Western Ontario Waterways
Regional Council Fall Meeting

Thursday October 29th – Friday October 30th, 2026
6:30pm-9:00pm both evenings

Meeting Workbook

"*Radical Resilience*"

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Workbook Introduction

Theme: *"Radical Resilience"*

Purpose: Connecting, Supporting, Transforming

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—Ann Harbridge (Chair of Agenda and Business), Rebekah Duncan (President), Mark Laird (Executive Minister), Dawn Blanchard, (Secretary)

Chaplain— Penny Squirrell and Laurie Stevenson

Equity Support— Phyllis Fleming and Aidan Legault

Parliamentarian—Heather Leffler

Tech Team—John Neff, Michele Petick

Worship Team—Rebekah Duncan, Jennifer Irving and Chris Grose

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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. **Procedural concerns** and questions;
2. **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

Thursday, October 29th	6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement Opening Motions Introduction Meeting Leadership, BRAVE Statement Opening Worship In Memorial, CoF Life Cycle Changes, Prayer New to WOW Intros Community Building New Staff Intros Proposal #2: Electing GC46 Commissioners Congregational Support Commission Report Closing Prayer

Friday October 30th	6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
	Welcome back / Equity Update Opening Worship Financial Report 2025/2026 YTD Proposal #3: Budget for 2027 Discipleship & Justice Commission Report Proposal #4: Becoming Anti-Apartheid Remit: Membership of Regional Councils Pastoral Relations Commission Report New / Unfinished Business Closing motions Closing prayer

President Rebekah Duncan Report

Happy Fall Everyone,

I am writing this from Charlottetown PEI on a beautiful fall day. I cannot start this message anywhere but with heartfelt, deep gratitude to Rev. Jennifer Irving for stepping back into her Presidential shoes while I was recovering from an unexpected and lengthy illness this year. Also, to the fantastic executive and Executive Minister, Mark Laird, for supporting the region, Jennifer, and myself through that time. I am so grateful to all of you who reached out to me or held me in prayer. Never has it been clearer to me than this past year that it truly "takes a village" and I adore ours.

Your WOW Executive continues to meet and work hard to meet the needs of our region. I have never attended more respectful, careful and care-filled meetings. Your executive works to fund inventive projects, support congregations, and review policies so they align with the mission and dreams of Western Ontario Waterways. This team and those who sit on the commissions they represent work very hard, taking careful consideration in all the decisions they make. They all make it easy to sit in the President's chair. I also want to thank Chris Grose for stepping into the role of President elect. I pray her experience as president will be just as life giving as mine has been when she steps into the role of president in the spring next year.

The theme for this meeting came out of a reading from Richard Rohr from his 2024 season of Radical Resilience. There is evidence of this idea of exceptional resilience all around us and there is more call these days to celebrate those moments and focus on how we live into mirroring the life of Christ the best we can. As we continue to learn how to live together in community and breathe life into the understanding that "we are one" as we continue to embrace our diversity and celebrate God's presence as well as each other's in our lives.

Blessings, Love, Light and Patience!

Rev. Rebekah Duncan

In Memoriam:

Rev. Anna Chen, OM

David Morris

Rev. Jan Aylward, OM

Rev. Murray McBride, OM

Bonnie Twining

Rev. Robert Tschanz, OM

Rev. Roy Holton, OM

Rev. Ewing Rae, OM

Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes:

WOWRC Community of Faith life Cycle Changes Report

Collaborative Agreements:

Campbellville: Ebenezer Pastoral Charge (WOWRC) and Acton: Trinity Pastoral Charge (HFRC) ended effective August 31, 2026

Section Two:

Congregational Support Commission

Report to the Fall Meeting of the Western Ontario Regional Council From the Congregational

Support Commission – October 2026

Within the key focus of the Region, "Connection, Supporting, Transforming," the Congregational Support Commission is here to support Communities of Faith where ever they find themselves, throughout their life cycle changes. From the inception of a new beginning, detailed in the Community of Faith Profile, through times of transition such as the loss of paid Ministry Personnel, or the consideration of amalgamation or collaborative agreement, to the hard time of closure and disbandment, we walk alongside you, supporting you in your decisions, answering your questions and consulting with you when new possibilities or challenges arise.

We receive and review the yearly Annual Reports from Communities of Faith throughout the Region and have a working group within the Commission that looks at each Annual Report that we receive. They review each report and respond back, through letter, to the Community of Faith. To date we have received and reviewed 44 out of a possible 141, 2025 Annual Reports, in 2026. There may be some reports submitted as a Pastoral Charge, that are not included in this number. Along with Annual Reports, there are other documents that help us to assist you in your work.

As of this writing we have received:

4 out of 141 new or updated Community of Faith Profiles and 3 out of 124 self-assessments from Pastoral Charges in 2026.

We thank those who have responded and hope that overall number of reports submitted will increase in the future. These are vehicles that help the Congregational Support Commission to walk alongside of you, through the ups and downs of your faith journey.

We also provide Pastoral Charge Supervisors to assist Communities of Faith who are without Ministry Personnel. These leaders take on the 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. There are 40 out of 124, or 32% (current or upcoming) of the Communities of Faith in our Region that have the support of Pastoral Charge Supervisors. The Congregational Support Commission has a working group that reviews reports made by Pastoral Charge Supervisors, at various time intervals and when their assignment with a Community of Faith is completed.

The Congregational Support Commission does more than receive and review reports, however. We have hosted workshops on the topics of Amalgamation/ Collaboration of Communities of Faith. We also hosted

a day with Betty Pries, centered on how Communities of Faith can thrive in today's age of anxiety. These gatherings were open to anyone interested with our Region and those around us.

In short, responsibilities of the Commission include:

- The articulation of ministry (Community of Faith Profile)
- 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.
- Amalgamations, Disbanding's and Collaborations.

However, the work of the Congregational Support Commission continues to expand, as we listen to and respond to the needs and dreams of Communities of Faith within the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council. This year, we have also taken time away to better understand our Commission's role and responsibility in the United Church's Initiative, "Toward 2035."

Our mandate is to walk alongside you in these exciting and challenging times in the 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,

Roz Vincent Haven, Chair

On behalf of the Congregational Support Commission:

Gord Dunbar, Nancy Flagel, Bruce Gregersen, Robert Hyatt, Marg Krauter, Peter Kupfer, Sharon Norton, Margaret Ruggles, Terry Smith, Collin Snyder.

Discipleship and Justice Commission

Discipleship and Justice Commission Report to the Fall 2026 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.
One of our primary annual functions is to receive, review and discern funding for ministries that have applied to grants through the Region's portion of **Mission and Service Support**.

We 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.

2026 Mission and Service Recipients

Camp Bimni	$16,500.00
Camp Menesetung	$21,500.00
The Hub – St. Pauls United	$22,500
United Church GO project	$10,000.00
Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council	$20,000.00
Parkminster United Church	$2,000.00
Tobermory United Church	$8,000.00
Guelph U Ecumenical Campus Ministry	$34,500.00

For 2027 the amount of funding requested, was $72,000 more than the Commission has available to grant which is $150,000. 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. Final decisions for 2027 will be made and communicated to the applicants by the end of November.

The Discipleship and Justice Commission is also responsible to award grants from the **Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults Fund.** 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 2026, this fund supported;

Ministry with Children Youth and Young Adult Funds Opening balance for 2026 $64,000
April 1st deadline, for May meeting decisions dispersing up to $30,000
September 15th deadline for Oct meeting decisions dispersing $32,500 plus any remaining amounts from the Spring

2026 Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults Grant Recipients

Go Beyond March Break Camp	$2500
Camp Bimini	$5000
Eramosa United Church	$5000

Trinity United Church	$4000
Avondale United Church	$3232
Leadership Development Camp	$785
Cedar Hills United Church	$5000
Pine River United Church	$4950
Port Elgin United Church	$5000
St. Paul's UC Oakville – The HUB	$5000
subsidy for participants at The Collective	$3366.67

The other fund administered by the Discipleship and Justice Commission is the **Events Budget**. In 2026 this fund had $10,000. The amount each year is determined by the annual Regional Council budget. In 2026, this fund supported:

Worshiplude – deposit	$1856.59
Worshiplude – final payment	$121.26
Social Justice Network Ontario Regional Councils (SJNORC)	$1000
Woodland Cultural Education Event	up to $1500
"Here From The Beginning" travel costs	$53.60
"Beyond Polarized Kvetching" workshop	$182.68
"Biblical Grounding for Justice Ministries" webinar	$90

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

The Region's Camps (Camp Menesetung, Silver Lake Camp and Camp Bimini) are an important corcern of the Commission. Communities of faith 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.

At the spring WOW Regional Meeting, our commission presented communities of faith who have completed the Affirming Process with Pride flags.

In terms of education and advocacy, D&J commission was prompted by the Tri-regional PalNet group to encourage communities of faith to become apartheid free. The commission committed to learning more and benefitted from the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) workshop on becoming an apartheid free community on April 20th, which gave an excellent introduction to the topic. That webinar (59 minutes) is still available on youtube:

https://youtu.be/ZnAsAPQSiik
Further information can also be found on the UNJPPI website: Apartheid Free Communities of Faith – United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel

The Discipleship and Justice Commission is grateful for the supportive work of Regional Council Staff and we

welcome Laura Black to the team. Thérèse Samuel 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 Dan Leaver who has agreed to serve as Vice Chair.

Rev Kristal McGee, Chair, on behalf of Discipleship and Justice Commission Members: Linda Peacock, John Adeyemi, Diane Dick, Ayla Mackie, Judy Jones, Dan Leaver, Megan Gilholm, Janet Howitt, Dyanne Marlock.

Human Resources Commission

Pastoral Relations Commission Report
Fall Meeting of Western Ontario Waterways Region
October 29-30, 2026

The Pastoral Relations Commission was pleased to welcome three new members to the Commission this past spring. We appreciate their willingness to step forward to share in the work of the Commission.

One of the ongoing questions we are asked is about Pulpit Supply. A Tri-Region policy for Pulpit Supply has been created, which outlines who congregations can use for pulpit supply and the process for engaging pulpit supply. The policy is available as Toolkit #9 on the region's web page. Updated Licensed Lay Worship Leader and Ministry Personnel Pulpit Supply Lists are available by contacting our Pastoral Relations Minister, Micol Cottrell.

Does your community of Faith have an up to date Position Description for your ministry and staff position? The Commission reviews a lot of these in our work. Most Positions Descriptions are long and involved documents. They do not have to be. We have seen some Position Descriptions that run to nine or ten pages. With all respect to congregations, Saint Paul himself could not meet the requirements of a Position Description that long. I invite you to view a Position Description as a descriptive document, not a prescriptive one. See it as a primary tool for invitation to someone to be with you in ministry. Share what excites you about your Community of Faith. Tell the reader what you are doing in ministry together. Share the vision of your mission to your community. Be honest in your struggles. Review your Position Descriptions regularly. Just as people change, the ministry of a Community of Faith changes.

Looking forward, there are a number of changes to be aware of. ChurchHub now gives access to the Chair of the Ministry and Personnel Committee to complete call and appointment forms. Members of the Order of Ministry are reminded to check in regularly on ChurchHub to ensure their forms are complete and they do not have any outstanding credentials such as Boundaries courses to attend to. The dictum. "The job isn't over until the paperwork is done" applies to pastoral relationships.

The 2027 Minimum Salaries and Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel is available on the national web site. Minimum salaries received a 2.7% increase to the 2026 minimum salaries. Continuing Education and Learning Resources increase to $1,780 annually and travel remains at a minimum of $0.60 per kilometre. The list of Cost of Living or CoL amounts included in salaries are not yet released, but with the exception of one Community of Faith in this region, there are no changes. The one Community of Faith affected has been informed of the change.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important and exciting part of our work together. I want to thank all the members of the Commission for their engagement, as well as Micol Cottrell, our Pastoral Relations minister and Michele Petick who provides our administrative support.

David Shearman, Chair Pastoral Relations Commission, Western Ontario Waterways Region

Section Three: Meeting Materials

Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion

Title: **Opening and Procedural Motion**
Origin: Executive Minister

What is the issue?
The regional council must establish the procedures by which it will conduct business.

Why is this issue important?
This clarifies and confirms the way in which decision-making will happen.

How might the regional council respond to the issue?
The regional council might adopt the following as a consent docket:

1. Adopt the agenda as circulated and authorize the Agenda and Business Committee to make any changes as necessary;
2. Approve the minutes of the meeting of 2026-05-22-24;
3. Receive the minutes of the following meetings of the;

    i. Executive
    26-03-25
    26-05-27

    ii. Congregational Support Commission
    26-04-14
    26-04-17
    26-05-12
    26-06-09
    26-07-14
    26-08-14

    iii. Human Resources Commission
    26-03-25
    26-06-24

    iv. Discipleship and Justice Commission
    26-02-19
    26-03-19

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

4. Appoint Heather Leffler as Parliamentarian;
5. Appoint Ann Harbridge as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name Phyllis Fleming and Aidan Legault to serve as Equity Support Team Members;
7. Name Laurie Stevenson and Penny Squirrell as Chaplains;

8. Name President Rebekah Duncan, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Ann Harbridge, Executive Minister Mark Laird, Executive Assistant Max Watkinson and Recording Secretary Dawn Blanchard, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
9. Set the bounds of the meeting as the Zoom call, and the Best Western Plus Orangeville Inn & Suites (7 Buena Vista Drive, Orangeville, ON)
10. Make the designated representative from any United Church ministry other than a congregation, which has been invited to become a community of faith by entering into a covenant with the regional council, a member of the regional council for this meeting (Section C.1.2 c);
11. Make all guests corresponding members;
12. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as 12:00 p.m., Friday, October 30th.
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.

Remit 1 – Amendment to the Basis of Union Regarding Membership of Regional Councils

Background:

At the 45th General Council 2025, the General Council:

(i) approved a change to the Basis of Union regarding the composition of the Regional Council to allow:

- Regional Councils to elect additional lay members; and
- retired designated lay ministers to hold membership in their respective Regional Councils; and

(ii) authorized a Category 2 remit (including information and study materials) to test the will of the church concerning this change.

The Question:

Does the Regional Council agree that the Basis of Union be amended to include the following?

6.2 Membership. The Regional Council is composed of:

6.2.3 lay members elected by the Community of Faith;

6.2.4 additional lay members elected by the Regional Council; the total number not to exceed 10 percent of the number of lay members elected under section 6.2.3; and

6.2.5 lay members who at the time of their retirement were designated lay ministers within the bounds of the Regional Council.

Proposal #2 – Process for Electing GC46 Commissioners

Title: Election of General Council Commissioners

Origin: Executive

What is the issue?

In the spring of 2027, the regional council will elect its Commissioners to the 46th General Council which runs from the start in St. Catharines in July 2028 through till 2031.

This will be the third 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.

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.

The second time the Regional Council adopted the solution below for electing General Council Commissioners, which helped to address many of the challenges noted above.

Why is this important?

The decisions of the General Council impact all communities of faith and ministry personnel. It is important that 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 how voting went in 2020 and no one wants to repeat that experience. The process in 2024 went much smoother.

What might the regional council do?

The regional council might agree to:

a) To close nominations for Commissioners to GC 46 as of midnight April 30th, 2027; 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 2027 regional council meeting.

Proposal #3 – Finance & Budget

Proposal 3 Budget 2027

Title: **Reviewing 2025 Final Numbers, 2026 Year-to-Date and Adopting 2027 Operating Budget**
Origin: Treasurer and EM

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

Establishing a budget for 2027 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 and needs to remain so.

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. Note that except for Minister, Congregational Support HF is responsible for 1/3 of the salary of each staff person. These are the breakdowns of each person's job in relation to each ministry category.

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
First Third Faith Formation	Nurturing discipleship	Minister, First Third 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	Deepen understanding and relationships 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	

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.

It also should be noted that while there is a projected deficit, the reasonable expectation is that it will not be nearly as severe or at all based on the actual investment income.

What might the regional council do?
The regional council might:

1. Receive the internal 2025 operating statement for information;
2. Receive the internal 2026 operating statement for the Second Quarter for information;
3. Adopt the proposed 2027 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary.
4. Approve the 2025 Auditors Report

WOWRC Operating Budget 2027

	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget	2026 Q3 Actuals	2027 Budget
Income					
Assessment	325,000	325,000	325,000	260,933	325,000
Mission and Service	180,000	180,000	180,000	172,843	180,000
Salary Support	69,707	67,000	70,050	50,250	67,000
Other Grants (Archives)	20,000	29,209	20,000	15,188	20,000
Other Revnue		6,065		31,285	
PTCC Grant	82,000	82,000	72,000	72,000	72,000
Property Fund	19,871	20,147	19,943	16,220	20,639
Investment Income	55,000	181,619	60,000	156,848	60,000
Transfers	91,710	52,011	91,710	29,017	92,775
Total	843,288	943,051	838,703	804,584	837,414
Expenses					
<u>Regional Operations</u>					
Staff	98,409	99,940	93,816	80,593	98,730
Travel	6,000	5,206	6,000	2,246	6,000
Staff Support	2,000	2,980	2,000	2,847	2,000
Exec Meetings	5,000	1,760	5,000		2,000
Exec Events	5,000	9,655	5,000	4,044	10,000
Affirm Dues		1,000		1,000	1,000
Archives	40,000	38,418	40,500	30,375	40,000
Corporations	2,000	3,375	2,800	2,531	3,000
Legal	10,000		10,000		10,000
Learning Fund	30,000	1,000	30,000	2,500	30,000
Professional Fees	25,000	35,345	30,000	22,500	30,000
Section J		920			
Total	223,409	199,599	225,116	148,636	232,730
<u>Communities of Faith</u>					
Staff	128,642	140,446	133,750	108,847	137,024
Travel	6,000	5,435	6,000	2,503	6,000
Pastoral Charge Supervisor Travel		3,437		1,611	
CSC Meetings	3,000	270	3,000		2,000
CSC Events	10,000	9,462	10,000	9,956	10,000
Total	147,642	159,050	152,750	122,917	155,024
<u>Pastoral Relations</u>					
Staff	50,959	37,799	50,821	33,382	52,266
Travel	3,000	356	3,000	1,756	3,000

Liason Travel		205		220	
HRC Meetings	3,000		3,000		2,000
HRC Events	10,000	3,234	10,000	1,689	10,000
Emergency Fund	1,000		1,000		1,000
Total	67,959	41,594	67,821	37,047	68,266
Connecting					
Staff	41,887	15,627	25,185	19,359	26,279
Travel	2,000	232	2,000		2,000
RC Meetings	34,500	46,142	34,500	68,389	40,000
Total	78,387	62,001	61,685	87,748	68,279
Communication					
Staff	36,617	28,711	24,921	20,314	25,786
Travel	1,500	173	1,500	86	500
Total	38,117	28,884	26,421	20,400	26,286
Social Justice and Outreach					
Staff	33,606	29,354	43,245	21,885	44,818
Travel	3,500	2,578	3,500	539	3,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	1,500	408	1,500	1,000	1,000
D & J Commission Events (50%)	5,000	8,264	5,000	3,767	5,000
Shared D & J Commisison Events					
Total	43,606	40,604	53,245	27,191	54,318
First Third Faith Formation					
Staff	42,307	43,442	34,207	22,353	34,185
Travel	2,500	957	2,500	545	2,500
D & J Commission meetings (50%)	1,500		1,500		1,000
D&J Commission Events (50%)	5,000		5,000		3,000
First Third Regional Events					18,000
Total	51,307	44,399	43,207	22,898	58,685
Right Relations					
Staff	18,892	19,574	19,943	15,682	20,639
Travel	2,000	594	2,000	269	2,000
Total	20,892	20,168	21,943	15,951	22,639
Emerging Ministry		1,118		6,924	

Office and Admin costs					
GCO Acctg & IT	40,000	39,600	45,000	28,283	45,000
Office Operations	25,000	8,190	20,000	2,448	15,000
Total	65,000	47,790	65,000	30,731	60,000
Building Expenses	12,500	11,966	13,000	12,445	13,500
Total					
Mission and Service Grants	135,000	135,000	135,000	110,750	150,000
Total	883,819	791,055	865,188	643,638	909,727
Difference	-40,531	151,996	-26,485	160,946	-72,313

Auditors Report 2025

Click here to view the Auditors Report

Proposal #4 – Regional Council Pledge to Become an Apartheid Free Community

Regional Council Pledge to Become an Apartheid Free Community
Origin: Tri-regional PalNet and Commissions of Discipleship and Justice

1. **What is the issue? Why is it important?**

The regional council has the opportunity, as a collective of United Churches, to respond to one of the most significant moral challenges to the world of our day: the ethnic cleansing of and attempt to erase the people of Palestine. We believe in Jesus who calls us to seek justice and resist evil. The ecumenical body of Palestinian Christians, Kairos Palestine, calls churches of the world to listen to their voices and join them in resisting the apartheid nature of Israel's occupation and the on-going taking of land which may cause the extinction of the "living stones", the presence of Christians in the Holy Land. As the United Church of Canada does gospel work in opposing racism, in valuing human rights for all persons, in resisting apartheid, in valuing the voices of Palestinian Christians who are members of our church as well as those who call to us from Palestine, our commitment to God's work of justice-making calls us to join others in this resistance to oppression.

2. **What is happening now?**

The Palestinian people live under a settler-colonialist project of the state of Israel where land is being taken by the war on Gaza, as well as in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, by the occupation which is deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion "LEGAL CONSEQUENCES ARISING FROM THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF ISRAEL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM" July 19, 2024. Palestinians are subject to discrimination based on race (being non-Jewish) to the degree that Israel is found to have created an apartheid system. Farmers and herders are being forced from their land while olive trees are uprooted by bulldozers and crops are sprayed with chemicals that destroy them. Families are forced to wait in long lines at checkpoints and other barriers, even when seeking emergency medical care. Not only adults but children are arrested and detained without trial for months and years in violation of basic human rights. Christian communities such as Taybeh are being persecuted by settlers with the knowledge and support of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF).

3. **What is the recommendation?**

1. That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council become an Apartheid Free Community with the following pledge:

"WE AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people
and all people;
WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and
WE DECLARE ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end,
WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime,
settler colonialism, and military occupation."

2. that Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council authorize the Executive Minister to sign the Apartheid-free Communities pledge by registering the region council on the Apartheid-free Communities webpage

3. That the regional council, through the Commission of Discipleship and Justice and Tri-regional PalNet, encourage communities of faith to learn about and become Apartheid-Free Communities.

4. **Background information:**

Since the creation of the state of Israel and the Nakba (1947-48) people of The United Church of Canada have been concerned about the displacement of Palestinians from their villages and land. A current expression of ecumenical and broader societal action is the Apartheid Free Communities, a movement that began in North America as an initiative of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and continues to grow with religious communities, businesses, non-governmental organizations and even towns and cities taking the pledge. Pacific Mountain, Bermuda-Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Councils voted to join the movement. In 2012 The United Church of Canada adopted a policy of economic measures called “Unsettling Goods” encouraging members of the UCC to avoid buying items produced in illegal settlements (the Canadian government, in August 2026, undertook a similar position). In October 2024, following GC44 affirmation of the Justice Principles for advocacy work, the Moderator of the United Church of Canada wrote a pastoral letter encouraging participation in strategies including: the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction movement; the Apartheid-Free Communities movement; and the international human rights community in recognizing and rejecting Israel's apartheid system of laws and legal procedures towards the Palestinian people. Ecclesiastically, we partner with Kairos Palestine and other Palestinian faith organizations and are committed to listening to their experience of oppression and holding them in both prayer and action. Today, it is faithful that we join with the Christians of Palestine and people of good will in the world to end apartheid in Israel/ Palestine just as the United Church joined with other Christians in the work of ending apartheid in South Africa.

5. **How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

Apartheid can only exist where there is racial discrimination which is a deep concern of the United Church of Canada as we strive to be an anti-racist church. Our policy is also to avoid discrimination on the basis of any identity. In this case Israel has declared itself a Jewish state and discriminates on that basis against those who are Christian, Muslim or other. It is vital that we distinguish between Judaism, a religion, and Zionism which is a political ideology. The United Church General Council 45 declined the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Antisemitism and instead chose the Jerusalem Declaration, making clear that criticism of Israel, a state like others, is not antisemitic, a form of racism.

Proposal #5 – Closing Motion

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 October 29-30, 2026, 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 2027;
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 October 29-30, 2026 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.

Notes: