

Strategic Plan

2026-2028

Issues in developing a plan

We have three years. Too many goals means nothing gets done well. Too few means that we are doing nothing

We recognize that we have awesome people power but that we only have so much time we can give. To ask too much is to overwhelm

Our last strategic plan, covered much but had

16

Initiatives although it could have been easily been
30 or 50 otr 100...

What we are proposing then is a reduced number of goals for the coming triennium but it does not mean that this will be the only work of our region, but that we will concentrate on these key areas.

We are doing our strategic plan in a series of umbrella forms. While it will not lay out every possible area of ministry that we will carry out, it is hoped that these umbrellas will direct our ministry for the next few years. As the plan is rolled out it is hoped to develop more detail.

Assisting congregations and ministers

In

Times of Transition



shutterstock.com · 186711998

Toward 2035 has given us much to think about. We know many of our congregations are making tough decisions about their present circumstances. Some of our congregations are relatively healthy. They have a good sense of ministry and are not facing immediate financial crisis.

Some congregations are holding their own but may need some help. We all recognize that many of our congregations are older and smaller (not me, I am not older, I am just plenty-nine). They need assistance now to see ways that they might continue to be vital in the years to come.

Sadly other congregations are nearing or soon will have to think about closing or amalgamations in the not too distant future. They have specific needs right now: wisdom about how to deal with property issues, pastoral care for the congregational members and ministers who might be losing their place of community, leaving their legacy, etc.

Although we are hoping to ensure that 2035 is not a reality, we do know that in the next nine years, many of our congregations will face challenges such as amalgamations and disbandment. Such transitions are never easy.

Bringing in an idea from the last strategic plan

Connectors



shutterstock.com · 186711998

The Vision Keepers have divided up our region into 8 subregions:

Southwest,

Northwest,

Peterborough

Northumberland-Hastings

North of Trenton to Highway 7

Quinte-Napanee

Kingston

Northeast

It is our hope to have a contact person or to have contact persons in each of these eight regions to assist congregations in these transitions.

Our goal is to appoint a mentor or to appoint mentors for each of these 8 regions. These mentors would check in with the folks there, work with Mission Through Property and Covenant Support to provide a sense of support through difficult times.

Examine policies that better reflect the current realities of ministry leadership



shutterstock.com · 186711998

We recognize that many of our congregations are finding it extremely difficult to attract ministerial leadership to fill their pulpits. More congregations are looking at ways to keep their ministry going with lay led congregations.

General Council 45 talked about lay led congregations, however little definition was given as to what these congregations would be like, how they would be governed, and what policies would apply to them.

We would ask the Pastoral Relations Minister and the Covenant Support Team to consult the manual, the General Council, the other Regional Councils, and to look at our own handbooks to set appropriate policies that ensure that these congregations can have appropriate leadership.

Look for resources to assist congregations when they do not have clergy.

Encourage mentoring and collaboration between congregations to share wealth, experience, expertise

Have a committee who can provide pastoral care to congregations and ministers who are facing difficult transitions.

A renewed focus on first third ministry



shutterstock.com · 186711998

More information to come. A consultation is being established between first third ministers in the three regions and an outside consultant. We need to engage in programs that help us to realize that the first third ministry is not a ministry of the future, but is a ministry of today.

Anti Racism



shutterstock.com · 186711998

We recognize that many voices in society are striving to separate folks from each other at the present time. So we as a regional council will engage by urging leadership groups in the Region and in our communities of faith to engage in dedicated learning events that promote living in a multi faceted Canada. We will encourage our folks to take the anti racism training offered by the United Church or other bodies. We will encourage the Anti-Racism , Interfaith, and Intercultural Forum to continue offer training events.

Recommitment to truth and reconciliation with First Peoples



shutterstock.com · 186711998

It has been 40 years since the first apology was made to United Church “Native Congregations” in Sudbury. It is now 11 years since the Truth and Reconciliation report was shared with its 94 calls to Action. Remit 1 was passed after the 44th General Council granting autonomy to the Indigenous Church. Some good work has been done but more needs to follow. We support the ongoing work of our Region’s Indigenous Justice and Respectful Relations Forum of our region.

In this phase of our strategic plan we commit ourselves to continuing to develop relationships with Indigenous neighbours, and do the work of education and advocacy.

We will also explore opportunities to support Indigenous Communities and the Indigenous Church when decommissioning congregations. We encourage the Council of Elders and other leadership bodies in our Region to take time during this first year of the strategic plan to meet with the IJRR Forum and Indigenous peoples when appropriate to hear how this work might be shaped.

We know much work needs to be done in the region. New problems and opportunities will continue to emerge. But it is felt that by concentrating on these areas, our region has a framework of key areas that we can effectively concentrate on in the next 3 years.