

Fall Gathering of
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
Thursday, September 28 – Sunday, October 1, 2023
Online Meeting Workbook

We Are One – Living into Right Relations



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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.

World Wide Day of Communion: Worship Service, link to materials for congregations

*** [Click here for a worship service for Sunday October 1](#) ***

Workbook Introduction

THEME

We Are One – Living into Right Relations

PURPOSE

Connecting, Supporting, Transforming

PRIORITIES

Assessment	Mission & Support
Congregational Support/Pastoral Relations	Right Relations
Communication	Camps/Youth/Faith Formation
Connections	Chaplaincy

Format and Process: Decision Making

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

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

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

In our proceedings, the steps will be:

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

Holy Manners

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

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

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

Reflecting on and naming our own biases

Actively listening

Vocalizing questions that arise from our learning

Encountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

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

Maya Angelou



Participation in a Virtual Meeting

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

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

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

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

Waiting Room

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

Participants

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

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

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

For example, if Mark was a guest, he would write his name as:
x-Mark Laird. This helps us with vote counting.

Mute

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

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

Video

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

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

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

Being recognized to speak

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

Remember when the President calls you by name to:

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

Voting

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

Chat Box

Please reserve the chat box for the following:

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

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

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

Breakout Rooms

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

Equity Support Team Member Position Description

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

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

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

Responsibilities

Before the meeting

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

During the meeting

- At the beginning of the meeting, offer a covenant, equity agreements, intercultural lens questions, or other related protocols that can help work toward equity at the gathering.
- Be available (by phone or e-mail) to participants at the meeting who would like to share about any equity-related issues over the course of the meeting (including affirmation of processes, or hearing particular challenges that people are experiencing).
- Help work toward the full participation of peoples of all identities.
- Be attentive to microaggressions, unhelpful power dynamics, harm, intercultural conflicts, oppressive practices, and/or other inequities.
- If hurt or harm has been done in the course of a meeting, in most cases do not offer a direct intervention or interjection in the moment, but rather be in touch with the moderator or chair of the meeting and ask them to address the issue at another point during the gathering.

- Partway through the gathering and/or at the end of the gathering, offer advice and feedback on how the meeting has been functioning in terms of equity. It is helpful to offer some affirmation about what has been going well, and suggestions for a subsequent gathering.
- When reporting back to the meeting, point out any issues in a general way, and not specifically target individual people.

After the meeting

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

Background

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

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

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

Section One: Check-In

President Jennifer Irving's Message

We Are One – Living into Right Relations

Dear Friends,

After our Spring Meeting, when I became the new President of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, I created this picture. Don't worry, I know I'm not an artist! But I share this in the hope that it will help show the hope I hold for the Regional Council.

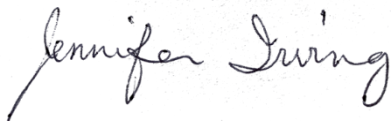
Because I know it isn't obvious, I'll try to explain what my soul was telling me through this image.

The red ball in the centre is meant to represent our regional council. When I was young and in the Junior Choir in Honeywood, we used to sing the ***Giant Love Ball Song*** by Carey Landry. The bright red ball brings that song to my mind. The rainbow eye within the round is open to the future and in it, *all* are fully seen and included in their diversity and uniqueness—every identity honoured. Finding connection, respect,

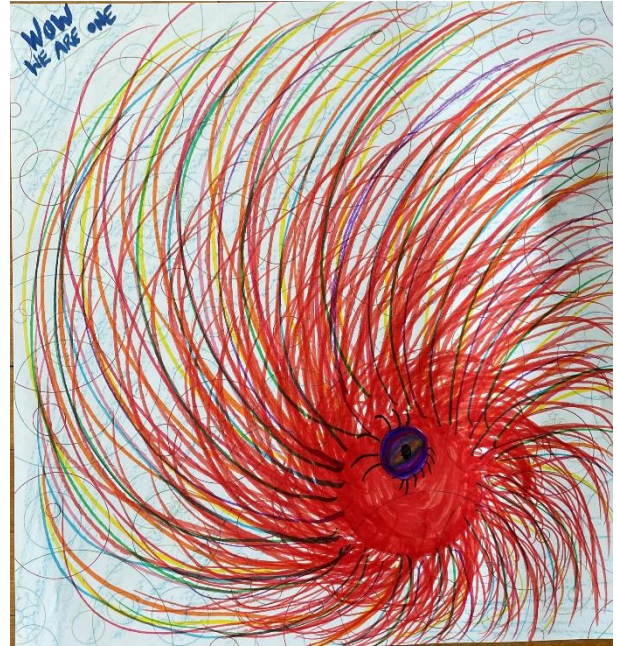
support and caring allows each and every one of the members of our regional council to reach out — gracefully widening our circle of impact and inclusion. ***Centred in love, we move in harmony.***

At this Fall Gathering, as we spend time reflecting and acting on what it means to live into right relations; as we hear a call to reconcile“action”; as we honour Indigenous voices and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation; as we engage in education and conversation and vote on Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization; as we worship and work together in the light of the sacred fire, we show our commitment to this envisioned future where “we are one.”

In love and hope,



Jennifer Irving
President, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council



As at September 2023

In Memoriam

Rev. Elizabeth Praamsma, OM



Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes

Disbandment

With thanks for their legacy and faithful service

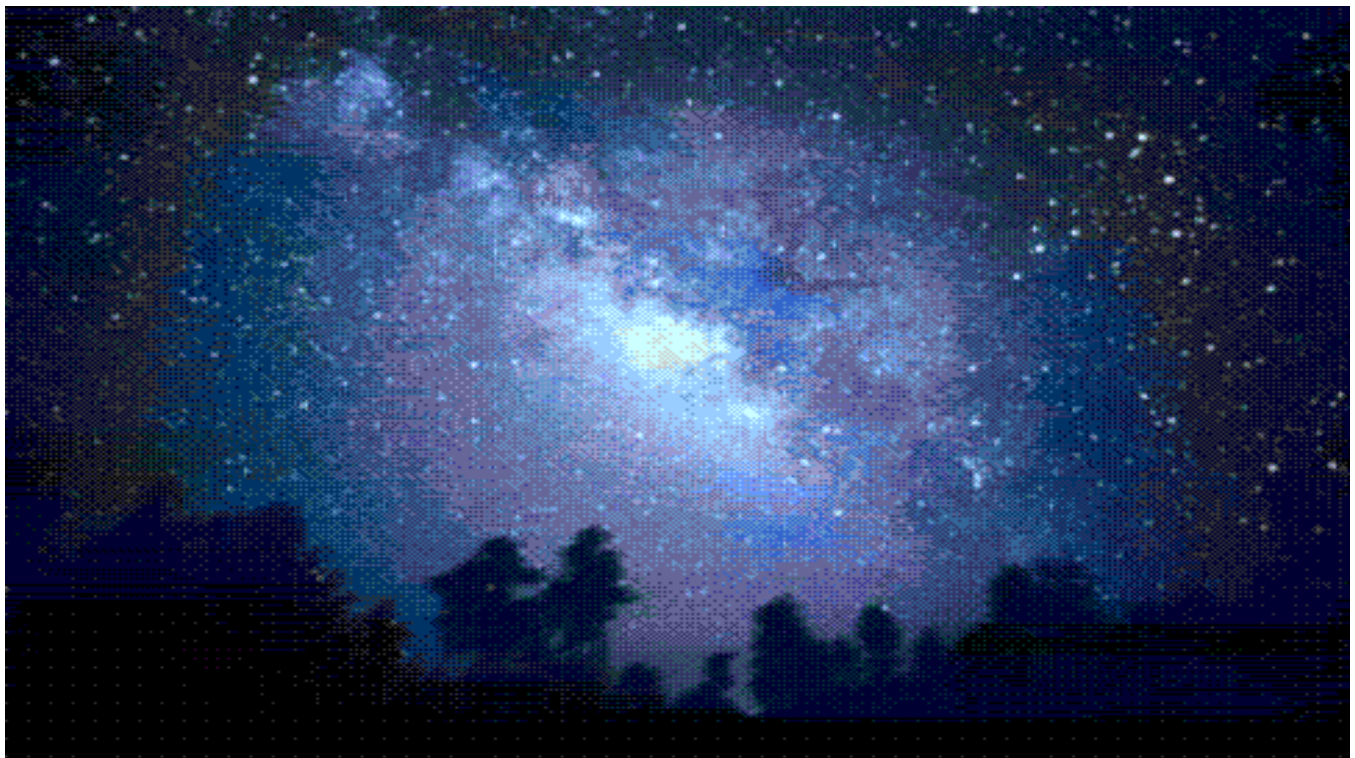
Bluevale United Church

Amalgamation

Many blessings as these communities of faith continue their ministries together!

Angus United Church and Grenfel United Church

Amalgamated as ~~ Grenfel United Church ~~



Section Two: Information

Congregational Support Commission Pastoral Charge Supervisors



WOWRC
WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.wowrcucc.ca



ARWRC
ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.arwrcucc.ca



HFRC
HORSESHOE FALLS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.hfrcucc.ca

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

Costs of Pastoral Charge Supervision to the Community of Faith

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Qualifications

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

- i. Police Records check (vulnerable sector);

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

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

Discipleship and Justice Commission

The Discipleship and Justice Commission is tasked with providing information, education and opportunities for communities of faith and their members to deepen faith and strengthen service and witness.

Over the past year, our commission has worked to carry out this mandate on a variety of fronts.

We received applications for Mission Support Grants, discerned our way through them, and awarded grants to many (but not all) applicants. WOWRC Mission Support Grants were awarded to the Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council, the University of Guelph Ecumenical Campus Ministry, Camp Menesetung, Camp Bimini, Five Oaks, the HUB Youth Network, and others. As Mission Support funding from the national church has decreased, these deliberations have proven increasingly challenging.

We had lengthy and fruitful discussions about our affirming priorities and the shift away from the language of “mission.” The name of our commission was changed to reflect this wisdom from Indigenous members of The United Church of Canada (UCC).

We helped fund learning events by various networks and faith communities, such as the Social Justice Network of Ontario Regional Councils, Norval United Church, UCC 360, and a Fishbowl Conversation with UCC Youth.

We undertook, alongside D&J Commissions from Antler River Watershed and Horseshoe Fall, to champion our regional council’s engagement with the Remit process regarding space for an autonomous Indigenous Church within the UCC. Cathy Hird has organized this effort, equipping a team of liaisons to connect with WOWRC pastoral charges. This work will continue until the March 2024 deadline for Remit votes.

We ordered, received and presented WOWRC emblazoned Pride Flags to each of the Affirming ministries within our regional council at the Spring Meeting. Pride Flags are also being offered to WOWRC communities of faith engaged in the process of considering an affirming designation.

We would like to thank our past commission co-chairs, Rev. Gail Fricker and Rev. Jenn Hind-Urquhart, for their capable leadership of our commission. In Spring 2023, Andrew Hyde assumed the chair position of the commission.,

Andrew Hyde
Chairperson, Discipleship and Justice Commission

Human Resources Commission

It seems we just had our Spring Meeting of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council in Port Elgin and we are meeting again. Where did the summer go? Like many, it has been a busy season both in our own families and in our Communities of Faith. Many Pastoral Charges are looking for new Pastoral Relationships and with that function the Human Resources Commission are deep in the work. As a commission we supply liaisons to help navigate the pathway. We also must approve the Position Description and then the final Call or Appointment. Like many areas of the church, we are not at full strength with membership on the commission. Our commission is organized to have eight commissioners, and we have five. Our liaisons are working with, from 2 to 6 communities of faith at the same time.

The global economic struggles are felt here at home as well. Many of our churches are looking for half to three-quarter time ministry as they struggle financially. Most ministers are looking for full-time employment. These are challenges we face that have given birth to new ways to think outside the box. Rural Connect is one of these programs. Collaborative Ministry is another initiative that is gaining momentum. With all these new and exciting developments comes training and the delivery of information. This then requires people to take on the task. As with many areas of church life, the volunteer aspect is crucial. The regional council staff can only be spread so thin. Therefore, we require the help of many hands and minds to accomplish our work.

I think I speak for all who do this work when I say, "it is challenging, but oh so rewarding." The great feeling when you are asked to take part in a Covenanting Service when a new Minister and Community of Faith have found a mutually rewarding position together. I have had the opportunity to take part in five such services over the past year, and each has been unique and uplifting.

In summary, our work never stops, and we will always have a need for dedicated people to continue a forward momentum. If you have the time, the passion, and some skill sets that you think would be of benefit, please fill out the '[Expression of Interest](#)' form on the [WOWRC website](#).

We look forward to more challenges and more rewards as we move closer to 100 years of The United Church of Canada.

Respectfully submitted,



Doug Hayward
Chairperson, Human Resources Commission

Section Three: Meeting Materials

Agenda for the Fall Gathering 2023 Online Meeting

We Are One – Living into Right Relations

Thursday September 28 4:00 PM – 9:00 PM <i>(including supper break)</i>	
4:00 PM	Welcome & Constitute Meeting Land Acknowledgement Proposal #1: Opening & Procedural Motion BRAVE/Affirming Statement & Leadership Team Introductions Welcome to WOWRC Opening Worship
4:00 PM	Habitat For Humanity Build Proposal #2: GC45 Commissioners election in 2024 Reminder: Deadline for New Business Thursday, Sept. 28, 9 PM Grace
5:30 – 7:00 PM	Supper
7:00 PM	Welcome Back Welcome to WOWRC <i>Going Deeper on the Regional Council Evaluation: Conversation Groups</i> In Memoriam Community of Faith Life Cycle Change Closing Prayer Reminder: Deadline for New Business Thursday, Sept. 28, 9 PM
Friday September 29 4:00 PM – 9:00 PM <i>(including supper break)</i>	
4:00 PM	Welcome Land Acknowledgement Welcome to WOWRC Opening Prayer Congregational Support Commission Engagement: <i>Paying Pastoral Charge Supervisors Discussion</i> Introduction of Candidate Candidate Addresses the Court: Whitton Daley Proposal #3: Budget 2024 Grace
5:30 – 7:00 PM	Supper
7:00 PM	Welcome Back Opening Prayer Welcome to WOWRC Human Resources Commission Engagement Discipleship & Justice Commission Engagement

New Business
Time for Conversation: Dreams & Imaginings for the Regional Council
Closing Prayer

Saturday September 30 9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

9:00 AM Welcome back
Honouring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Remit Education
Remit Discussion
Remit Vote
Save the Dates
Courtesies
Thanking President
Unfinished Business
Proposal #4: Closing Motion
Closing Blessing
Adjournment

Sunday October 1 10:30 AM

10:30 AM World Wide Communion Service
livestreamed from Centennial United Church, Stayner
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UctNUcub3St5941GPwyu7yOA>

Sunday October 1 4:00 PM

4:00 PM Celebration of Ministry Service
Celebrant: Whitton Daley
livestreamed from Cedar Hill United Church, Cambridge
<https://youtube.com/live/UniWqYS52JE?feature=share>

Going Deeper Into the Regional Council Evaluation

Background

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

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

As the WOWRC 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 Thursday evening of our Fall Meeting to dig deeper into the evaluation in affinity groups.

The Process for the Fall Meeting

During the Thursday evening 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 WOW 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 Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.

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

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

Breakout Groups

1. Connecting communities of faith to the Regional Council

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

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

- a. How can we foster a greater sense of connection between local communities of faith and WOWRC?
- 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 WOW?

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

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

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

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

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

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2023 **Local Events for Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

September 29, 4:00 p.m. **Flag Raising Event** in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Community Flagpole in front of the Collingwood Public Library, 55 Ste. Marie St. **Collingwood**.

September 30, 10 a.m. **Every Child Matters Walk: a Walk to Remember and Honour All Our Children, Healing of the Seven Generations, Kitchener**. Meet at 300 Frederick St. and walk to Victoria Park Clock Tower.

September 30, 1 p.m. **Official opening and Commemoration of Truth and Reconciliation of a new exhibit: A Visual Reconciliation: Cross Cultural Reflections on the Seven Sacred Teachings**, Martin Luther University College (at Wilfrid Laurier University), **Waterloo**. Exhibition Runs Sept 11- Dec 8.

September 30, 6-8 p.m. **Orange Shirt Day: Join us as we honour the lost children and survivors of residential schools**. Healing of the Seven Generations, Riverside Park (Dolph Pavilion), **Cambridge**.

September 30, 12-4 p.m. **"Ode to My Ancestors" Book Launch and poetry reading with Inaugural Poet Laureate of Smart Waterloo Region, Sarah Siembida**. McDougall Cottage Historic Site, 89 Grand Ave. S. **Cambridge**.

September 30, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. [online, \$10.00 donation] **Public Virtual Tour of the Mohawk Residential School**, Woodland Cultural Centre, **Brantford**.

September 30, 6:30 - 7:15 p.m. **Vigil Service**, Trinity Lutheran Church, 23 Church Street, **New Hamburg**. Hosted by Trinity Lutheran Church and the New Hamburg community members.

September 30, 1-3 p.m. **Film Screening: "The Nature of Health: Living Beyond Canada's First and Longest Running 'Indian' Residential School"**. Guelph Civic Museum. **Guelph**.

September 30, 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. **Creemore Festival of the Arts: ReconciliACTION**. **Creemore**. Including:

11:00 a.m. Free performance featuring indigenous drummers and dancers at The Village Green

2:00 p.m. Members of The Poets share experiences at St. John's United Church

8:00 p.m. The Poets Tragically Hip Tribute Band play at Creemore Legion Hall – Tickets: \$25

September 30, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**. Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, 16164 Highway 12 East, **Midland**.

ONLINE:

Sainte-Marie among the Hurons September 25, 10:00 a.m. **Commemorative program** including videos from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, a conversation with lawyer & author Michelle Good <https://hhp-events.ca/> to register.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Lunch and Learns. September 25-29. <https://buff.ly/44Hazwb> to register.

REMIT 1: RESOURCES

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

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

Dear Friends,

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

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

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

*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?

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who can I ask questions about this remit?

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

What is a category 3 remit?

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

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

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

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

Where can I access additional background information?

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

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

The following may also be helpful to reference.

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

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

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

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

Available on [united-church.ca](#):

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

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 2023-05-26-27;
3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the
 - i. Executive
2023-07-19
2023-06-15
2022-05-17
2022-04-19
 - ii. Congregational Support Commission
2023-06-20
2023-05-11
 - iii. Discipleship and Justice Commission
2023-06-27
2023-04-13
 - iv. Human Resources Commission
2023-05-16
for information.

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

4. Appoint Fred Monteith as Parliamentarian;
5. Appoint Terry Smith as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name Maggie Dieter to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
7. Name President Jennifer Irving, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Terry Smith, Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird, and Executive Assistant Sue Duliban, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
8. Set the bounds of the meeting as the zoom call and the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario;
9. 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);

10. Make all guests corresponding members;
11. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as 9:00 p.m., Thursday, September 28;
12. Receive all written reports in the workbook.
13. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline

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

Step Two:

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

Step Three:

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

Step Four:

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



Proposal #2 – Election of General Council Commissioners

Title: Election of General Council Commissioners

Origin: Executive

What is the issue?

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

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

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

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

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

Why is this important?

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

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

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

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might agree to:

- a) **To close nominations for Commissioners to GC 45 as of midnight April 15, 2024; To publicize the deadline in advance (website, newsletter, with registration materials)**
- b) **To direct the Recruiting Team authorized by the spring 2023 meeting and appointed by the Executive to review the nominations with a view to:**

- i) **Ensure a diverse cohort of Commissioners and alternates who bring both experience and new energy to the role and who are committed to the preparation and online prior requirements for General Council;**
- ii) **Recruit nominees to address gaps in representation.**
- c) **To vote on the slate as a whole at the spring 2024 regional council meeting.**



Proposal #3 – Budget 2024

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

Origin: Treasurer

What is the issue?

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

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

Why is this issue important?

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

Income

The regional council receives two grants to fund its operation:

Assessment Grant: For Governance and Shared Services

Mission and Service Grant: For Mission and Ministry

The regional council also receives funds from:

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

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

Expenses

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

Ministry	Purpose	WOWRC’s Share of the following Positions
Regional Operations	Operation of the regional council	Executive Minister Executive Assistant .25 Administrative Assistant (AA), Discipleship and Office .6 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 .8 AA, Website Management and Records

Connecting	Providing opportunities to come together including regional council meetings	Minister, Pastoral Support
Faith Formation	Nurturing discipleship	Minister, Faith Formation .125 AA, Discipleship and Office Site
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 .125 AA, Discipleship and Office Site
Right Relations	Deepening understanding and relationship with Indigenous Ministries	.5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations
Office Operations	Office supplies and equipment	
Building Expenses	Cost to maintain building	
Emerging Ministries	Unbudgeted expenses responding to an emerging situation or to the regional council’s exercise of discipline.	

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

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might:

- 1. Receive the internal 2023 operating statement to date for information;**
- 2. Direct the Executive to deal with the 2022 Auditors’ Report OR Receive the 2022 Audited Financial Statements for information;**
- 3. Endorse the following principles for the 2024 budget:**
 - a. To base costs on the figures from previous years with a 4.5% increase for inflation;**
 - b. To fund expenses for matters involving *The Manual, Section J; Oversight and Discipline*, from the Unrestricted Operating Reserve as these fluctuate in number and cost; and**
 - c. Use the Investment income and the PTCC Net Revenue Grant to help offset the reduction in M&S grant received by the Regional Council to support Mission Support Grants.**

And
- 4. Adopt the proposed 2024 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary within the above guidelines.**

	2023 Budget	as at Aug 31	2024 Budget
Income			
Assessment	325,000	216,667	325,000
Mission and Service	240,000	186,935	180,000
Salary Support	67,000	44,667	68,340
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	13,333	20,000
Other Revenue		12,053	
PTCC Grant	50,000	50,000	60,000
Property Fund	18,010	9,819	19,782
Investment Income			55,000
Transfers	77,954	14,817	89,178
Total	797,964	548,291	817,300
Expenses			
<u>Regional Operations</u>			
Staff	102,037	71,247	101,472
Travel	6,500		6,000
Staff Support	2,000		2,000
Exec Meetings	17,500	706	5,000
Exec Events	5,000		5,000
Archives	40,000	26,667	40,000
Corporations	2,000	1,533	2,000
Legal	10,000		10,000
Learning Fund	30,000	1,433	30,000
Professional Fees	20,000		20,000
Section J		41,693	
Total	235,037	143,279	221,472
<u>Communities of Faith</u>			
Staff	122,269	84,161	124,520
Travel	6,000		6,000
CSC Meetings	5,000	665	3,000
CSC Events	10,000	1,494	10,000
Total	143,269	86,320	143,520
<u>Pastoral Relations</u>			
Staff	46,519	32,186	48,281
Travel	3,000		3,000
HRC Meetings	5,000		3,000
HRC Events	10,000		10,000
Emergency Fund	1,000		1,000
Total	65,519	32,186	65,281
<u>Connecting</u>			
Staff	37,868	26,009	39,526
Travel	2,000	665	2,000
RC Meetings	30,000	22,308	34,500
*Mission Support Grants			

Total	69,868	48,982	76,026
<u>Communication</u>			
Staff	26,007	19,952	34,631
Travel	1,500	147	1,500
*Mission Support Grants		12,750	
Total	27,507	32,849	36,131
<u>Social Justice and Outreach</u>			
Staff	38,983	18,982	31,962
Travel	3,500		3,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500		1,500
D & J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	2,963	5,000
*Mission Support Grants		13,875	
Total	49,983	35,820	41,962
<u>Faith Formation</u>			
Staff	46,984	31,151	47,507
Travel	2,500		2,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	2,500		1,500
D&J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	3,779	5,000
*Mission Support Grants		39,375	
Total	56,984	74,305	56,507
<u>Chaplaincy</u>			
*Mission Support Grants		42,750	
<u>Right Relations</u>			
Staff	17,045	11,958	17,803
Travel	1,000		2,000
Other	500		500
Total	18,545	11,958	20,303
<u>Office and Admin costs</u>			
GCO Acctg & IT	40,000	24,863	40,000
Office Operations	25,000	4,074	25,000
Total	65,000	28,937	65,000
<u>Building Expenses</u>			
Total	12,000	9,360	12,500
<u>Mission Support Grants</u>			
	135,000		135,000
Total	878,712	546,746	873,702
Difference	-80,748	1,545	-56,402

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 September 28-October 1, 2023 meeting to the Executive;**
- 2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next regional council meeting;**
- 3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the spring of 2024; and**
- 4. Entrust the Executive and Commissions with the responsibilities and authority of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council in accordance with *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and the Governance Handbook of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council;**
- 5. Close the September 28-October 1, 2023 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council at the close of the Celebration of Ministries Service on Sunday, October 1, 2023.**

We Are One – Living into Right Relations

