

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Fall Meeting

Friday November 7 – Saturday November 8, 2025

Meeting Workbook

“Growing our Community”



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Workbook Introduction

Theme: *“Growing our Community”*

Purpose: **Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith**

Priorities:

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

Format and Process: Decision Making

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

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

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

In our proceedings, the steps will be:

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

WOWRC Fall Meeting Support Team

Agenda & Business Committee—Terry Smith (Chair), Rebekah Duncan (President), Mark Laird (Executive Minister), Max Watkinson, (Secretary)

Chaplain—Stacey Mortson and Jane Sullivan

Equity Support—Phyllis Fleming

Community Building—Heather Leffler

Parliamentarian—Gary Clark

Tech Team—John Neff, Michele Petick

Worship Team—Jennifer Irving and Aidan Legault

BRAVE: Commitment to Community Safety



WOWRC
WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
www.wowrucucc.ca

BRAVE: Commitment to Community Safety

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

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

R – reflecting on and naming our own biases

A – actively listening

V – vocalizing questions that arise from our learning

E – encountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Affirming Ministry Vision Statement

SAFETY. SANCTUARY. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

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

A. Continuing to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.

B. Continuing to remove barriers to participation in society.

C. Committing to be open to the Spirit.

D. Resisting oppression.

E. Welcoming and celebrating people of any sexual orientation and gender identity.

Participation in a Virtual Meeting

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

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

If you are not familiar with these options, there are zoom information tips at: [Zoom Resources](#)

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

Waiting Room

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

Participants

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

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

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

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

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

Mute

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

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

Video

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

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

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

Being recognized to speak

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

Remember when the President calls you by name to:

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

Voting

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

Chat Box

Please reserve the chat box for the following:

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

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

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

Breakout Rooms

Participants will be invited to move into a breakout room at various times during the meeting.

To join the breakout room, participants must accept the **join invitation**. Once you enter the breakout room, unmute your microphone and turn on your video.

Equity Support Team Member Position Description

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

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

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

Responsibilities

Before the meeting

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

During the meeting

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

conflicts, oppressive practices, and/or other inequities.

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

After the meeting

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

Background

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

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

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

Section One:

Meeting Agenda

Friday, November 7 th	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement Opening Motions Introduction of New Staff and Meeting Leadership Opening Worship Pastoral Relations Commission Presentation Community Building Closing Prayer
Saturday, November 8 th	9:00 a.m. – 3 p.m.
	Welcome back Opening Worship GC45 Presentation Financial Report Proposed Budget for 2026 Towards 2035 Break Towards 2035 cont'd GC 45 Presentation cont'd Congregational Support Commission Report GC 45 Presentation cont'd Stewardship Presentation Lunch Discipleship and Justice Commission Report GC45 Presentation cont'd Seasons of Growth Presentation – Greg Smith-Young Seeds of Growth GC45 Presentation cont'd Introduction of Candidate Moderator's Message In Memorial, CoF Life Cycle Changes Closing motions
Saturday, November 8 th	4:00 p.m.
	<u>Celebration of Ministry Service</u> Westminster United Church, Orangeville 247 Broadway, Orangeville, ON, L9W 2Z5

President Rebekah Duncan's Welcome



A few weeks ago, I spoke to my congregations about what we do to be welcoming. How we greet one another, usher one another into our shared spaces and offer support and comfort to one another. Since then, I have begun my services in such a manner. I am not certain how this will translate to the page and I do plan to demonstrate it but ...

Hello!

Welcome!

It is **so** good to see you.

Please find yourself a snack and good drink
and make your way to a seat that is calling to you.

Make yourself comfortable, I hope you are well and safe.

Take a minute to breathe and settle in and we will begin.

In the nature of full and open transparency, I am very nervous. I fully expect to make many mistakes, feel free to chuckle, and breathe along with me as I do so.

Past President Jennifer began her presidency with the theme of “We are One: Widening the Circle”. And the lyrics,
Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still! Let this be our song, no one stands alone, standing side
by side, draw the circle wide.

(Gordon Light-More Voices #145 © 1994 Common Cup Company)

As I have considered what theme I may chose for my term as president I was drawn to the old adage “If **it** ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” and the clear message we are receiving in our current time that **it** is indeed broken and **it** does need “fixing” However more than that I feel strongly that it is still our relationships that need our most focused attention. Our relationships within our own congregations, between congregations, with the region and national church and other regions to be sure. Also, our continued attention to our work of being in right relations with our Indigenous siblings, our work of repair in our relationships with our 2S LGBTQIA+ family and the clear call to focus energy on our work with our first thirds ministry.

We cast the circle wide, and we welcome with open arms all who wish to come into the fold, but the circle must also be a place of security, a place of support and open communication. Many of us may stand within the circle at times and as the circle at others. We gather as a people who need to look within and outside of ourselves.

It has been a busy start to my presidency with the 100th Anniversary service in Newfoundland, the AFFIRM annual meeting in PEI, GC 45 in Calgary and now this regional meeting. What I do know is that as wide and as varied a group that we are, we live and work in a church that we love deeply and that is a firm foundation on which we can move, grow, shift and inspire the change we need to be and see.

Blessings! Love! Light! Patience!

Rev. Rebekah

RMT, M.A., M.Div., OM

President of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council of The United Church of Canada

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.

Let all you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16: 13-14

In Memoriam:



Rev. Lorraine Davis OM

Rev. Stephen Huntley OM

Rev. Dr. Ruth Evans OM

Rev. Mark Waugh OM

Sydney (Doug) Stewart

Rev. Kenneth Beal OM

Rev. B. R. Bruce Scott OM

Dr. Marion Logan

Irene Richardson

Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes:



WOWRC Community of Faith life Cycle Changes Report

Disbandments

1. Milbank-Hampstead Pastoral Charge disbanded on September 11, 2025.
2. Dobbinton Pastoral Charge disbanded on June 12, 2025.
3. Bridgeport United Church, Kitchener has had its final service and is working to complete the disbandment process by the end of 2025.

Amalgamations

1. Hickson Pastoral Charge/Hickson United Church (Antler River Watershed Regional Council (ARWRC)) and Tavistock Pastoral Charge/Grace United Church (Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council (WOWRC)) amalgamated effective September 14, 2025.
2. Exeter United Church and Hensall United Church are in process of amalgamating.

Collaborations

1. Collaboration agreement between Guelph Campus Ministry, Two Rivers Presbyterian and Rev. Andrew Hyde (UCC) from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.
2. Collaboration agreement between Wesley United Church, Cambridge and Westminster United Church, Waterloo comes to an end on October 31, 2025

Section Two:

Volunteer Recruitment

WOWRC Volunteer Recruitment Report

The Volunteer Recruitment Team is grateful for all the volunteers who are serving in WOWRC.

New members can be added throughout the year. Please consider completing an Expressions of interest to serve on the Executive, a Commission or the Student and Candidate Support Network.

Executive Members at Large (5) _____ (28)	2 vacancies Youth/Young Adult _____ (28)
Congregational Support Commission _____ (28) _____ (28)	3 vacancies _____ (28)
Discipleship and Justice Commission _____ (28)	2 vacancies _____ (28)
Pastoral Relations Commission _____ (28) _____ (28)	3 vacancies _____ (28)
Student and Candidate Support Network Student/Candidate for Ordination _____ (28) Diaconal Minister _____ (28) Lay Person _____ (28)	7 to 12 vacancies _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28)

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Connecting, Supporting, Transforming Executive, Commissions and Networks 2025/2026	
Executive President Rebekah Duncan OM (28) Vice/Past Jennifer Irving OM (26) Secretary Dawn Blanchard L (27) Treasurer Brent Caslick L (26) 2nd Indigenous Brian George L (28) Diversity Beth Kerr DM (26) Congregational Support Representative Discipleship and Justice Representative Pastoral Relations Representative	2 vacancies Members at Large (5) Heather Leffler OM (26) 2nd Terry Smith L (26) 2 nd Robert Lawson OM (28) Liz Dillman L (28) _____ (28) Youth/Young Adult _____ (28)

Note: Commissions require a minimum of seven members and can have a maximum of 12 members, at least one-third of which are ministry personnel and one-third are lay.

Congregational Support Commission Chair Roz Vincent-Haven DM (26) Peter Kudelka (26) Bruce Gregersen OM (27) 2nd Margaret Krauter (27) 2nd Peter Kupfer L (27) Sharon Norton L (27) Colin Snyder OM (27)	3 vacancies Gord Dunbar OM (28) Margaret Ruggles DM (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28)
Discipleship and Justice Commission Chair Kate Ballagh-Steeper OM (27) Linda Peacock L (26) John Adeyemi OM (27) Diane Dick L (27) Ayla Mackie L (27) Kristal McGee OM (27)	2 vacancies Meghan Gilholm L (28) Judy Jones L (28) Dan Leaver DM (28) Jan Howlett L (28) _____ (28) _____ (28)
Pastoral Relations Commission Chair David Shearman OM (25) Harry Disher OM (26) Cathy Larmond OM (26) 2nd Carol Stephenson L (26) Jane Sullivan OM (26) 2nd Lena Medeiros OM (27)	3 vacancies James Montgomery L (27) Lori Campbell OM (28) John Greg Smith OM (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28)
Student and Candidate Support Network Student/Candidate for Diaconal Ministry Lisa Leffler (28) Student/Candidate for Ordination _____ (28) Ordained Minister Robert Lawson (28) Diaconal Minister _____ (28) Lay Person _____ (28)	7 to 12 vacancies Gord Dunbar OM (28) Rebekah Duncan OM (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28) _____ (28)
Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation (PTCC) <div> <div>Director</div> <div> Peter Kupfer (27) Brent Caslick (28) </div> </div> <div> <div>Member</div> <div> James Montgomery (28) Betty Morrison (28) </div> </div>	
Toronto United Church Council (TUCC) Director David Shearman (26)	Member John Fraser (26) Michael Torrie (26)

Submitted by Rebekah Duncan, Jennifer Irving and Heather Leffler

Congregational Support Commission

Report from the Congregational Support Commission – November 2025

The Congregational Support Commission has the responsibility to support Communities of Faith within the Western Ontario Waterways Region Council through their life cycle changes. From the launch of a new configuration, be it through amalgamation, nesting or a collaborative agreement, we walk alongside of you. If your beloved building is now too large and too expensive or no longer a fits in size of home or if you have made the hard decision to close and disband, we are here to help you step into a new season.

Our responsibility and assistance come in many forms. This is the Commission that gives support to congregations as they prepare their Community of Faith Profiles, and then reviews the completed profiles, in order for the Community of Faith to begin a search for their next minister. We also review the Annual Report of Communities of Faith within the Region each year, giving attention to delights, concerns or challenges.

It is our duty to deal with all property issues within the WOW Regional Council. If you are considering selling part of your property to better serve the requisites of your community, come to us. If you wish to redevelop your space to better fit your current needs, come to us. If you are thinking of selling your building to a developer and then renting back worship space, come to us. If you are imagining a partnership with another group in the community, to create a hub, or an outreach initiative or a daycare, or something else, we invite you to come to us and share what you are thinking, your concerns and dreams. The Community Support Commission will go through resources, tool kits, etc. with you and can connect you with other Communities of Faith, further along the way, who have traveled a similar road.

We also provide Pastoral Charge Supervisors to assist Communities of Faith who are without ministry personnel. Pastoral Charge Supervisors take on this important work within the Region to ensure a connection between the Community of Faith and the wider church and provide support and assistance in articulating United Church polity. We review the reports made by Pastoral Charge Supervisors, at various time intervals and when their assignment with a Community of Faith is completed.

In short, the responsibilities of the Commission include:

- The articulation of ministry (Community of Faith Profile and Annual Reports)
- The use of financial and property resources
- Advice around governance
- The overall health and well-being of communities of faith, such as changes in the life cycle.
- Dealing with real property etc.
- Advice for grants and loans

The work of the commission is wide and varied, but it is also exciting to see how Communities of Faith are dealing with the many challenges facing church today. We are deeply grateful to Congregational Support Minister, John Neff, usually your first contact with our Commission. Thank you, John, for your leadership, advice and counsel. We would be unable to do our work without your steadfast and expert support. Also, a big thank you to Executive Assistant Max Watkinson for supporting our work and keeping us on track.

Respectfully submitted by Roz Vincent-Haven, Commission Chair On behalf of the Congregational Support Commission: Gord Dunbar, Bruce Gregersen, Marg Krauter, Peter Kudelka, Peter Kupfer, Sharon Norton, Margaret Ruggles, Colin Snyder

Discipleship and Justice Commission

Discipleship and Justice Commission

Report to the Fall 2025 Regional Council Meeting

The Discipleship & 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.

As of the writing of this report, the Commission has received 12 applications to be considered for funding grants through the Region's portion of Mission and Service Funds. Final decisions will be made and communicated to the applicants by the end of November. The amount of funding requested, was \$48,000 more than the Commission has available to grant which is \$135,000. This both reflects the growing need for external funding for congregational projects, as well as the dependence many para church organizations rely on such as our Camps, and other Non-Profit organizations.

The Discipleship and Justice Commission is also responsible to award grants from the Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults. Annually we receive \$65,000.00 to award. Congregations are encouraged to consider applications to fund local activities that engage ministry with children, youth or Young Adults. The application form is on the WOW website. In 2025, this fund supported;

Port Elgin UC Kids in the Kitchen	\$3800
Regional Children & Youth leader retreat	\$1228
Pine River UC Zimbabwe Trip	\$10000
Avondale UC Stratford Youth Event	\$1700
Youth Forum Delegate Subsidies	\$2100
GO Project YM Audit Pilot Project	\$5000
Trinity UC 100 th celebration	\$1500
St Mary's VBS program	\$1500
Lakeshore – Camp funding	\$930

The maximum grant available in this fund is \$10,000. We saw a significant increase in requests to this fund in 2025. Congregations and other Regional activities that engage children, youth or young adults are encouraged to consider applications to this funding stream, rather than to the Mission and Service Granting stream.

The other fund administered by the Discipleship and Justice Commission is the Events budget. In 2025 this fund had \$10,000. The amount each year is determined by the annual Regional Council budget. In 2025, this fund supported:

UCC 360 Antiracism Program – Alcris	\$500
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Limongi	
Honorarium for Hyeran Kim Cragg	\$175
Honorarium for Equity and Pastoral care for UCC 360 event	\$50
Payment to SJNORC	\$1000
Kids Across the Region	\$500
Great Lakes Collaborative Retreat	\$700
Recognizing Disinformation workshop	\$175
Therese Samuel – postage costs	\$11.27
Additional funds for Kids Across the Region	\$500
Adrian Jacobs – Strawberry Thanksgiving event	\$195
Great Lakes Collaborative 2026 Retreat	\$1000

This fund is under utilized. Should a congregation or regional group want to host a speaker, or run a workshop the Commission would consider such requests to this fund.

Over the past year, the WOW D and J Commission, working with other D and J Commissions in the Tri-Region, worked to streamline the application form for the Mission and Service Grants. The Commission also created a more thorough reporting form to be filled by those who received M and S Grants before they are eligible to apply for new funding. While M and S Grant recipients have always been required to submit a story about their projects, there was a need for more thorough reporting evaluating how grant money was spent. Improving our follow-up on grants awarded will help to highlight to the WOW Region the ministry that is being done. The D and J Commission also has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure grants are being used as intended.

One project that received Mission and Service Fund support previously, is the Equity, Diversity and Belonging project undertaken by Westminster United Church in Waterloo. The stated purpose of the project; “The purpose of this document is to share resources and Westminster United Church Waterloo’s learnings about equity, diversity, and belonging (EDB) work within the United Church context. This will aid other Communities of Faith in pursuing this work within their communities.” The document they created, not only recounts their learning journey but provides a guide for other congregations. We commend this document to the congregations in the Region: <https://wowrcucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Resource-for-Equity-Diversity-and-Belonging-Ministries-in-Communities-of-Faith.pdf>

The Region’s Camps; Camp Menesetung, Silver Lake Camp and Camp Bimini also fall under the responsibility of the Commission. While all the camps saw some growth in the numbers of campers for 2025, there is still room to grow and increase their camper attendance to be viable. All the camps are still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic on the leadership pool available for staffing. Congregations are encouraged to consider supporting their local camps in a variety of ways; financially, through promotion, and with volunteers for Boards and work parties. Camps are still a significant way that the United Church is connecting

with children, youth and families. In 2025, Camp Bimini was accredited by the Region.

The Discipleship and Justice Commission is grateful for the supportive work of Regional Council Staff; Therese, Kathy and John Egger are important resources to help us carry out our work, as is Krista Ford whose administrative skills keep us on track and informed. Thank you!

Thank you also to the members of the Discipleship and Justice Commission. The time, diligence and commitment you bring to the work and ministry of the commission is valued and appreciated. I am particularly grateful to Andrew Hyde for his years of service as Chair, and for carrying on until July when I could step into the role. Thank you!

In Christ's Service,

The Rev. Kate Ballagh-Steeper

Chair

Discipleship and Justice Commission.

kate@harcourtcommunity.ca

Pastoral Relations Commission

Pastoral Relations Commission – November 2025 Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

The Pastoral Relations Commission continues to meet regularly to affirm the requests for changes in pastoral relationships, assign liaisons to work with vacant congregations and assist in the navigation of our denominational human resources systems.

We are finding that our pastoral relations system has changed and is not what it was before restructuring. We strive to meet the needs of communities of faith as they work towards new pastoral relationships while coming to terms with new realities of smaller churches and fewer resources yet with increased demand for services. Many congregations are vacant as they are unable to offer full-time ministry. Often this means examination of future potential and options. This is one point where the Commission works with the Congregational Support Commission and local churches.

The Licensed Lay Worship Resource Team, an important part of our provision of regular worship for communities of faith, has been reconstituted and looks forward to taking up their tasks of support and credentialing.

The Commission is looking for new members as some will reach the end of their term in 2026. You may complete and Expression of Interest on the region's web page or speak to Micol Cottrell, our Pastoral Relations minister or myself.

We look forward to welcoming Lori Stevenson, our Minister of Pastoral Care, as she begins her work among us. I also want to express my appreciation and thanks to Micol Cottrell, our Pastoral Relations minister, and Michele Petick who provides the Commission with administrative support for their diligent and tireless work.

***David Shearman, (he/him) Chair,
Pastoral Relations Commission***

United Church Apology to the 2 Spirit and LGBTQIA Communities

An Update from

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations and Social Justice

John Egger, Minister, Social Justice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section Three: Meeting Materials

Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion

Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion

Title: Opening and Procedural Motion

Origin: Executive Minister

What is the issue?

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

Why is this issue important?

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

How might the regional council respond to the issue?

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

1. Adopt the agenda as circulated and authorize the Agenda and Business Committee to make any changes as necessary;
2. Approve the minutes of the meeting of 2025-05-02/03;
3. Receive the minutes of the following meetings of the
 - i. Executive
25-02-19
25-03-19
25-04-16
25-05-12
25-06-18
25-09-17
 - ii. Congregational Support Commission
25-02-13
25-03-13
25-04-10
25-05-08
25-06-12
25-08-05
25-09-11
 - iii. Pastoral Relations Commission
24-11-19
24-12-17
25-01-21
25-02-18
25-03-18
25-04-15
25-05-20
25-06-17

iv. Discipleship and Justice Commission

25-02-25

25-03-25

25-04-22

25-05-27

25-06-24

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

4. Appoint Gary Clark as Parliamentarian;
5. Appoint Terry Smith as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name Phyllis Fleming to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
7. Name Stacey Mortson and Jane Sullivan as Chaplains;
8. Name President Rebekah Duncan, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Terry Smith, Executive Minister Mark Laird, Executive Assistant and Recording Secretary Max Watkinson, as the Agenda and Business Committee; Set the bounds of the meeting as the Zoom call, the Best Western Plus Orangeville, 7 Buena Vista Dr., Orangeville, ON, L9W 0A2 and Westminster United Church, Orangeville (247 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z5).
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 a.m., Saturday, November 8th, 2025.
12. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline:

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

Step Two:

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

Step Three:

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

Step Four:

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

Proposal #2 – Finance Budget & Auditor’s Report

Proposal #2 Budget 2026

Title: Reviewing 2025 Year-to-Date and Adopting 2026 Operating Budget For Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

Origin: Treasurer and EM

What is the issue?

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

Establishing a budget for 2026 is one step in this process and will guide the Executive in its management of regional council resources.

Why is this issue important?

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

Income

The regional council receives two grants to fund its operation:

Assessment Grant: For Governance and Shared Services

Mission and Service Grant: For Mission and Ministry

The regional council also receives funds from:

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

Expenses

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

AA refers to Administrative Assistant.

Ministry	Purpose	WOW’s Share of the following Positions
Regional Operations	Operation of the regional council	Executive Minister Executive Assistant .65 AA, Finance, Office Site Operations
Communities of Faith	Partnering with congregations	Minister, Congregational Support .05 AA, Finance and Office Site Operations
Pastoral Relations	Supporting the formation and nurture of healthy pastoral relationships	Minister, Pastoral Relations .25 Minister, Pastoral Support .15 Communication and AA
Communication	Newsletters, Websites	.85 AA, Communication and AA
Connecting	Providing opportunities to come together including regional council meetings	.75 Minister, Pastoral Support

Faith Formation	Nurturing discipleship	Minister, Faith Formation
Social Justice	Seeking to be faithful in the world	Minister, Social Justice .5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations .3 AA, Finance
Right Relations	Deepening understand and relationship with Indigenous Ministries	.5 Minister, Social Justice and Right Relations
Office Operations	Office supplies and equipment	
Building Expenses	Cost to maintain building	
Emerging Ministries	Unbudgeted expenses responding to an emerging situation or to the regional council's exercise of discipline.	

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

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might:

1. Receive the internal 2025 operating statement to date for information;
2. Approve the 2024 Auditors' Report
3. Appoint KPMG LLP as auditors for the 2025 Financial Year.
4. Adopt the proposed 2026 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary.

Auditor's Report

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

WOWRC Operating Budget 2026

	2024 Budget	2024 Actuals	2025 Budget	2025 Q3 Actuals	2026 Budget
Income					
Assessment	325,000	334,375	325,000	244,690	325,000
Mission and Service	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000
Salary Support	68,340	67,000	69,707	50,250	70,050
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	21,776	20,000	25,000	20,000
Other Revenue		34,262		11,550	
PTCC Grant	60,000	70,000	82,000	82,000	72,000
Property Fund	19,782	19,782	19,871	14,903	19,943
Investment Income	55,000	70,913	55,000	51,799	60,000
Transfers	89,178	28,838	91,710	33,455	91,710
Total	817,300	826,946	843,288	693,647	838,703
Expenses					
<u>Regional Operations</u>					
Staff	101,472	101,038	98,409	75,267	93,816
Travel	6,000	4,377	6,000	3,241	6,000
Staff Support	2,000	1,233	2,000	1,884	2,000
Exec Meetings	5,000	3,209	5,000	1,316	5,000
Exec Events	5,000	2,774	5,000	2,928	5,000
Archives	40,000	43,553	40,000	30,000	40,500
Corporations	2,000	2,700	2,000	2,531	2,800
Legal	10,000	1,639	10,000		10,000
Learning Fund	30,000	1,500	30,000	1,010	30,000
Professional Fees	20,000	29,690	25,000		30,000
Section J					
Total	221,472	191,713	223,409	118,177	225,116
<u>Communities of Faith</u>					
Staff	124,520	126,000	128,642	107,041	133,750
Travel	6,000	1,332	6,000	1,342	6,000
CSC Meetings	3,000	331	3,000		3,000
CSC Events Total	10,000	1,000	10,000	2011	10,000
	143,520	128,663	147,642	110,394	152,750
<u>Pastoral Relations Staff</u>					
Travel					
HRC Meetings HRC					
Events Emergency	48,281	42,851	50,959	27,461	50,821
Fund Total	3,000	314	3,000	302	3,000
	3,000	280	3,000		3,000
<u>Connecting</u>	10,000	2,142	10,000	1,334	10,000
Staff Travel	1,000		1,000		1,000
RC Meetings	65,281	45,587	67,959	29,097	67,821
	39,526	39,963	41,887	11,453	25,185
	2,000	877	2,000	671	2,000
	34,500	53,360	34,500	26,085	34,500

Total	76,026	94,200	78,387	38,209	61,685
<u>Communication</u>					
Staff	34,631	33,585	36,617	21,468	24,921
Travel	1,500		1,500		1,500
Total	36,131	33,585	38,117	21,468	26,421
<u>Social Justice and Outreach Staff</u>					
Travel	31,962	33,358	33,606	22,633	43,245
D & J Commission meetings (50%) D &	3,500	314	3,500		3,500
J Commission Events (50%) Shared D &	1,500	132	1,500	10	1,500
J Commission Events Total	5,000	1,300	5,000	5,658	5,000
				1,132	
<u>Faith Formation</u>	41,962	35,104	43,606	29,433	53,245
Staff					
Travel					
D & J Commission meetings (50%) D&J	41,507	41,996	42,307	32,972	34,207
Commission Events (50%)	2,500	280	2,500	806	2,500
	1,500		1,500		1,500
Total	5,000	1,163	5,000	451	5,000
<u>Right Relations Staff</u>	50,507	43,439	51,307	34,229	43,207
Travel					
Other	17,803	18,483	18,892	14,832	19,943
Total	2,000		2,000	422	2,000
	500		500		500
<u>Emerging Ministry</u>	20,303	18,483	21,392	15,254	22,443
<u>Office and Admin costs GCO</u>		92			
<u>Acctg & IT</u>					
Office Operations					
Total	40,000	42,544	40,000	28,809	45,000
	25,000	7,392	25,000	3,471	20,000
<u>Building Expenses</u>	65,000	49,936	65,000	32,280	65,000
Total					
	12,500	10,128	12,500	9,739	13,000
<u>Mission Support Grants</u>					
	135,000	135,000	135,000	111,250	135,000
Total Difference					
	867,702	785,838	884,319	549,530	865,688
	-50,402	41,108	-41,031	144,117	-26,985

Proposal #3 – Closing Motions

Title: Closing Motion

Origin: Executive Minister

What is the issue?

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

Why is this issue important?

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

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might

1. Entrust any unfinished business from its November 7th / 8th, 2025 meeting to the Executive;
2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next spring regional council meeting;
3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the spring of 2026;
4. Entrust the Executive and Commissions with the responsibilities and authority of 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 November 7th / 8th, 2025 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council meeting at the conclusion of the Celebration of Ministry Service being held November 8th, 2025 at 4 p.m. at Westminster United Church, Orangeville (247 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z5).

Notes: