
**East Central Ontario Regional Council
Special Meeting of the Council of Elders
Tuesday, January 7, 2025 – 1 PM**

Vision of the Council of Elders by which we evaluate progress based on:
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Strengthened by God's grace and refreshed by the Spirit, We follow the way of Jesus in healing our world.
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IN ATTENDANCE

Stephen Coles	Member
Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly	Member, Executive Minister
Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick	Member
Brian James	Member, Financial Administration
Patricia Long	Member
Rev. Kaitlyn Ostrander	Member
Rev. Brian Nicholson	Member
Rev. Edward (Ned) Wells	Member
Rev. Lynn Watson	Member
Sheila-Mae Young	Member
Rev. Darren Liepold	Corresponding Member, Congregational Support Minister
Joel Miller	Corresponding Member, Program Assistant to Executive Minister, Recording Secretary

Rev. Dan Haywards

REGRETS/ABSENT

Rev. David King	Member
Joyce Payne	Member

This special meeting of the Council of Elders of the East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC) will focus on the following key areas:

- Discern next steps coming out of the investigators report concerning Cambridge Street United Church
- Discern next steps coming out of the investigators report concerning Emmanuel United Church
- Discern next steps following a complaint (Rev. Mark Fearnall) against the Regional Council
- Decide regarding the transfer of cemetery and St. Paul's United Church to Hasting Highlands Municipality

Land Acknowledgement – Stephen Coles led the land acknowledgment

Opening Devotions – Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly led opening devotions, and following the reading of Mathew 2:1-12

Explanation of distinction between various actions taken in case of an identified issue – Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly highlighted the following possible response actions that could take place in cases of issues raised:

- Whistle-Blower policy
- Creating Safe and Respectful Environments policy (formerly called Workplace Discrimination Harassment and Violence Response Policy)
- Complaints to the Office of Vocation (Ministry Personnel who are in violation of *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice*)

- Regional Council Commission (replacing decision making authority at the congregational level for a set period of time)
- Congregational Review (identified by the Manual as *J4 Review*)
- A request for a change in pastoral relations may be brought to a special congregational meeting for a vote if at least 10 members sign a petition requesting such a meeting.

Appointment of an Equity Monitor for this Meeting

2025-01-07-001 MOTION (L. Watson/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders appoint Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick as Equity Monitor for this meeting. **CARRIED**

* The equity score card can be used following this meeting and submitted to the Equity Leadership Team:
<https://ecorcuccan.ca/resources/accessibility/>

Agenda

2025-01-07-002 MOTION (N. Wells/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders accept the agenda as circulated. **CARRIED**

Incoming Correspondence

- December 6, 2024, Rev. Mark Fearnall, St. John's Campbellford United Church, re complaint against East Central Ontario Regional Council (*for action under section 3*);
- December 12, 2024, Heather Keachie, Gardiner Roberts LLP, re Transfer of Cemetery and St Paul's UC to Hastings Highlands Municipality (*for action under section 4*);
- December 13, 2024, Rev. Mark Fearnall, St. John's Campbellford United Church, re complaint against East Central Ontario Regional Council (*For action under section 3*).

Outgoing Correspondence

- none

Business Arising

- Cambridge Street United Church** – further explanation was provided by Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly about possible outcomes.
 - See *Investigator Report for Cambridge Street United Church* (*circulated ahead of meeting; not included as appendix*)
 - See *2023 Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Response Policy* (*circulated ahead of meeting; not included as appendix*)

Rev. Darren Liepold and Rev. Brian Nicholson recused themselves from the meeting for this discussion. Rev. Dan Hayward, Pastoral Relations Minister, Nakonha:ka Regional Council, was present during this discussion.

Carol Hancock, investigator, was present to share details in her report, explained the process of substantiation, and receive questions.

It was noted that there was a correction on page 42 of the report: Rev. Sharon "Clement" Rayment should be Rev. Sharon Campbell Rayment.

It was iterated that interpretations of L19 of the *Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Response Policy 2023* means that actions are not limited to those described in L19.

Carol highlighted that there was concern among people she has talked to as to what will come next.

The Chair thanked Carol for her presence and explanations to questions asked.

2025-01-07-003 MOTION (K. Fitzpatrick/K. Ostrander) That having received the *Investigator Report for Cambridge Street United Church*, the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders appoint the following people to meet with the complainants and respondent, and then report back the February 4th Council of Elders meeting: Stephen Coles, Rev. Lynn Watson, and Rev. Ned Wells. **CARRIED** (*Sheila-Mae Young abstains*)

2. **Emmanuel United Church** – further explanation was provided by Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly about possible outcomes.
 - See *Investigator Report for Emmanuel United Church* (circulated ahead of meeting; not included as appendix)

Brian James recused himself from this portion of the meeting. Rev. Darren Liepold and Rev. Brian Nicholson returned for this portion of the meeting.

Stephanie Coward-Yaskiw was present to provide clarifications and answer questions.

2025-01-07-004 MOTION (S-M Young/B. Nicholson) That upon examining the *Reviewer's Report for Emmanuel United Church*, the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders recommend the following:

- a) That a pastoral and compassionate team approach be adopted in responding to the situation at Emmanuel United Church and that the team consist of a Commission, a finance person (if one of the members of the Commission does not have financial experience in the UCC), a conflict resolution practitioner, and staff from ECORC to support visioning. Each of the persons serving should have no history with anyone at EUC or with the congregation as a whole that could reasonably lead to any perception of bias.

It was suggested that there be 1-2 members forming part of the commission not coming from Council of Elders.

- b) That a Commission be established by ECORC to implement these recommendations, to direct the governance of the congregation, and to act as the final decision-making authority for the congregation for a period of at least one year. This will allow for policies and processes to be brought in line with UCC expectations while freeing the called minister to focus on ministry, strengthening relationships, and pastoral care.
- c) That the Commission ensure that this report, and any decisions made by ECORC in respect of its recommendations, be made freely available to the members and adherents of Emmanuel United Church and, that at its earliest opportunity, an open gathering be convened to present the decisions and respond to questions that may arise.
- d) That a simplified communications mechanism be set in place immediately in order to communicate information related to this review, as well as congregational life, and that the communication strategy identified in the Council Action Plan be implemented when possible.

- e) That the Commission work with the existing Council to implement these recommendations and to carry out the day-to-day governance of the congregation. It is recommended that the Commission:
 - 1. Act as Chair of the Council;
 - 2. Work towards active listening to all ideas and opinions offered during council meetings, modelling healthy decision-making processes and encourage respectful participation by all.
 - 3. Have final decision-making authority, where consensus cannot be reached.
- f) That the Commission work with the already existing Property Committee to ensure that their processes conform to UCC practices.
 - 1. Give thanks for the many years of leadership the current Property chair has given.
 - 2. The Commission appoint one of its members to the chair of that committee.
 - 3. That the current chair of Property be invited to continue to serve as a regular member given the experience and knowledge he brings.
- g) That the Commission work with the already existing Trustees to ensure that their processes conform to UCC practices.
 - 1. That the Commission appoint one of its members to the chair of the Trustees.
- h) That the Commission offer process support to any of the other committees if required.
- i) That the Commission work with the congregation to:
 - 1. Continue the recent work to explore the transition from the existing governance model to a simplified governance structure;
 - 2. Clarify governance and committee roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authorities;
 - 3. Update EUC's constitution (governance policies);
 - 4. Ensure clear policies and processes are in place to allow for shared leadership (eg. term limits, which are already present in EUC's constitution; mentorship/shadowing).
- j) That the Commission ensure that workshops on UCC polity and governance roles and responsibilities are facilitated and that specific training is delivered for appropriate committees (eg. M&P).
- k) That a finance person with experience in UCC financial process be identified to work with the current treasurer and Finance Committee to simplify and bring EUC's financial systems in line with UCC expectations and common financial processes, as well as to work with current trustees to explore the real (versus perceived) restrictions on trust funds, as well as how to simplify, and where possible, consolidate EUC's funds. That this work include:
 - 1. Implementing a Unified Budget System to reduce the number of financial silos within EUC and to reunify the ministry and building aspects of the church's financial reporting.
 - 2. Bringing monies held in the Outreach, choir, trustee account into the general fund and giving them line items in the overall budget;
 - 3. As soon as possible, electing/appointing a treasurer from within the congregation;
 - 4. As soon as possible, arranging for bookkeeping services onsite, whether that be through the hiring of a permanent administrator who can also maintain the church's financial records, or by hiring a bookkeeper who keeps regular office hours at the church;

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5. Ensuring that all financial records are maintained and held onsite;
 6. Removing the Benevolent Funds (funds the minister uses for emergency purposes) from within the oversight of the Outreach and Pastoral Care Committee; furthermore, developing criteria and processes for the disbursement of benevolent funds that are in keeping with UCC and CRA expectations and requirements (what types of situations; how often; can money be given up to a certain amount or should it always be in kind; etc.).
- i) That ECORC identifies and secures the services of a conflict practitioner (to be paid 30% by Regional Council and 70% percent by congregation) with experience in congregational conflict and church systems, who will walk alongside the congregation over the next 18 to 24 months, to help them hear and understand each other, and to also develop a conflict-capable culture and conflict systems that will help them respond to conflict in a healthy way when it arises. The conflict resolution practitioner should be someone who has an understanding of congregational culture but who has not already worked with EUC or who has ties to EUC that could be construed as bias. This work could include:
1. facilitating listening circles to allow congregation members to listen deeply to each other and build understanding around the dynamics that are still present from the amalgamation, as well as what has been happening at EUC recently;
 2. mediating if and where needed;
 3. facilitating team-building for staff and committees;
 4. developing a culture of constructive feedback so that it becomes normal for people to share both positive and critical feedback with each other and with leadership, including the minister;
 5. conflict resolution training including how individuals and leadership (eg. chairs of committees) can best respond to poor behaviour on the spot and how to have challenging conversations;
 6. developing, with the congregation (not just leadership) a conflict resolution process for EUC that is “owned” by the congregation and that is adhered to. For instance, if the first step is to have a respectful and compassionate conversation with the person with whom someone is in conflict or who behaved poorly, and that step hasn’t been taken, leadership doesn’t let them skip that step and move to the next one or move to a formal process.
 7. revisiting the Behavioural Covenant with the congregation (not just leadership) to explore if it needs revision and to add steps (conflict resolution process) to take when the Covenant is broken.
 8. Other interventions as identified by ECORC or the congregation or by the conflict resolution practitioner
- j) That the Commission work with ECORC staff to identify the best timing for a visioning process to be developed and implemented with the congregation. That this visioning process:
1. Work to establish a clear vision and mission for EUC’s future that reflects the will of the congregation;
 2. Reexamine EUC’s understanding of and commitment to its status and identity as an Affirming congregation;
 3. Examine how the congregation feels the building fits into the vision. (That is, how does it want the building to serve the ministry mid and long-term?);
 4. Explore where children/youth fit into EUC’s vision for ministry and what that means for church life

- k) Regarding routine administrative processes, the Reviewer recommends the following:
1. That the historic roll of the congregation be reviewed and updated to reflect the actual membership of the congregation and that part of this review should include contacting those who no longer attend to clarify their membership;
 2. That church systems and equipment (eg. email system; laptop for livestream) should belong solely to Emmanuel United Church and should not be owned or run through anyone's personal equipment or accounts, whether that be staff or volunteers.
 3. That there be training for two or three persons (or teams) on how to use EUC's systems and equipment so that back-ups are always available.
- l) That ECORC, upon receiving any petition or complaint from anyone at EUC, ensure that the congregation's conflict resolution processes have been accessed first without resolution, and that, if so, proper UCC process, as found in the Manual, has been followed for the transmission of said petition or complaint.

CARRIED

The Executive Minister invited names of folks that would be a good fit to serve on this Commission.

- 3. Complaint Against East Central Ontario Regional Council** – explanation by Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly
- See *Complaint Against East Central Regional Council (Rev. Mark Fearnall)* – see correspondence a

It was stated that Pastoral Relations Ministers in neighboring regional council can be called upon at times, as necessary, and could provide pastoral care to the minister in question. It was noted that General Council will be reviewing the regional council structure as a whole. It was established that reviews of regional councils (along the lines of a congregational review) do not currently exist.

2025-01-07-005 MOTION (N. Wells/P. Long) That East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders acknowledge receipt of the complaint of Rev. Mark Fearnall against East Central Ontario Regional Council and considering Rev. Mark Fearnall's current status on restorative care leave, make every effort to find suitable ways to provide Rev. Mark Fearnall with suitable pastoral care as soon as he returns to his functions. **CARRIED**

- 4. Transfer of Cemetery and St. Paul's United Church to Hastings Highlands Municipality**
2025-01-07-006 MOTION (S-M. Young/K. Ostrander) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders approve the transfer of cemetery and St. Paul's United Church, legal description of which is PT LT 11 CON 10 MCCLURE AS IN QR147342 & PT 3 HRS 153; HASTING HIGHLANDS; COUNTY OF HASTINGS, and municipal address of which is 25 BOULTER LAKE ROAD, LAKE ST. PETER, ON K0L 2K0 to Hasting Highlands Municipality. **CARRIED**

Equity Monitor Report – Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick shared meeting went well, and thanks was extended for raising equity issues during meeting.

The Speaker declared that all the business having come before this special meeting of the Council of Elders was duly concluded at 4:20 PM.

Closing Prayer – Rev. Darren Liepold closed the meeting with a prayer.

Next Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, February 4, 2025 (1PM) Zoom
- Tuesday, March 5, 2025 (1PM) Zoom
- Tuesday, April 1, 2025 (1PM) Zoom

Steve Coles
Speaker

Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly
Executive Minister

ECORC Assembly of Elders - Participation Roster

	Opening prayer	worship/Land ack/closing	Equity Roles	Monitor
<i>February 4 2025</i>	Ned Wells		Joyce Payne	
<i>March 5, 2025</i>	Sheila-May Young		Lynn Watson	
<i>April 1 2025</i>	Joyce Payne		Brian Nicholson	
<i>May 6 2025</i>	Kaitlyn Ostrander		Kevin Fitzpatrick	
<i>June 3 2025</i>	Kevin Fitzpatrick		Pat Long	