

**East Central Ontario Regional Council**  
**Meeting of the Council of Elders**  
**Tuesday, May 6, 2025 – 1 PM**

**Vision of the Council of Elders by which we evaluate progress based on:**

Strengthened by God's grace and refreshed by the Spirit,  
 We follow the way of Jesus in healing our world.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Stephen Coles	Member
Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly	Member, Executive Minister
Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick	Member
Brian James	Member, Financial Administration
Rev. David King	Member
Rev. Kaitlyn Ostrander	Member
Joyce Payne	Member
Rev. Edward (Ned) Wells	Member (departed at 3:10 PM)
Sheila-Mae Young	Member
Rev. Susan Garrod-Schuster	Corresponding Member, Acting Pastoral Relations Minister
Sharon Hull	Corresponding Member, Minister for Spiritual Nurture, Respectful Relationships and Justice with All Ages
Rev. Darren Liepold	Corresponding Member, Congregational Support Minister
Joel Miller	Corresponding Member, Program Assistant to Executive Minister, Recording Secretary
Karen Wilson	Corresponding Member - Communications and Administration Assistant

**REGRETS/ABSENT**

Patricia Long	Member
Rev. Ryan McNally	Member, General Council 45 Lead Commissioner
Rev. Brian Nicholson	Member
Rev. Lynn Watson	Member

This meeting of the Council of Elders of the East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC) will deal with regular business, but will focus on the following key area:

- Discern a way forward regarding Vision 2035 (response to statistical projections)
- Discern a way forward regarding General Council 45 Commissioner vacancies

**Land Acknowledgement and Opening Devotion** – Rev. Kaitlyn Ostrander recognized that this regional council has an affirming ministry and asked all to acknowledge the First People's traditional Territory from which they are joining the meeting. All were also called to reflect on the history, lands and its people, and to strive towards truth and reconciliation and repairs for the damage caused by settlers upon First Peoples. Kaitlyn opened devotions by reading from Scripture: Matthew 15:1-20, and highlighted the importance of being intentional about faith, beliefs and decision making.

**Introduction of New Staff - Rev. Susan Garrod-Schuster, Acting Pastoral Relations Minister** – Steve Coles introduced Rev. Susan Garrod-Schuster, and Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly extended gratitude for the dedication Susan is bringing to her role.

**Time for sharing** – All are invited to share and introduce themselves.

#### **Appointment of an Equity Support Person for this Meeting**

**2025-05-06-001 MOTION** (J. Payne/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders appoint Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick as Equity Support Person 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/>

#### **Minutes of April 8, 2025**

**2025-05-06-002 MOTION** (K. Fitzpatrick/S-M. Young) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders approves the Minutes of April 8, 2025, as circulated as corrected (addition of Rev. Ryan McNally to attendance). **CARRIED**

#### **Business Arising**

(none)

#### **Agenda**

**2025-05-06-003 MOTION** (S-M. Young/K. Ostrander) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders accept the agenda as amended:

- Addition of correspondence k.

#### **CARRIED**

#### **Incoming Correspondence**

- a) March 27, 2025, Joe Grant, Lawyer, LFF Lawyers LLP, re Saint James United; "Restrictive Covenant" (*for information*);
- b) March 28, 2025, Cathy Hamilton and Gary Tompkins, Co-Chairs, Quebec and East Ontario Candidacy Board, to Glenn Keefe, re readiness for ministry leadership in a pastoral charge appointment (*for information*);
- c) March 28, 2025, Cathy Hamilton and Gary Tompkins, Co-Chairs, Quebec and East Ontario Candidacy Board, to Mark Sturman, re mid-Student Ministry Education interview (*for information*);
- d) March 28, 2025, Cathy Hamilton and Gary Tompkins, Co-Chairs, Quebec and East Ontario Candidacy Board, to Douglas Ferris, re readiness for ordination (*for information*);
- e) March 28, 2025, Cathy Hamilton and Gary Tompkins, Co-Chairs, Quebec and East Ontario Candidacy Board, to Siobhan Flynn, re candidacy for diaconal ministry (*for information*);
- f) March 28, 2025, Toni Grates, Director, The Travelling Stage, re Proposal of Interest in Northminster United Church – The Travelling Stage (*for information*);
- g) April 3, 2025, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Senior Governance Support Lead, re regional council centennial message to be presented during June 8<sup>th</sup> centennial celebration at Gower Street United Church, in St. John's, NL (*for information*);
- h) April 9, 2025, Bob Savaria, Manager, Financial Reporting and Budgeting, re regional monthly statement of account (*for information*);

- i) April 12, 2025, Adam Ratcliff, re potentially selling land belonging to Uxbridge United Church (*for information*);
- j) April 17, 2025, Toni Grates, Director, The Travelling Stage, responding to correspondence from Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly, Executive Minister, re Proposal of Interest in Northminster United Church – The Travelling Stage (*for information*);
- k) May 1, 2025, Susan Jackson, Information and Statistics Coordinator, The United Church of Canada, re PC's that have NOT yet submitted their 2024 Statistical Forms-PLS submit by May 26, 2025 (*for information*);

### Outgoing Correspondence

- l) March 28, 2025, Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly, Executive Minister, responding to correspondence of March 28 from Toni Grates, Director, The Travelling Stage, re Proposal of Interest in Northminster United Church – The Travelling Stage (*for information*);
- m) March 28, 2025, Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly, Executive Minister, responding to correspondence of March 27, from Joe Grant, Lawyer, LFF Lawyers LLP, re Saint James United; "Restrictive Covenant" (*for information*);
- n) April 9, 2025, Rev. Darren Liepold, Congregational Support Minister, to the members of the Hampton Commission, re thanks and appreciation for the commission's work (*for information*);
- o) April 12, 2025, Ted Meyers, Chair of Ministry Through Property and Finance, responding to correspondence of April 12 from Adam Ratcliff, re potentially selling land belonging to Uxbridge United Church (*for information*);

Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly highlighted:

- 1. That the regional council is still searching for resource people who could complete a video presentation in time for the June Centennial Celebration in St-John's, NL., i.e. "greetings from the Oldest Methodist Church in Canada, from the East Central Ontario Regional Council..." Darren, Steve and Karen will collaborate to see about generating a small video presentation.
- 2. That a report from the regional council to General Council 45 has been prepared and forwarded
  - See 2025-08 ECORC Report to GC45 as part of correspondence in SharePoint.

### Business arising grouped according to confirmed Guiding Principles

#### I. All Communities of Faith participate in ECORC meetings and initiatives

- a) **Facilitation Forum** – Stephen Coles, Speaker, planning is coming together; Saturday afternoon is being opened up for invitees outside of the regional council to be present.
- b) **Dates of future meetings and information sessions (for information):**
  - **May 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025** Annual Meeting, Spring, St. Paul's United Church / St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bowmanville, ON
  - **October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025** Fall Meeting – in Alderville, ON
- c) **Proposed Dates Future General Meetings:**
  - 2026**
    - **May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>**
    - **November 14<sup>th</sup>**

**2027**

- **April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>**
- **November 13<sup>th</sup>**

**II.** Clergy, lay leaders and communities of faith express satisfaction with the support, development opportunities and communication they receive

**III.** Those involved in any way with ECORC demonstrate awareness of our Vision and Mission statements, and express a feeling of connection to and commitment to the work of ECORC

**IV.** People in all roles and capacities within ECORC are aware of Council decisions and policies, and know where to find the information they need

a) **Covenant Support Leadership Team (CST)**

- see CST minutes of April 22, 2025 as **Appendix A**

**2025-05-06-004 MOTION** (J. Payne/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders receive for information the Covenant Support Leadership Team (CST) minutes of April 22, 2025. **CARRIED**

**V.** The number of church buildings in our Regional Council that are accessible is increasing. There is faithful stewardship of property and finances

- a) **Ministry Through Property and Finance Leadership Team (MTPF) – Sheila-Mae-Young**
- See MTPF minutes of April 23, 2025 as **Appendix B**

**2025-05-06-005 MOTION** (S-M. Young/K. Ostrander) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders receive for information the minutes of the Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team (MTPF) for meeting held on April 23, 2025. **CARRIED**

- b) **Sale of Maple Grove United Church**

**2025-05-06-006 MOTION** (S-M. Young/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders receive and approve the recommendation of the Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team to authorize the trustees of Maple Grove United Church to list Maple Grove United Church, at 2197 Maple Grove Road, Bowmanville, Ontario, at a Fair Market Value price, estimated at \$1.2 million and to distribute the proceeds from the sale according to ECORC policy guidelines. **CARRIED**

- c) **Greenwood United Church**

**2025-05-06-007 MOTION** (S-M. Young/B. James) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders receive and approve the recommendation of the Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team to authorize the trustees of Greenwood United Church to use \$23,000 from the Greenwood Frontier Capital Investment (\$1,343,080) to cover ice storm damages and install a generator. **CARRIED**

**VI.** ECORC events take place in a variety of geographic locations within our Region throughout the year

**VII.** We hold events every year related to outreach and social justice within our Regional Council

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- VIII.** *We observe increasing use of land acknowledgments and more participation in learning opportunities related to Respectful Relations and Indigenous Justice*
- IX.** *Children, youth and young adults are represented on all decision-making bodies*
- X.** *There are events planned for and by children, youth and young adults every year. A significant number of these events provide children, youth and young adults with leadership opportunities*
- XI.** *There is evidence that inclusive language is becoming the norm in the life and work of our church throughout our Regional Council, especially inclusive language and images of God in worship*
- XII.** *Reports from equity monitors and meeting notes give evidence of a growing awareness of equity standards*
- XIII.** *The number of Communities of Faith designated as Affirming continues to increase*
- XIV.** *An increasing number of Communities of Faith, along with ECORC and the Council of Elders, are developing plans to increase their environmental stewardship*
- XV.** *We can document specific actions we have taken to become intercultural*

#### **New Business –**

- a) **Proposal: Way Forward – Vision 2035** – Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly explained details of this proposal.  
- See *Way Forward – Vision 2035* as **Appendix C**

*For information:* A Discussion Guide will be made available for Congregations regarding Vision 2035 through Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary (after regional council introduces at annual general meeting).

Discussion: There was concern that no one gets left behind because the date for the large gathering may not work for everyone. It was suggested that a contact person be established for relaying all information and future coordination. On the issue of ; could the Council of Elders decide on recommendations coming from the task group, or could the Council of Elders deal with the data generated from the task group and recommend on its own, using time from meetings devoted to viewing the regional council from a vantage point which goes beyond solely business? It was suggested that an omnibus motion be had for the business of the Council of Elders so that more time can be devoted to discerning and visioning.

**2025-05-06-008 MOTION** (S-M Young/K. Ostrander) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders accept and implement the proposal *Way Forward – Vision 2035* as a living document. **CARRIED**

#### **Keepers of the Vision 2035**

**2025-05-06-009 MOTION** (S-M Young/K. Ostrander) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders name Joyce Payne, Rev. David King, Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick and Stephen Coles as Keepers of the Vision 2035. **CARRIED**

\*Going forward, the Council of Elders agenda will include a consent document to deal with all business.

The question was raised about how to communicate to nominations and people having expressed and interest in being a member of the Council of Elders that these changes to how the Council of Elders will operate (devoting time to visioning 2035) is taking place?

b) **2 Vacancies for General Council 45 Commissioner** – Stephen Coles

Current Commissioners to General Council 45:

1. Rev. Brian Nicholson	O
2. Rev. David Moore	O
3. Rev. Elizabeth Cunningham	O
4. Kathleen Whyte	L
5. Rev. Kaitlyn Ostrander	O
6. Marilyn Rodger	L
7. Mark Sturman	O
8. Paul Cook	L
9. Rev. Ryan McNally	O
10. Neva Moelker	L
11. Rev. Caroline Giesbrecht	O
12. Rev. Wanda Stride	O
13. Vacant	L
14. Vacant	L

\*Marilyn Robitaille (L) is now Commissioner H

\*Tom Smart (L) No longer available

\*Stephen Coles is an automatic Commissioner by virtue of being Speaker of the Council of Elders

**Discernment:**

Proceed by way of the Nominations process (presenting a slate for decision at Annual General Meeting) – it was suggested that gender not be included in any listing going forward. It was suggested that the Equity Forum could collaborate with Nominations to look at how gender is represented in list going forward. It was asked that the Affirming Forum be made aware of recommendations being made from Equity to Nominations (to be looked at under business arising at next meeting).

**Equity Monitor Report** – Rev. Kevin Fitzpatrick went through the equity scorecard and provided a grade for each of the categories. All worked well, and there was emphasis on remembering to self-identify when speaking into the meeting.

It was shared that Rev. Dr. Morgan Bell will be the new Director of United Church Studies at Montreal Dio.

The Speaker declared that all the business having come before this meeting of the Council of Elders was duly concluded at 3:40 PM.

**Closing Prayer** – Rev. Kaitlyn Ostrander closed the meeting with a prayer.

**Next Meeting Dates** - Tuesday, June 3, 2025 (10 AM – 3 PM) in person (Cobourg, ON?)

Steve Coles  
SpeakerRev. Eric Hebert-Daly  
Executive Minister**ECORC Assembly of Elders - Participation Roster**

	<b>Opening prayer</b>	<b>worship/Land ack/closing</b>	<b>Equity Roles</b>	<b>Monitor</b>
<i>June 3 2025</i>	Kevin Fitzpatrick		Pat Long	

**Appendices**

Appendix A	Covenant Support Leadership Team (CST) minutes of April 22, 2025	Pages 8-9
Appendix B	Ministry Through Property and Finance (MTPF) minutes of April 23, 2025	Page 10
Appendix C	Proposal: Way Forward – Vision 2035	Pages 11-12

## Appendix A

### **East Central Ontario Regional Council Covenant Support Meeting Minutes**

**April 22, 2025**

A meeting of the Covenant Support Team was held by Zoom on Tuesday April 22, 2025 at 2:30pm.

Present: Donna Bignell, Freda Burns, Steve Coles, Caroline Giesbrecht, Philip Hobbs, Patti James, Paul Kneebone, Cheryl McMurray, Anne Meredith (scribe), Ted Myers, Stephanie Richmond, Bill Sheaves (Chair)

Regrets: Lynn Watson

Darren Liepold was present for East Central Ontario Regional Council.

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Bill Sheaves opened the meeting. Philip Hobbs led the opening prayer. The agenda and minutes were approved by consensus.

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#### **Forum Team Reports**

Steve Coles reported for Liaisons sharing that there is some excitement regarding new appointments and calls.

Paul Kneebone reported there are now 22 active Licenced Lay Worship Leaders with less of them available in the east and north. Brad Ford will be the new team leader.

Ted Myers reported for Mission Through Property that Maple Grove United Church is being put up for sale. Northminster United Church will have a decommissioning service on April 27, 2025. A Swahili speaking United Church will soon begin using the Northminster space. Scugog Island United Church will close in June 2025. Zephyr United Church will have its decommissioning service on May 4, 2025.

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#### **Motions for Appointments and Calls**

It was moved by Philip Hobbs and seconded by Donna Bignell that, after confirming eligibility on ChurchHub, the Covenant Support Team approve the re-appointment of the Rev. Donald Wilmer to the Dunbarton Fairport (Pickering) Community of Faith effective July 1, 2025-June 30th, 2026 at 50% time. Carried.

It was moved by Steve Coles and seconded by Donna Bignell that, after confirming eligibility on ChurchHub, the Covenant Support Team approve the call of the Rev. Doug Ferris to the Eldad-Hampton (Clarington) Community of Faith effective May 23, 2025 at 50% time. Carried.

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It was moved by Stephanie Richmond and seconded by Steve Coles that, after confirming eligibility on ChurchHub, the Covenant Support Team approve the call of the Rev. Ratna Arasaratnam to the Rural Faith (Northumberland) Community of Faith effective July 1, 2025 at 50% time. Carried.

It was moved by Donna Bignell and seconded by Cheryl McMurray that, after confirming eligibility on ChurchHub, the Covenant Support Team approve the call of the Rev. Ratna Arasaratnam to the Cold Springs Community of Faith effective July 1, 2025 at 50% time. Carried.

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### Supervision

Burnt River Pastoral Charge/Community of Faith needs a supervisor with the resignation of David Wolford Davis. Phoenix Rising Community of Faith needs pulpit supply.

It was moved by Philip Hobbs and seconded by Steve Coles that Jean Wilson be named the Pastoral Charge Supervisor to the Wooler (Northumberland) Pastoral Charge. Carried.

Supervision is needed at Mark Street Community of Faith (Peterborough).

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Darren Liepold thanked everyone for their suggestions regarding the Governance Documents.

The hiring of a part time Pastoral Relations Minister is underway.

The investigator is completing their report regarding the complaint out of Dunbarton-Fairport Community of Faith.

Final outcomes are awaited from the Remedial Committee at Emmanuel Community of Faith. The minister is on administrative leave. The congregation is in the hands of the Commission.

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### Ministry in Changing Times

Projects are going on in the Tweed, Kingston, Trent River, and Northumberland areas. Thirty congregations are in collaborative talks.

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### New Business

It was moved by Donna Bignell and seconded by Stephanie Richmond that Mark Sturman be allowed to preside over Communion as of May 1, 2025 at Centennial-Albert United Church where he is in Supervised Ministry Education. Carried.

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A thank you was extended by and to Bill Sheaves for his work as chairperson of Covenant Support as his term ends next month.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday May 20, 2025 at 2:30pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Anne Meredith

## Appendix B

**MTP&F Team Meeting Notes the for April 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting.**

Prepared by Ted Meyers

**Agenda**

- Welcome, sharing and opening prayer by Ted
- Previous meeting notes approved by consensus
- Updates from ECORC meeting and Eric
- Business
  - **Maple Grove UC Sale - Certificate A attached**
    - **Motion Brian James, Arthur Smith That the MTPF Team Recommend to the ECORC the approval of the request to list of the Maple Grove United Church, at 2197 Maple Grove Rd, Bowmanville, Ontario at a Fair Market Value price estimated at \$1.2 million and distribution of Funds according to ECORC policy guidelines. Carried**
  - Northminster UC Closing and formation of new Faith Group.
    - Decommissioning Service April 27 Eric and Ted to attend.
    - Transfer of Lands to ECOR Land Trust with KW taking over Property Management including the current rentals.
    - New Faith Group to be invited to decommissioning Service.
  - UPRC and KW, ECOR Land Trust and Property Management.
    - A discussion for clarification took place with identifying the need to document the process to define the steps in the disposition of properties that have become surplus to need when COF's disband, amalgamate or merge. Ted will prepare this documentation for the Team's review at its next meeting. It is clear that properties being considered for candidate's for inclusion in the KW (Long Term) or the ECOR (Short Term) trusts. With different needs for property management agreements.
  - Ongoing Support tasks
    - Blackstock Nestleton Disbanding / closing June 2026
    - Scogog Island Closing June 2025 Darren and Ted to facilitate.
    - Zephyr UC
      - Decommissioning Service May 4<sup>th</sup>. Darren and Ted to attend.
      - Currently TUCC Property Manager who are recommending sale of property. See the attached email.
    - Greenbank Seagrave to start Amalgamation discussions. Darren to facilitate.
    - Little Britain Manse damage re Ice Storm.
    - Bethel Grove Cemetery in Township of Hamilton
    - Westbrook UC land Transfer
- Nominations - Chair Job Description see attached
- Closing Prayer
- Next meetings
  - ECORC Spring meeting May 23 9am and May 24 8.30 to 5.30
  - MTPF May Meeting May 21<sup>st</sup> if required or at the call of chair
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Appendix C**Way forward – Vision 2035**  
**ECORC**

Following a series of briefings on the statistical data of the church from 1992 to 2023 and the extrapolation to what 2035 would look like, the regional council would like to participate in the ‘whole church effort’ to sensitize ourselves to our reality, as well as to work with all parts of the church to make strategic interventions that will help to impact the forecast in ways that are practical and direct.

The General Council, Regional Councils and all communities of faith and ministries need to be actively engaged in this work in order to impact the future of our denomination and our Christian witness in this world.

This includes two key dimensions:

1. Making sure the whole of the church is conscious of where we stand and how we believe we might shift the course of some aspects going forward. (May: Full RC, June: congregational leadership and ministry personnel, Fall: congregational dialogues and engagement)
2. Regularly look at the region’s work in light of the desired future so that we can make strategic decisions along the way to help make that future possible. (including updating the RC’s strategic plan, taking a deep look at the statistics within our region, etc.)

**Proposed timeline****May 24<sup>th</sup>**

Presentation of stats and conversation at Regional Council meeting, small break out groups, facilitated discussion, tie-in with worship, highlight the creation of a task group, seek any interest.

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Council of Elders appoints a Vision 2035 Task Group

- First task: adapting the Strategic Plan
- Second task: receiving information and ground-truthing it
- 2026 task: Being the keeper of the vision, transformation into a Leadership Team?

**Week of June 16<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop with Ministry Personnel and Congregational Leaders (Chairs/Presidents/Designates)

Split into two segments – first part of the day sharing all the details, second part of the day where congregational leaders and Ministry Personnel work separately to equip themselves with their role, followed by some sub-regional cluster groupings to see if there is any benefit of working geographically. Include GC Commissioners in this event so that they know and are prepared for the discussions in Calgary. Empower leaders to do some work on this in their congregational setting in the fall.

**September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

First report back from the Task Group at the Council of Elders, including draft changes to strategic plan.

**Fall**

Congregational conversations throughout the fall.

**October 25<sup>th</sup>**

Fall RC meeting – further conversation, amended Strategic Plan put forward, Nomination of a permanent Task Group or Leadership Team?