  - 5% Camping Ministry Fund
    - "A congregation may give an amount equal to the percentage of its previous year's revenue that was donated to a non-United Church registered charity to that charity."

(To be clear, should this essential new source of funding become a reality, we wish to clearly state that this fund would not replace/diminish other funds that are already being allocated to camps. This fund, no matter the amount would be in addition to those and would represent a commitment to Camping Ministry in ARW Regional Council.)

