

2026

Governance Handbook



**East Central Ontario
Regional Council**
Of the United Church of Canada



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Introduction

This policy and practice document has been prepared by the Regional Council Transition Commission, then the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders (effective January 1, 2019) with the recognition that the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders will regularly review all of the policies.

The East Central Ontario Regional Council will set policies for the Council of Elders and leadership teams. Staff will be empowered and trusted to execute that policy.

The structure will consist of leadership teams supported by staff and by task groups of skilled and trained volunteers to carry out policy (e.g. liaisons with individual communities of faith).

All of the policies can be measured against the East Central Ontario Regional Council's Vision:

- Supporting and enhancing the life of Communities of Faith where ministry takes place
- Nurturing Social Justice and Outreach programs
- Building Communications

East Central Ontario Regional Council Governance Structure Notes

By the actions of the 43rd General Council the United Church of Canada embarked on restructuring from four courts to three courts. The Conferences and Presbyteries were replaced by Regional Councils. Regional Council 11 now renamed East Central Ontario Regional Council comprises of 6 Presbyteries of the former Bay of Quinte Conference and 5 Communities of Faith from the former Living Water Presbytery, Toronto Conference.

Guiding Principles

Restructuring was undertaken with several objectives. Perhaps the most important change was to strengthen and emphasize the Communities of Faith as the primary place for ministry and mission to be exercised. To support this objective there has been an intentional effort to move from the language and structure of the business world to reclaim the language and means of our faith.

Additional objectives included the reduction of volunteer time and the financial cost to support the governance structure. As well as meeting the essential requirements of the Regional Council as described in the 2019 Manual C. Regional Council.

These objectives became the guiding principles in the structure of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Regional Council Governance Structure

Communities of Faith

The Community of Faith is the primary place of ministry in which the mission of the church is conducted.

2019 Manual B.1.1 A community of faith is any community of people within the United Church that

- a) gathers to explore faith, worship, and serve; and*
- b) is recognized as a community of faith within the United Church by the regional council through a covenantal relationship between the community of faith and the regional council.*

There are many kinds of communities of people that may be recognized as communities of faith: pastoral charges, congregations, outreach ministries, chaplaincies, faith-based communal living, house churches, online communities, and others.

Communities of faith may be intended as time-limited, transitional, or ongoing.

Regional Council

The Regional Council, consisting of representation from the Communities of Faith and other lay leadership, along with ministry personnel, active, retained and retired, is responsible for the oversight and leadership of the Communities of Faith within the Bounds of the Regional Council. The Regional Council may also undertake ministry on behalf of the whole or part.

The Regional Council mandate and responsibility is set by the Manual and the polity and policy of The United Church of Canada. It is further defined and refined by regular conversation of the Regional Council as it creates and maintains a Mission Statement, Mission Strategy and declared Priorities.

The Regional Council will meet at least once a year in a face to face gathering and may meet additionally through the year by means appropriate to the objective. The Regional Council will determine how and the frequency of its meetings.

The Regional Council creates and mandates Teams to undertake the work and oversee the responsibilities of the Regional Council. Originally four Teams were instituted:

1. Covenant Support Team: responsibilities include support of Communities of Faith; formation of Pastoral Relationships, LLWL supervision and training, care of Pensioner's
2. Mission Through Property and Finance Team: responsibilities include all property matters, financial and budget management; grant awards.
3. Formation Nurture Justice Team: responsibilities include promoting denomination and Community of faith life and wellbeing; youth, and Right Relations
4. Nominations Team: elects members of the Elders and Teams; elects members of Forums if requested

The actions of the Inaugural Meeting resulted in additional Teams

5. Equity Team: responsible for maintaining Equity, guides Regional Council in objective to be Affirming.
6. Facilitation Team: responsible for the planning and support of the Regional Council Meetings.

When the Regional Council is not in session it shall be represented by the **Elders**.

Elders

Elders represent the Regional Council between full meetings of the Regional Council providing oversight to ensure that the work undertaken on behalf of the Regional Council is completed in accordance to the polity and practices and directions of the Regional Council. The elders shall meet as a **Council of Elders** to provide oversight of the work of the Covenant Support Team; the Mission Through Property and Finance Team and the Formation Nurture Justice Team. The **Council of Elders** shall fulfill the duties of an Executive as assigned by the Manual.

“Council” and “Elder” are historic words of the church. The title was chosen to reflect the role of oversight and care for the spiritual health of the Regional Council.

The Elders are selected through a Nominations Process to ensure the Council of Elder sis reflective of the diversity and demographics of the Regional Council. Elders will serve staggered three-year terms. The member of the Regional Council elected to serve in accordance to 2019 Manual C.2.12 b) as a member of the General Council shall also be a member of the Council of Elders serving a three-year term in conjunction with the term of the General Council. The Elders serve as equals but shall elect/appoint from within one who shall serve as Speaker who will preside at meeting of the Council of Elders and Meetings of the Regional Council. All Elders do represent the Regional Council.

The term Elder reflects the biblical use of identifying a spiritual leader with responsibilities of oversight and guidance. It is not a reflection of age.

Elders are selected for their wisdom, caring, spiritual discernment, and other gifts of the Spirit. They must be members of the regional council.

Teams

Teams, created by and accountable to the Regional Council, are assigned responsibilities and tasks on behalf of the Regional Council. The Regional Council may delegate responsibilities to the Teams and empower the Teams to make decisions on behalf of the Regional Council.

The Teams are the primary working groups of the Regional Council. Each of the Teams have a mandate and terms of reference that grant them responsibility for the ongoing work of the Regional Council. The Teams are accountable to the Regional Council (oversight undertaken by the Council of Elders). The mandate and terms of reference will determine what aspects of the work requires final decision by the Council of Elders and/or the Regional Council; that which may be made by determination or decision of the Team and that which the Team may designate to Staff or to Forums. That which is delegated remains the responsibility of the Teams which must maintain oversight of the work.

The Teams are elected through a nomination process that is intended to ensure that the teams are comprised of both gifted individuals and is representative of the diversity and demographics of the Regional Council.

The Council of Elders appoints from its membership individuals to align with the working Teams to exercise Regional Council oversight and guidance to the working Teams.

Forums

Forums are established and accountable to the Teams. Forums may be appointed or elected, may be of fixed term or permanent. Forums may be established to give guidance or counsel to a Team; they may be established to complete an assigned task in which they may be empowered as a Commission with limited responsibility and powers. Teams remain responsible for the work of Forums.

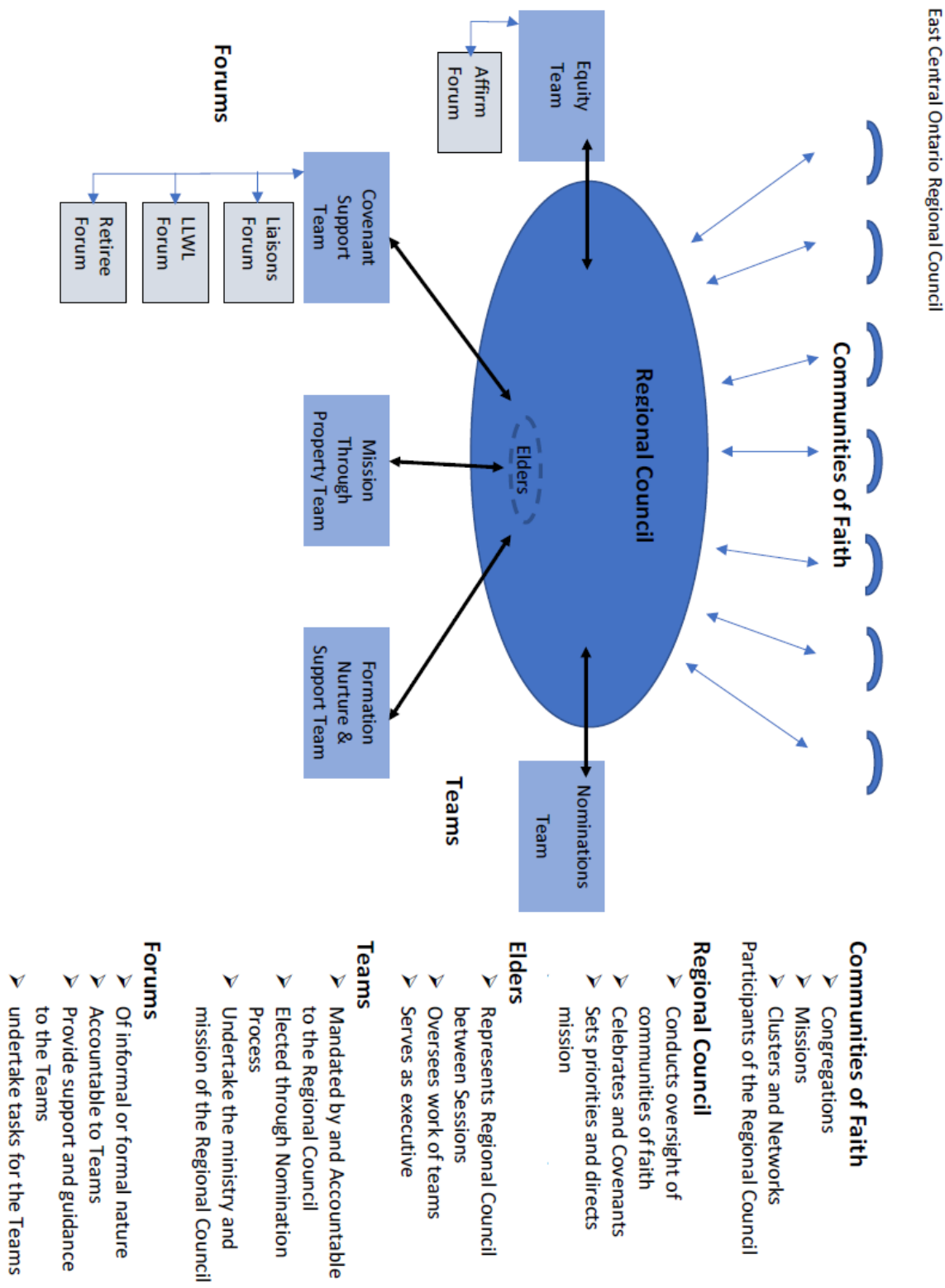
Clusters and Networks that, while not formal governance bodies, are central to living out the faith of the United Church. The Regional Council may encourage the formation and provide support to Clusters and Networks, but these bodies are the responsibility of the participating Communities of Faith. The Regional Council responsibility is limited to the oversight and support of the Communities of Faith.

Clusters

Clusters are local groups of communities of faith that provide community and support for communities of faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning.

Networks

Networks link people working on specific issues (e.g., supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry) or for project work (e.g., event planning) that function through the whole church, depending on the issue.



Governance Structure

East Central Ontario Regional Council Vision Statement

POLICY NAME: East Central Ontario Regional Council Living Mission	Date Approved: September 25, 2020
	Review date:
Purpose: This policy outlines the living mission of the Region, the authority and compliance, membership, responsibilities and annual meetings.	

Introduction

The Vision Statement describes East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC) functioning in its ideal state — it is aspirational. The Mission Statement describes how ECORC arrives at this ideal state through faith, belief and action. The Guiding Principles provide practical direction for ECORC to evaluate how well we are living out our faith, beliefs and actions. Central throughout is the idea that language can and should foster community and connection, which means that these statements must be easy for the average person to understand.

Linda Hutchinson, Coordinator of the Affirming Ministry Program for Affirm United, has approved this document as meeting the requirements for the Vision/Mission statement of an Affirming Region within the United Church of Canada. We hope our formatting meets accessibility guidelines; we sincerely apologize if we have fallen short.

This document should be seen as a seedling rather than a foundation. We expect the statements it contains to be revisited and revised over time, and foresee it growing in some areas and being pruned in others as ECORC itself becomes more firmly rooted.

Vision

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

Mission

Grounded in the teachings of Jesus to love our neighbours as ourselves,
we nurture and engage our Communities of Faith,
including all ministry personnel, members and adherents, staff and lay leadership,
joining our hearts and voices in sacred covenant.
In gratitude for our abundant blessings and in the service of this call,
we pledge to be faithful stewards of our resources
and aspire to be agents of God's love, compassion and justice
on earth as it is in heaven.

Recognizing our churches' participation in historic injustices,
we reach out with particular love and care, as Jesus did,
to those who have been ignored, excluded, condemned, silenced or erased.

We seek to uphold high standards of equity and Affirming,
and to encourage these same standards in our Communities of Faith.

Valuing diversity and differences as gifts,
we support the full participation of all people
in the life and work of our church and in wider society.
We publicly, intentionally and explicitly celebrate and seek justice
for people of every age, gender, racialized experience, culture,
sexual orientation, gender identity, mental and physical health and ability,
economic circumstance or any other diversity.

We promise to walk with, and learn from,
Indigenous ministries and Communities of Faith within our church,
and to reach out to all Indigenous Peoples.
We support and encourage all Communities of Faith to walk this path with us.
As we are called by God to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others and to seek justice,
so we are called to respect the deep spirituality
of traditional Indigenous teachings
of Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community.

Further acknowledging that cultural prejudices have prevented us
from seeing all people as equally worthy of God's love and compassion,
we invite Communities of Faith to join our vision
of becoming an intercultural church,
participating in ecumenical, intercultural and interfaith
ministries, partnerships and initiatives
in their local communities and in wider society.

As Jesus gathered children in his arms
and spoke of their leadership and spiritual gifts,
we commit ourselves and our Communities of Faith
to nurturing and supporting children, youth and young adults,
learning from them and celebrating their presence
and participation in everything we do.
Hearing God's call for open hearts and unity in the body of Christ,
we commit to uniting the Communities of Faith and individuals in our Region,
inviting all to participate in this Vision and Mission.
Recognizing that meaningful communication is essential to unity,
we will respect all voices, share information and listen for the Spirit's prompting,
that all may be embraced in this work of Love.

Diverse, yet One in Christ,
we seek to serve and support our Communities of Faith
as they faithfully serve a broken and hurting world.
Nurtured by our heritage and strengthened by God's grace,

we witness to the healing power of Christ's love, compassion and justice on earth as it is in heaven.

Guiding Principles

We are accountable to all people of the East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC) in living out our vision and mission in ways that can be measured over time. We will know we are doing so when we can say “yes” to these statements, which are presented by theme rather than by priority or importance:

- All Communities of Faith participate in ECORC meetings and initiatives.
- Clergy, lay leaders and communities of faith express satisfaction with the support, development opportunities and communication they receive.
- We hold events every year related to outreach and social justice within our region.
- Reports from equity monitors and meeting notes give evidence of a growing awareness of equity standards.
- The number of church buildings in our region that are accessible is increasing.
- The number of Communities of Faith designated as Affirming continues to increase.
- There is evidence that inclusive language is becoming the norm in the life and work of our church throughout our Region, especially inclusive language and images of God in worship.
- We observe increasing use of land acknowledgments and more participation in learning opportunities related to Respectful Relations and Indigenous Justice.
- An increasing number of Communities of Faith, along with ECORC and the Council of Elders, are developing plans to increase their environmental stewardship.
- We can document specific actions we have taken to become intercultural.
- Children, youth and young adults are represented on all decision-making bodies.
- 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.
- 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.
- People in all roles and capacities within ECORC are aware of Council decisions and policies, and know where to find the information they need.

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

Purpose

The Manual C.2.4

The East Central Ontario Regional Council is responsible for encouraging and engaging in

- a) joining our collective hearts, voices, and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world;
- b) local, regional, national, and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical, and interfaith) for ministry, mission, and justice work;
- c) ministry with children, youth, and young adults;
- d) honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry; and

Honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry is described in Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church, a resource available from the General Council Office.

- e) living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community.

Authority / Compliance

The East Central Ontario Regional Council and East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders will follow all policies outlined or referred to in The Manual of the United Church of Canada, or as required by federal, provincial or municipal laws.

Limitations

The Manual C.2.14

All responsibility of the Regional Council is subject to

- a) policies set by the General Council on membership, governance, pastoral relations, candidacy, ministry personnel, property, and any other area within the authority of the General Council; and
- b) the authority of the General Council to assume control of the Regional Council in extraordinary circumstances where the Regional Council is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational or Regional Council policies.

Membership

The Manual C.1 (includes C.1.1. – C.1.3)

The Regional Council consists of members of the order of ministry, other ministry personnel, lay members of the United Church, and leaders of associate member ministries, all as set out in sections C.1.1 to C.1.3 below.

“Ministry personnel” is a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply. For more information on these categories of ministry personnel, see Entering Ministry H.1.1 and H.1.2.

There must be a balance between the members in the membership categories in section C.1.1 and C.1.2 below where possible.

Members of the Order of Ministry and Other Ministry Personnel

The Manual C.1.1

The following ministry personnel are members of the Regional Council:

- a) members of the order of ministry within the bounds served by the Regional Council; and
- b) other ministry personnel in a covenantal relationship with a community of faith within the bounds of the Regional Council.

Lay Members

The Manual C.1.2

Communities of faith that are congregations or pastoral charges continue to elect representatives to the Regional Council in the same way they elected representatives to the presbytery prior to January 1, 2019. They may also change the way in which they elect representatives within denominational policies, with the agreement of the Regional Council, and by including it in the covenant between the community of faith and Regional Council.

The lay members of the Regional Council are members of the United Church who are not ministry personnel and who are

- a) elected by communities of faith on the following basis:
 - i) one representative from each community of faith with 100 or fewer members;
 - ii) two representatives from each community of faith with 101 to 200 members;
 - iii) three representatives from each community of faith with 201 to 300 members;
 - iv) four representatives from each community of faith with more than 300 resident members; and
- b) additional lay members as determined by the Regional Council if necessary to respect a balance of ministry personnel and lay members who are not ministry personnel in the membership of the Regional Council.

Leaders of Associate Member Ministries

The Manual C.1.3

The Regional Council includes people in formal ministry leadership in those communities of faith of other denominations

- a) that have been granted associate membership in the United Church based on policies set by the Executive of the General Council; and
- b) that are located within the bounds of the Regional Council.

A community of faith of another denomination may be granted associate membership in the United Church based on policies set by the Executive of the General Council.

The Region has power / authority to add members to the Regional Council.

Responsibilities

Covenanting

The Manual C.2.1

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) recognizing a new community of faith by entering into a covenantal relationship with it;
- b) living in a covenantal relationship with each community of faith, with mutual responsibilities for the life and mission of the community of faith, and fulfilling its responsibilities under the covenant;
- c) approving changes to the covenantal relationship with the community of faith from time to time, including structural changes, amalgamations, realignments, and disbanding of communities of faith; and

The Regional Council's responsibilities in the life cycle of a community of faith that is a congregation or pastoral charge are set out in more detail in Congregational Life G.1.

- d) living in a covenantal relationship with ministry personnel.

Services for Communities of Faith

The Manual C.2.2

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) providing support, advice, and services to communities of faith in human resource matters;
- b) providing support, advice, and services to communities of faith in dealing with congregational property;
- c) managing regional archives;
- d) providing ongoing leadership training for ministry personnel and lay people; and
- e) providing funding partnerships with United Church educational and leadership training centres and camps as determined by the Regional Council.

Service, Support, and Oversight of Communities of Faith

The Manual C.2.3

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) reviewing the self-assessments of communities of faith in light of the covenant between the community of faith and the Regional Council;
- b) supporting emerging new ministries;
- c) supporting communities of faith in their life and work;
- d) promoting articulation of mission and ministry;
- e) ensuring compliance with the policies and polity of the United Church and reviewing any relevant records;

The “polity” of the United Church means the form of organization and government of the United Church as it is set out in these bylaws.

- f) hearing appeals from communities of faith and their governing bodies; and
- g) assuming control of a community of faith in extraordinary circumstances where the community of faith is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational policies.

Policy and Finance

The Manual C.2.5

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) administering policy set by the General Council, and setting appropriate regional policy;
- b) participating in determining priorities for mission and ministry work through the Mission & Service fund; and
- c) setting and managing its annual budget, including revenue from the denominational assessment, and setting any additional regional assessment for any additional services the Regional Council wishes to undertake.

Property

The Manual C.2.6

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) co-operating with the community of faith in buying, selling, leasing, and renovating community of faith property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational policies and guidelines, including
 - i) making decisions on requests from communities of faith to buy, sell, mortgage,

exchange, renovate, lease, or otherwise deal with community of faith property; The Regional Council makes decisions relating to the property of amalgamating congregations. See congregational Life G.1.4.5.

- ii) making decisions on the meaning of the terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” for that Regional Council;

The terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” are explained in Congregational Life G.2.1.2 and G.2.1.3.

- iii) communicating the meanings of those terms to each community of faith within the bounds served by the Regional Council; and

There are three exceptions to the Regional Council’s responsibility for making decisions about the property of communities of faith that are congregations. They are set out in Congregational Life G.2.2.2, G.2.2.3, and G.2.2.4.

- b) making decisions on the property of communities of faith remaining after the communities of faith cease to exist; and
 - c) buying, selling, leasing, and renovating regional property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines.

Preparation for Ministry

The Manual C.2.7

The Regional Council is responsible for

- a) celebrating the approval of applicants for candidacy;
- b) ordaining and commissioning members of the order of ministry;
- c) recognizing designated lay ministers;
- d) licensing licensed lay worship leaders; and
- e) celebrating admissions and readmissions.

Some responsibilities are delegated and some are the responsibility of the Regional Council.

Annual Meeting

The Regional Council will meet in person for the first year 2019 and the Council of Elders will make a recommendation to the Regional Council regarding future annual meetings.

“MOTION (/) That Regional Council meets ... ”

Annual Meeting Requirement

The Manual C.4.1

The Regional Council must meet at least annually.

The annual meeting may be a meeting of the entire Regional Council or the Council of Elders of the Regional Council, as determined by the Regional Council.

Meetings: General

The Manual C.4.2

The Regional Council must decide

- a) whether and, if so, how often it will meet regularly between annual meetings as the entire Regional Council or the executive;
- b) the time and place for the annual and other regular meetings, and the procedure for calling annual and other regular meetings; and
- c) how it will hold special meetings for urgent business between regular meetings.

Minimum numbers of members

Minimum Number of Members at Meetings

The Manual C.4.3

The Regional Council may meet only if a minimum number of members is present. For meetings of either the Regional Council or its executive,

- a) if there are fewer than 60 members, at least 1/3 of them must be present;
- b) if there are 60 or more members, at least 20 members must be present; and
- c) there must be at least one ministry personnel and one lay member who is not ministry personnel present.

Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

The Council of Elders may make a recommendation to the East Central Ontario Regional Council in 2020 regarding minimum numbers of members.

Relationships with Regional Councils 11, 12 & 13

POLICY NAME: Relationship with Regional Councils 11,12 & 13	Date Approved: May 22, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: This policy is the covenant between Regional Council 11, 12 & 13.	

Memorandum of Understanding

East Central Ontario Regional Councils Sharing Executive Minister and the Program Assistant to the Executive Minister

Participants

East Central Ontario Regional Council (11)

And

Eastern Ontario Outaouais East Central Ontario Regional Council (12)

And

Conseil Régional Nakonha:ka East Central Ontario Regional Council (13)

Terms

The three participating Regional Councils agree to enter into a cooperative arrangement to share the services of the Executive Minister and the Program Assistant to the Executive Minister as assigned.

1. This will be an opportunity to test strengths and weaknesses of a different way of working while living into new times, and adjustments may be made as needed with the approval of all the participants.
2. The Executive Minister will serve each Regional Council 1/3 time,
3. The Program Assistant to the Executive Minister will serve each Regional Council 1/3 time.
4. Travel costs and administrative expenses for the Executive Minister and the Administrators supporting the Executive Minister will be shared equitably between Regional Council 11, 12 & 13, through a travel expense pool where each Regional Council contributes an equal percent.
5. The Regional Council will share equally in the cost of the salary, benefits, and office related costs for the Executive Minister and Program Assistant to the Executive Minister.
6. The Executive Minister will be responsible for
 - i) Support and Leadership for Council of Eldersmeetings
 - ii) Relationship building including Regional Council visits and support
 - iii) Support to the Speaker

iv) As per Executive Minister Job Description

7. The Regional Council Program Assistant to the Executive Minister will be responsible for supporting the work of the Executive Minister
8. Any Regional Council concerns about the Executive Minister will be raised with the General Secretary, General Council, so that it may be resolved following the United Church's human resource policies.
9. The Regional Council Executive Minister may raise any concerns he/she has about the arrangement with East Central Ontario Regional Councils 11, 12 & 13, with the General Secretary, General Council, who will be responsible for working with the Regional Councils.
10. A Regional Council Staff Committee may be created, to begin after the first Regional Council meetings, to be made up of two members of each Regional Council Executive. The Staff committee would support transition, monitor the workload of the Executive Minister, and Program Assistant to the Executive Minister, address any concerns/disputes between the Regional Councils and if not resolved, contact the General Secretary for support.

Each of the participating Regional Councils will sign a separate copy of this Memorandum of Understanding and return it via PDF document to the General Secretary, General Council. The Memorandum of Understanding will be considered effective when the General Secretary, General Council, has received such copies from all participating Regional Councils and has also signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders

POLICY NAME: East Central Ontario Regional Council Executive	Date Approved: September 3, 2024
	Review date:
Purpose: This policy provides direction to the Council of Elders that continues the work of the East Central Ontario Regional Council when the council is not meeting.	

Purpose

The executive of the East Central Ontario Region shall be known as the Council Elders and shall provide the spiritual and governance leadership of the Region meeting the function and purpose as defined by the 2019 Manual C.3.1

Membership

The Council Elders shall be 12 elected members consisting of Speaker, Past Speaker, Designated Speaker, Lead Commissioner and 8 representative members of the Regional Council:

- A designated Speaker shall be elected by the Regional Council each year to serve one year as Designated Speaker and the following one year as Speaker and one year as Past Speaker.
- The Lead Commissioner shall be elected each Triennium by the Regional Council from among the named General Council Commissioners to serve as Elder during the term of Commissioner.
- 8 Elders selected through the Regional Council Nominations process.

The Nominations Team shall select elders to serve three (3) year term endeavoring to ensure a one third (1/3) elder rotation each year.

The Executive Minister of the East Central Ontario Regional Council is an Ex officio member of the Council Elders.

East Central Ontario Regional Council Staff and East Central Ontario Regional Council Treasurer shall be corresponding members of the Council Elders.

Role of Elders

Elders shall serve as equals sharing in all responsibilities of governance and spiritual leadership. The Speaker shall be first among equals and serve as the spokesperson and may assign representative duties.

Each elder may serve as a corresponding member to one East Central Ontario Regional Council Team as assigned and agreed to by the Council Elders.

As a Council Elder Member, the Elder shall:

- Share the responsibility of holding before the Regional Leadership Teams the overall vision and mandate as given by the East Central Ontario Regional Council and Council Elders.
- Provide a conduit of information to and from the Regional Team.
- Represent the Regional Team, its needs and recommendations, to the Council Elders.

Elders, when presenting work or representing a Leadership Team or Forum should voluntarily limit participation to the nature of a corresponding member to avoid the perception of bias.

Role of Corresponding Members

Corresponding members do not vote and do not participate in discussion unrelated to the area of representation. Corresponding members provide a specific and contextual knowledge and level of awareness that is important to the deliberations of the Team. Corresponding members share make sure the elected members have the information they need to discern a course of action. Corresponding members also have the responsibility to ensure that the body they represent is informed of the work and decisions of the Leadership Team.

Meetings

The Council Elders shall meet at least six times annually and typically monthly. The Council Elders may meet either ‘in person’ or ‘electronically’.

Quorum

The Quorum shall be 7 elected members.

Speaker

The Regional Council shall elect each year a member to serve a three-year term comprising one year as Designated Speaker, one year as Speaker, and one year as Past Speaker.

The Speaker shall preside at all meetings of the Regional Council and meetings of the Council Elders and preserve order and decorum. The Speaker may participate in all discussion and debate but must avoid any bias or perception of bias.

The Speaker shall communicate to the Regional Council on behalf of the Council Elder.

The Past Speaker shall preside and serve in the absence of the Speaker.

Lead Commissioner

Each Triennium, and for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the 2019 Manual D.1.1.d (and the parallel in following editions) the Regional Council shall elect a Lead Commissioner. The Lead Commissioner will be a member of the Council Elders.

The Lead Commissioner is elected as part of the triennial election of Commissioners to the General Council from the East Central Ontario Regional Council, at the meeting of the Regional Council held in the year before the year of the meeting of the General Council. The Lead Commissioner will serve during the term of General Council Commissioner

Vacancies

Members of the Council Elders unable to fulfill their term may resign. A Council Elder failing to fulfill the responsibilities of Elder may be removed from office by a 2/3 majority decision of the remaining Elders of the Council Elders.

The remaining members of the Council Elders may elect a member of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to serve as an Elder until the next meeting of the East Central Ontario Regional Council at which time the East Central Ontario Regional Council will elect an Elder to complete the vacant term. When filling a vacancy, the Council Elders will consult with the Nominations Leadership Team.

Forums

The Council Elders may be assisted in the work by creating Forums of knowledge and expertise to support and undertake directed work. Forums may consist of one or more individuals and be short term or permanent. It is the responsibility of the Council Elders to determine the Terms of Reference of Forums, to recruit and appoint Forums. Forums may be authorised to undertake necessary steps to complete the assigned activities but may not make decisions on behalf of the Council Elders. Forums shall report regularly to the Council Elders.

Duties

The Council Elders serve as the executive of the Regional Council and has all of the responsibilities of the regional council, unless the regional council has decided otherwise. The Duties of the Regional Council and the Regional Council executive body are identified in the current Manual.

Mandate

In addition to the Manual direction, the Council Elders

1. Provide oversight of the work of all Teams and Forums receiving recommendation from the Teams and making decisions.
2. Provide coordination among the Teams and Forums.
3. Coordinate and provide leadership of Regional Council meetings.
4. Arrange Celebration of Ministry Services when required.
5. Provide a safe and inclusive Regional Council environment.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS & FORUMS

Nominations Team

LEADERSHIP TEAM: Nominations Team	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide terms of reference for the Nominations Team.	

Purpose

The Nominations Team serves the East Central Ontario Regional Council by recommending appointments and/or elections to the Council of Elders, Teams, Forums and Task groups as well as individuals to positions as requested by the East Central Ontario Regional Council, its Council of Elders, or the Executive Minister.

Membership

The Nominations Team will consist of seven members:

- one member of the Council of Elders
- six members of the East Central Ontario Regional Council not serving on the Council of Elders

The composition of the Nominations Team will reflect the intercultural church.

The members and chair of the Nominations Committee will be appointed and/or elected by the Council of Elders.

Terms of Appointment

Members will serve staggered terms of three years, two being appointed and/or elected each year. There is a possibility of reappointment and/or re-election for a second term.

Meetings

The Nominations Team will meet as needed, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the committee may meet in person.

Duties

The Nominations Team is responsible for reviewing nominations and submitting to the East Central Ontario Regional Council, the Council of Elders, or the Executive Minister, as appropriate, recommendations for appointment and/or election.

In carrying out this responsibility, the Nominations Team will:

- reflect theologically on the basis for appointed and/or elected member participation in the church;

- discern who is equipped to serve; and
- Members of the Nominations Team will actively seek out and encourage nominations from across the diversity of the church and its geographic regions.

Using spiritual discernment practices, the Nominations Team will:

- consult with mandating body and review their request, the expressions of interest and any screening reports;
- consider the diversity of the group with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, age, geography, and vocations, placing special emphasis on those who have been historically excluded from positions of influence and authority; and
- strive to meet the church's commitments to becoming an intercultural church, the full inclusion of people with disabilities, developing new and young leadership, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, any future commitments regarding the appointed leadership of the United Church.

The Nominations Leadership Team will nominate persons to be on the ballot for election as members of the General Council from the ECORC.

Covenant Support Team

LEADERSHIP TEAM: Covenant Support Team	Date Approved: April 7, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide terms of reference for the Covenant Support Team.	

Commission Powers

The Covenant Support Team is granted the following Commission Powers:

1. *2024-04-19-20-006_MOTION (P. Reed/K Ostrander) that the East Central Ontario Regional Council approve that:*

1. the Covenant Support Team is granted Commission powers for specific matters, namely,

- a. The appointment of Liaison Officers*
- b. The appointment of Pastoral Charge Supervisors*
- c. The approval of a vacancy and the initializing of a search when the needs of the Community of Faith/Pastoral Charge have not changed.*
- d. Approval of a Call when it matches the terms set out by the approved Search. These powers do not extend to any circumstance that emerges from conflict, uncertainty or deviates from precedent. CARRIED*

2. *Licensed lay Worship Leaders:*

Exercise oversight of LLWLs by(1) providing directly, or with a LLWL Forum, training for LLWLs; (2) conducting annual evaluations; (3) approving annually the licensing and relicensing of LLWLs (Manual I.1.11.5)

Purpose

The Covenant Support Team is a Leadership Team that supports and nurtures the relationships between the East Central Ontario Regional Council and Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel (Active, Retained, and Retired), and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. The Covenant Support Team supports and nurtures the covenant relationships within the Regional Council.

Membership

The Covenant Support Leadership Team shall consist of 12 elected voting members as recommended by the Nominations Team following recruitment and discernment practices. The members serve a three-year term with an annual rotation of 1/3 of the members.

The Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister and the Regional Council Congregational Support Minister are Ex officio members of the Leadership Team.

The Office of Vocation Minister, The Regional Council Executive Minister, Council of Elder appointments, and Chairs of the Forums may serve as corresponding members.

Role of Members

Members of the Team make decisions and recommendations upholding the overall vision and mandate as given by the East Central Ontario Regional Council and reflected in polity and policy. Team Members are expected to prepare for meetings of the Team and participate fully in the deliberations of the Team. Members may expect to be given specific assignments for completion such as assignment to work with a Forum.

When representing a Forum or presenting a report the Team member should voluntarily limit participation to the nature of a corresponding member to avoid the perception of bias.

Role of Corresponding Members

Corresponding members provide a specific and contextual knowledge and level of awareness that is important to the deliberations of the Team. Corresponding members shall make sure the elected members have the information they need to discern a course of action. Corresponding members do not vote. They do, however, contribute to all discussion topics where they may have specific knowledge and/or expertise..

Corresponding members also have the responsibility to ensure that the body they represent is informed of the work and decisions of the Leadership Team.

Meetings

The Covenant Support Team shall convene every other month and/or as required. The meetings may be in person, telephone conference call or web based.

Quorum

Quorum shall be a majority of the people currently serving.

Chairperson

The Leadership Team shall select from among the elected membership the Team Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. The names of the individuals to be reported annually to the Council of Elders and the Nomination Team. The Chairperson shall not serve more than two consecutive years. The three-year term of an elected member may be extended by one year if serving as the Chairperson.

The Chairperson and the Secretary shall be responsible for reporting Team activities and actions to the Council of Elders monthly as required. They shall attend Council Elder meetings upon request of the Council of Elders.

Vacancies

A member of the Team unable to fulfill their term may resign. A member failing to fulfill the responsibilities may be removed from the position by a 2/3 majority decision of the remaining members.

Vacancies are filled by the Nominations Team during an annual election cycle.

To provide continuity of task, or for the purpose of securing a chairperson, the Team may request of the Nominations Team to extend the membership of a member by one year.

Forums

The Covenant Support Team may establish Forums of knowledge and expertise to undertake directed work in order to provide assistance to the Covenant Support Team in fulfilling its responsibilities. As a minimum, the Covenant Support Team shall have a Liaison Forum and a Licensed Lay Leadership (LLWL) Forum and is encouraged to establish a Retirees Forum. Forums may consist of one or more individuals and be short term or permanent. It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to determine the Terms of Reference of the Forums; to assist in the recruitment of members; and, in conjunction with the Pastoral Relations Minister, ensure adequate training is provided to the members of the forums. Forums are authorized to undertake necessary steps to complete the assigned activities and may be authorized to make certain decisions on behalf of the Leadership Team. Forums shall report to the Leadership Team regularly.

Forums will select their chair and/or secretary and provide those names and their contact information to the chair of the Covenant Support Team. Forums will report annually after the spring meeting of the Region a full listing of their current membership and their contact information and a request for approval of new members who have been properly trained and wish to be named as Liaisons. Forums will regularly advise the CST of any resignations from the Forum and requests for approval of new members.

Authority as a Commission

The Leadership Team may be appointed by the Regional Council as a Commission for designated matters of a routine nature that are supported by policy and precedence. Commission powers shall be noted in the Mandate printed in italics with the date granted.

Duties

The Covenant Support Team shall have responsibility for the completion of the mandated duties, making decisions as authorized and recommendations to the Council of Elders as required. The responsibilities shall include:

- Oversight of
 - Communities of Faith and Pastoral Charges;
 - Ministry Personnel, active, retained, and retired;
 - Pastoral Relationships;
 - License lay Worship Leaders
- Establishment of Forums and the oversight of same, including approval of members and Chairpersons;

The Covenant Support Team is accountable to the Council of Elders for all activities and decisions (with exception of those for which it is empowered to operate as a commission); and shall report annually to the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Mandate

The mandated duties of the Covenant Support Team include:

Communities of Faith and Pastoral Charges

- Supporting and encouraging healthy communities of faith;
- Encouraging congregation in the exercise of Stewardship and Visioning;
- Ensuring Community of Faith compliance with the policies and polity of the United Church and reviewing any relevant records;

- Exercising oversight of communities of faith by:
 - ensuring that Communities of Faith have a current and accurate Community of Faith Profile;
 - providing support to emerging new ministries;
 - providing support, advice, and services to communities of faith in human resource matters;
 - providing ongoing leadership training for ministry personnel and lay people [The Manual C.2.2];
 - providing Pastoral Charge Supervision as required by:
- ◆ assisting staff in recruiting and training Pastoral Charge Supervisors; and
- ◆ assigning Pastoral Charge Supervisors to Pastoral Charges without a minister or during sabbaticals;
- Proposing recommended actions to the Council of Elders
 - Of Communities of Faith in extraordinary circumstances where the Community of Faith is unable to or refuses to meet its responsibilities or acts outside of denominational policies;
 - Of the appointment of Interim Ministers;
 - Of the creation of proposed “congregational designated minister” position;
 - Of proposed amalgamations, realignments, and disbanding of communities of faith [The Manual C.2.1];
 - Of concerns regarding the well-being of a community of faith, pastoral charge, or pastoral relationship.

Ministry Personnel.

- Encouraging and supporting ministry personnel by
 - Providing measures to sustain health, joy, and excellence in ministry practice;
 - assisting with informal conflict resolution processes as required;
 - celebrating the life occasions and accomplishments of ministry personnel;
 - Providing directly or with a Retirees Forum the support of ministry personnel approaching retirement and maintaining a relationship with pensioners;
 - Proposing recommended action to the Council of Elders;
 - ✓ for the granting of a license to administer the sacraments to diaconal ministers, designated lay ministers, people who retired while serving as designated lay ministers, and sacrament elders;
 - ✓ Whenever there is concern for the well-being of the pastoral relationship or ministry personnel.

Pastoral Relations:

- Oversee changes in Pastoral Relationship;
 - When there is no change in the needs of the Community of Faith/Pastoral Charge; and
 - When the needs of the Community of Faith/Pastoral Charge have changed.
- **Declaration of a Vacancy**

The declaration of a vacancy when the needs of the Community of Faith/Pastoral Charge have changed is different than the one in which there is no change in the needs of the Community of Faith/Pastoral Charge. The two processes are described in the accompanying procedures document, “Declaration of Vacancy in the East Central Ontario Region.”

- **Initiation of a Search**
 - Once a declaration of a vacancy has been made, direct the Liaison Forum to guide the community of faith in the process of search;
 - Receive for approval recommendations from the Liaisons Forum regarding the Community of Faith Profiles.
 - Approve calls and appointments when they are consistent with the declared vacancy.
 - Recommend action to the Council of Elders when the result of the Search differs from the declared vacancy.
 - Represent the Region in a Covenanting Service with ministry personnel and Communities of Faith.
- **Inform the Council of Elders of the ending or continuing of appointments.**

The Liaison Forum

FORUM: Liaison Forum	Date Approved: April 7, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide terms of reference for the Liaison Forum	

Liaison Forum Narrative

The Liaison Forum is made up of individuals who have been trained by the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister and appointed by the Covenant Support Team (CST) to assist the CST in carrying out their responsibilities. The Liaison Forum may include lay and ordered individuals. Liaisons work with Communities of Faith (CoFs) from developing their profiles to covenanting with a new minister.

The Liaison Forum gives the members the chance to discuss their work in CoFs, share best practices and discern readiness of profiles for publication.

Note: Pastoral Relations Policy and guidelines for Liaisons is an expansion of Section I. Pastoral Relations in The Manual.

Purpose

To assist the CST in providing support to the CoFs within the bounds of the Region by touching base with the CoFs at the times defined in the Regional Council Liaisons Resource document and guidelines established by the CST.

Membership

The Liaison Forum shall consist of all those approved by the CST to serve as Liaison Officers of the East Central Ontario Regional Council and the Pastoral Relations Minister.

Meetings

The Liaison Forum shall meet monthly or at the call of the Pastoral Relations Minister.

Duties

- i. Review and make recommendations to the CST for posting CoF profiles, having ensured that the CoF Profile is complete and the position description is accurate.
- ii. Support the search process when a CoF seeks to call a member of the order of ministry or appoint a designated lay minister to fill a position that has been approved by the East Central Ontario Regional Council.
- iii. Review and recommend to the CST requests for calls and appointments having ensured that process is complete, the position description met and all requirements met or exceeded.
- iv. Attend all interviews as part of the Search team.
- v. Attend the congregational meeting to receive the recommendations of the Search Team.
- vi. Represent the Region at covenanting services.

The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Forum

FORUM: The Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Forum	Date Approved: June 2, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide the terms of reference for the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Forum	

Purpose

To support the Covenant Support Team and the East Central Ontario Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister in recruiting, training, interviewing and recommending the licensing and relicensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs) and in the oversight and discipline of LLWLs.

To sponsor a body known as the LLWL Network that will provide opportunity for the LLWLs to share and learn from each other as a community of practice.

Membership

The LLWL Forum shall include representative Ordered Ministry personnel serving in the East Central Ontario Region (who also serves as a Corresponding Member of the CST), the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister, three-to-five LLWLs serving in the region, and other interested parties as determined by the Covenant Support Team and the Pastoral Relations Minister.

The LLWLs serving on the Forum shall represent a range of geographical locations.

Meetings

The LLWL Forum shall meet at least 4 times a year at the call of the LLWL Forum Chairperson in consultation with the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister.

Duties

Accountable to and directed by the Covenant Support Team, the LLWL Forum shall:

1. elect its chair and secretary annually;
2. recommend to the CST three to five LLWLs to serve renewable three-year terms on the Forum;
3. oversee and regularly review the LLWL Licensing and Renewal policy of the ECORC;
4. provide recommendations to the CST on policies and procedures related to the work of LLWLs and receive and respond to input from the LLWL Network;
5. encourage on-going learning and seek to provide opportunities for further development of LLWL skills through training and education, in partnership with the CST;
6. help ensure clear communication and accountability, linking the LLWL Network and Forum to the CST;
7. circulate the names of LLWLs within the bounds of those lay people who have been licensed and are approved to lead worship throughout the East Central Ontario Regional;
8. encourage experienced LLWLs to mentor students and newly licensed LLWLs so that they might reflect together on the LLWL role and the individual's effectiveness;

9. call to the attention of the CST any programmatic or performance issues that may arise, including actions taken to resolve the issue;
10. provide recommendations for policy revisions and supporting rationale in writing to the CST; and
11. maintain a handbook of approved policies, practices, and procedures for use by LLWLs and CoFs within the bounds of ECORC/ providing revisions to the CST for review and recommendations to the ECOR Council of Elders.

The Retirees Forum

FORUM: The Retirees Forum	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide the terms of reference for the Retirees Forum.	

Purpose

To support the Covenant Support Team and the East Central Ontario Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister in the care and support of all those in receipt of United Church pensions in the East Central Ontario East Central Ontario Regional Council.

To provide ongoing contact to and organize gatherings for Retirees.

Membership

Six (6) to twelve (12) people from across the East Central Ontario Regional Council who are interested in the care and support of all those in receipt of United Church pensions. One member shall be named secretary.

Meetings

The Retirees Forum shall meet as required at the call of the Pastoral Relations Minister, and the Secretary of the Forum, and will meet regularly six times per year; hopefully by teleconferencing.

Duties

Accountable to and directed by the Covenant Support Team, the Retirees Forum shall:

- i. remain in contact with the retirees, touching base annually;
- ii. organize gatherings of retirees where possible, respecting and supporting the long-standing traditions in various places of meals and celebrations;
- iii. listen and raise such issues that are heard by the Pastoral Relations Minister, the Covenant Support Team, the Council of Elders and the wider church as appropriate;
- iv. welcome new retirees, provide accompaniment and mentoring in the midst of the transition; and
- v. organize an Annual Celebration of retirements.

The Secretary of the Retirees Forum

The secretary shall maintain a list of the contact information of all retirees in the East Central Ontario Regional Council. This list shall be shared with the Communications and Administration Assistant of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Formation, Nurture and Justice Team

LEADERSHIP TEAM: Formation, Nurture and Justice Team	Date Approved: October 1, 2024
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide the terms of reference for the Formation, Nurture and Justice Team.	

Purpose

The Formation, Nurture and Justice Team of the East Central Ontario Regional Council shall, with other Teams, help the East Central Ontario Regional Council meet its responsibilities as outlined in The Manual C.2.

The Formation, Nurture and Justice Team shall operate under the guiding principle that all work will be informed and aligned with the East Central Ontario Regional Council priorities, as well as the ongoing priorities for youth ministry, anti-racism, Interfaith, intercultural and affirming ministries.

Membership

The Formation, Nurture and Justice Team shall consist—of 12 elected voting members as recommended by the Nominations Team from expressions of interest and following discernment practices. The members serve a three-year term with an annual rotation of 1/3 of the members.

The ECORC Minister for Spiritual Nurture, Respectful Relationships and Justice with All Ages, as well as the ECORC Minister for Respectful Relationship and Indigenous Justice are Corresponding Members and Staff Resource to the Team.

Additional Corresponding Members shall include:

1. an Elder appointed by the Council Elders,
2. the Executive Minister,
3. representatives of Team Forums

and may include, if not otherwise represented among the elected members, corresponding members,

1. at least one youth representative, and
2. one United Church Women (UCW) representative, preferably named by the UCW.

Role of Members

Members of the Team make decisions and recommendations upholding the overall vision and mandate as given by the East Central Ontario Regional Council and reflected in polity and policy. Team members are expected to prepare for meetings of the Team and participate fully in the deliberations of the Team. Members may expect to be given specific assignments for completion such as assignment to work with a Forum.

When representing a Forum or presenting a report the Team member should voluntarily limit participation to the nature of a corresponding member to avoid the perception of bias.

Role of Corresponding Members

Corresponding members do not vote. Corresponding members provide a specific and contextual knowledge and level of awareness that is important to the deliberations of the Team.

Corresponding members shall make sure the elected members have the information they need to discern a course of action.

Corresponding members also have the responsibility to ensure that the body they represent is informed of the work of the Leadership Team.

Meetings

The Formation, Nurture and Justice Team shall convene at least four times a year. The meetings may be in person, telephone conference call or web-based, or a combination thereof, recognizing the value of in-person meetings from time to time.

Quorum

The Quorum shall be 7 elected members.

Chairperson

The Leadership Team shall select from among the elected membership the Team Chairperson and a Chairperson Designate, and a Secretary. The names of the individuals to be reported annually to the Council Elders and the Nomination Team. The Chairperson shall not serve more than two consecutive years. The three-year term of an elected member may be extended by one year if serving as the Chairperson.

The Chairperson shall be responsible for bringing team actions items to the Council Elders for approval monthly as required. They shall attend Council Elder meetings upon request of the Council Elders.

Secretary

A Secretary shall be named by the Team to take minutes at each meeting and distribute them to all members.

Council of Elder Rep

Appointed to the team by the Council of Elders. After receiving draft minutes from the secretary, will provide the minutes of the team meeting to the council. Will report back to the team with any discussions and relevant information.

Vacancies

A member of the Team unable to fulfill their term may resign. A member failing to fulfill the responsibilities may be removed from the position by a 2/3 majority decision of the remaining members.

Vacancies are filled by the Nominations Team during an annual election cycle.

To provide continuity of task, or for the purpose of securing a chairperson, the Team may request of the Nominations Team to extend the membership of a member by one year.

Forums

The Formation, Nurture and Justice Team ~~may and~~ shall recruit and appoint Forums, composing of knowledge and expertise to support and undertake directed work on behalf of the Formation, Nurture and Justice Team. Forums may be authorised to undertake necessary steps to complete the assigned activities but may not make decisions on behalf of the Team. Forums shall report regularly to the Team.

Authority as a Commission

. The Leadership Team may be appointed by the Regional Council as a Commission for designated matters of a routine nature that are supported by policy and precedence. Commission powers shall be noted in the Mandate printed in italics with the date granted

Responsibilities

This Team will oversee the work outlined below, either as a Team, or by establishing sub-committees as needed.

- i. promoting joining our collective hearts, voices and resources to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society, both in Canada and around the world.
- ii. promoting local, regional, national and global initiatives and partnerships (community, ecumenical, and interfaith) for ministry and justice work.
- iii. ministry with people of all ages.
- iv. honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry; and
- v. living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community.

Mandate

1. Compassionate and Just Society

- a. Provide guidance to the Regional Council and Communities of Faith of opportunity and means to witness to the gospel and vision of Jesus for a compassionate and just society.
- b. To provide opportunity and encouragement of education to community of faith and regional council leadership to anti-racism, interfaith, intercultural, equitable and affirming.

2. Ministry with Youth

- a. To assist communities of faith seeking to be inclusive and supportive of youth
- b. To establish and support youth leadership within the Regional Council
 - i. organizing leadership, with and including youth leadership, of any ~~other~~ youth gatherings; and
 - ii. Share youth opportunities offered at the national level
 - iii. Offering training and support to first third ministry leaders

3. Pursuing Right Relations

- a. committing to on-going conversation and action toward living into right relations as treaty people; and

- b. committing to explore new and on-going ways to be in relationship with local First Nations communities.
 - c. Share events and opportunities offered at the National level
- 4. **Clusters and Networks**
 - a. Clusters and networks are independent and self-sustaining. This team will encourage participation and welcome updates.
- 5. **Denominational Life**
 - a. encouraging life-long learning.

Glossary of Terms

- 1. **Intercultural**
 - a. Within the United Church, a variety of cultural expressions of faith are affirmed and welcomed. Part of the vision of the intercultural church is to create a space where we can sustain our own cultural identities while also affirming those of one another.
- 2. **Affirming**
 - a. Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble works for the full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the United Church of Canada and in society. The Affirming Ministries Program is a network of United Church of Canada congregations and ministries that declare themselves to be fully inclusive of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. And it asks each Ministry to take action.
- 3. **Equity**
 - a. Giving fair treatment to all people based on their individual or group needs, even when that treatment is not the same as what others receive. Equity seeks to consider a person's or group's specific circumstances, past and present, and act accordingly to ensure success. Equity takes into account the needs of individuals and groups that have experienced and continue to experience systemic obstacles or challenges, in order to ensure the achievement of equal status in society for all.

Equity Forum

LEADERSHIP TEAM: Equity Forum	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide the terms of reference for the Equity Team.	

Purpose

We are called to prayerfully discern and respect the wide range of diversities within our Region including, but not limited to, sexual orientation, gender identity, life experience, differing abilities, ethnicity, race, generational differences, age, geographic location and economic circumstances.

The Equity Team exists to support the work of providing an accessible, equitable environment at all East Central Ontario Regional Council events and meetings.

Membership

The Equity Team will consist of up to twelve (12) members who reflect the intercultural church:

- one (1) member of the Council of Elders;
- three (3) members of the East Central Ontario Regional Council appointed annually; and
- members at large recruited by the Equity Team.

The Equity Team will include an Affirming Forum (see the Interim Action Plan).

Terms of Appointment

All members will serve terms of three years. There is a possibility of reappointment for a second term.

Meetings

The Equity Team will meet three to four times a year, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the Equity Team may meet in person.

Duties

- 1) Advise the Council of Elders and the Executive Minister on all matters concerning equity, privilege and accessibility;
- 2) be a resource to the East Central Ontario Regional Council to follow our priorities below and call the East Central Ontario Regional Council into account if we fail to live up to our commitment;
- 3) celebrate the participation of diverse individuals and communities in our life and work;
- 4) seek justice for all who are marginalized. Identify and dismantle barriers with regard to full participation of marginalized individuals and groups in Christ's ministry;
- 5) name and address ableist, heterosexist and white supremacist comments, attitudes and actions, recognizing how these undergird and perpetuate ableism, racism, homophobia and transphobia;
- 6) improve and provide resources for communication among Regional groups, and Communities of Faith, including digital communication;
- 7) live into being an Affirming Ministry that seeks to create safe and welcoming space for all;
- 8) provide opportunities for educational and training initiatives;

- 9) continue our journey of healing, reconciliation and embracing relationships with First Nations communities;
- 10) practice radical hospitality as church and in conversation with other faith communities;
- 11) be a resource for any regional meetings/events;
- 12) support the volunteer Equity Monitors; and
- 13) receive concerns about and suggestions to revise the Equity Monitor checklist.

Terms:

Equality

Treating all people the same, regardless of individual differences. Equal treatment is not necessarily fair treatment, because it overlooks the fact that differences in opportunities and resources exist to begin with. Equality of treatment does not necessarily produce equality of result, and does not necessarily allow all people to succeed equally.

For example, equality of treatment would mean giving everyone the exact same support, such as giving everyone the same amount of time to complete an exam regardless of learning disabilities or specialized learning needs.

Equity

Giving fair treatment to all people based on their individual or group needs, even when that treatment is not the same as what others receive. Equity seeks to consider a person's or group's specific circumstances, past and present, and act accordingly to ensure success. Equity takes into account the needs of individuals and groups that have experienced and continue to experience systemic obstacles or challenges, in order to ensure the achievement of equal status in society for all.

For example, equity of treatment would mean providing all people and groups with the resources that they individually need to succeed, such as taking into account an individual's abilities at exam time, so that a student with a learning disability or visual impairment would receive more time if needed.

Privilege

Privilege is an advantage that only one person or group of people has, usually because of their position or because they are rich. Privilege is also the special right that some people in authority have that allows them to do or say things that other people are not allowed to. We first need to acknowledge that privilege does exist (even in the church).

Accessibility

Accessibility is about creating communities that enable everyone to participate fully without barriers. First thoughts are for those with differing abilities but this also includes sexual orientation, gender identity, life experience, ethnicity, race, generational differences, age, geographic location and economic circumstances.

Equity Monitors will

Work with the planning team of the event/meeting and work through the Equity checklist (see attachment). The Equity checklist is to be used as a guide to strive towards, recognizing that we

might not be able to meet all of the points. It is helpful to name what is available on the meeting invite. The Equity Monitor(s) are introduced at the beginning of the event/meeting with a brief description of their role. Equity monitors are to be open and approachable to work through a solution for any additional concerns that may arise during a meeting/event. We have found comfort increase in recent years for people to bring forward their concerns.

Areas of equity concerns that have been identified are:

- meetings held in accessible locations;
- visual loss accommodations (materials sent out 48 hours in advance);
- scent-free/nut-free environments;
- assistive listening or amplification of speakers;
- speakers self-identifying;
- concern for dietary needs;
- sensitivities for chemicals/scents/food;
- materials printed for those without access to computers/printers;
- when printed items provided also include some large print;
- gender neutral washrooms (can be identified temporarily for that meeting);
- accessible washrooms;
- respect for pronoun use and identity (use nametags with pronouns, introductions to include pronouns);
- inclusive language (also sensitivity to language complexity);
- American Sign Language interpretation (note: meetings/events need to provide preparation material for interpreters, such as outlines, hymn lyrics and other outlines as required); and
- accommodations for persons with various mental health concerns (quiet spaces available).

Projected Tasks/Action Plan: September 2020 – May 2021(fall ECORC General Meeting 2020 to Spring Meeting 2021)

- engage in opportunities to learn together as an Equity Team to learn from and with each other, to deepen relationships and build capacity and competency in the diversity of equity (supporting new members and developing knowledge and experience together)
- implement and promote use of resources developed by Equity Team in 2019/20 for awareness, advocacy, education and resource in Regional Council(work with communications staff Karen Wilson to add to resources on the regional council website)
- begin networking directly with the various teams and forums of ECORC to establish needs, priorities and best practices as resource and support (meeting with all chairs)

- develop and promote resources to be shared in various formats to support clarity and invite engagement within ECORC about topics of equity (ECORC Equity YouTube channel)
- develop relationship and resourcing connections with the anti-racism and equity officer of the general Council (who reports to General Secretary) as this new position evolves (announced August 18, 2020, position to be filled in fall of 2020, for a two -year term)facilitating learning and working between governance levels.

Template Equity Checklist Planning and Hosting Events

Name of Community of Faith: _____

This equity checklist is designed to be multi-functional to help us be pro-active hosts who offer radical hospitality to welcome all at our table.

Pre-Planning For An Event

- ☐ All groups and event organizers are asked to decide what is needed on promotional material, social media and invitations to help facilitate equity.
- ☐ Try to host only in accessible venues. If only partially accessible ensure that it is stated
- ☐ If accessibility support is needed (operator for lift, key for elevator) is pre-arranged for availability with a named person and contact (avoid vague assurances someone should be there).
- ☐ Ensure all invitations have a contact cell number for someone at event so a person has a contact if needed when arriving to event (directions, parking issues, entrance locked)
- ☐ Provide contact name for those who may need transportation to an event, arranging for volunteer drivers as part of pre-event planning
- ☐ If persons with disabilities are known to be attending, contact the individuals before the event to ask them about their needs and how to best plan for their inclusion (if Communion, how would they like to receive)
- ☐ If anyone has a service animal, pre-arrange with person prior to event requesting service animal expectations be shared when the handler is doing introductions (if introductions not feasible for size of group, invite the service handler to provide information during sharing of housekeeping)
- ☐ Include all appropriate symbols that identify features of the location on invitations, announcements and promotions e.g. (affirming, accessible, gender neutral washroom, hearing assists available, scent free, nut free)

- Anticipate diversity of participants and plan with full participation as a goal (consider complexity of language, attention spans, movement, interactive, learning styles, able to speak in groups, stand, move, hear or see)
- Be adaptive and creative
- Include acknowledgement of lands as part of opening of event.
- Name an equity monitor for the event, introduce at beginning and explain role so all participants have a safe “go to” person and review norms or holy manners, confidentiality expectations for gathering

Presentation

- Projection - font size minimum 40 clear easy to read font (Aerial or similar), strong visual contrast, reduce clutter/ busyness, limit content per slide, use colour contrasts for speaker and large group (white presenter/yellow all, or similar), inclusive wording, attention to complexity of language, add pictures or symbols to clarify such as praying hands to show a time of prayer, use multi-racial images for inclusivity
- distribute 48 hours in advance, documents, handouts, agendas and PowerPoints to allow for additional processing time and accessibility, participants understand there could be some last minute adjustments
- Have large print copies and leader copy of detailed presentation available
- Use existent microphone system consistently (be mindful of placement for lip readers)
- If a person uses a wheelchair, sit when possible to converse so all are face to face,
- Say name when speaking, some may not see, some may forget names or come in late
- Provide clear, large font name tags and ensure people wear name tags and/or use table name plates (indicate pronouns on nametags)
- use alt tag labels for graphics and images, use closed captioning and described video features
- get permission for use of photos, video, quotes or other specific needs, to be used on social media, websites and future related events
- use a feedback or evaluation form that combines paper and on-line option, include request about equity (consider using survey monkey so non-anecdotal can be summarized by survey monkey)

Building Facility

- Offer accessible parking places and clear signage for directions to key rooms (if especially complex, consider making a brief video to give participants a preview tour of building and what to expect) that is posted on social media or website
- Check if site has any directions regarding best place to relieve service animal and directions, if there is an outside waste receptacle.
- Include in invitations special instructions for accessible access if needed, ensure door is unlocked and that signage is available from that entry point
- Accessible, gender neutral and family friendly washrooms with clear routes to washrooms, and if needed designating a temporarily labelled gender neutral washroom for event if not pre-existing
- Arrange seating to optimize all hearing, seeing screen, movement in the space, interaction and participation for all (ensure tables and arrangements allow space for those who use wheelchairs or other assists)
- Ensure passageways in room, to washrooms, quiet space, food and exits are accessible and kept clear
- Clarify procedures and comfort to avoid centering out, such as requesting if people will want to be served Communion at their seats or come up and individual preference, in planning, talk to individuals anticipate what will be most inclusive and accommodating for all to take part
- If family friendly, ensure spaces and activities are appropriate for all
- Ensure greeters have sense of inclusive design of building to best recommend seating but respect requests of individuals and do not move mobility assists to back or side of a venue, stranding the person
- Declare a quiet room space, with directions and sign on room
- Donated and catered food needs labels (gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian, vegan,) ingredient list, recipe as appropriate, placed by dishes for self-serve, on wall or clearly communicated to servers, determining if/when separate serving tables might be needed for special diet items
- Have water available, include which beverages are decaffeinated, sugar -free or other dietary identifiers
- Remind those bringing their own food to observe dietary needs

Affirming Forum

FORUM: Affirming Forum	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: To prayerfully discern and respect the wide range of diversities within the East Central Ontario Regional Council.	

Purpose

We are called to prayerfully discern and respect the wide range of diversities within our Regional Council including, but not limited to, sexual orientation, gender identity, life experience, differing abilities, ethnicity, race, generational differences, age, geographic location and economic circumstances.

The Affirming Forum helps the East Central Ontario Regional Council and the Equity Team create a space and an awareness of what full inclusion would look like. The Affirming Forum will also support the work of the East Central Ontario Regional Council becoming an Affirming East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Membership

The Affirming Forum will have members who are interested in affirming who will be appointed by the Equity Leadership Team.

Meetings

The Affirming Forum will meet three to four times a year, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the Affirming Forum may meet in person.

Duties

The Affirming Forum will be an ongoing body that creates awareness of what full inclusion would look like and makes the Equity Team aware of both where the East Central Ontario Regional Council is lacking and how we might become more fully what we desire. The Equity Team might assign tasks to the Affirming Forum to develop strategies and engage in teaching moments.

The Affirming Forum will advise the Equity Team, Council of Elders and the Executive Minister on all matters concerning becoming an Affirming Region. The Affirming Forum will implement the items below on the Interim Action Plan if the vote to become an Interim Affirming East Central Ontario Regional Council is passed with the results of 75% and higher at the Inaugural Meeting of the East Central Ontario Regional Council set for May 31, 2019 - June 2, 2019.

Interim Action Plan June 2019 – 2020

- Consult with East Central Ontario Regional Council Staff and provide suitable professional development related to working with and for an Affirming Ministry (The Affirming Forum).
- Engage East Central Ontario Regional Council Teams and Forums to discuss and determine their particular Affirming responsibilities and opportunities to ensure that an Affirming culture is in action for all the responsibilities as outlined in the document

“Responsibilities of East Central Ontario Regional Councils” received from David Allen November 8, 2018 (The Affirming Forum).

- Assess the interest and need and provide appropriate opportunities and financial support for education on diversity and inclusion across the region (The Affirming Forum).
- Revise the Interim Action Plan as necessary (The Affirming Forum to prepare and present to the Council of Elders for approval).
- Prior to the second annual meeting of the East Central Ontario Regional Council, prepare a progress report and ongoing action plan to submit to Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble for approval. (The Affirming Forum to prepare and present to the Council of Elders for approval. The Council of Elders will then submit to Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble).

The Facilitation Forum

FORUM: Facilitation Forum	Date Approved: September 3, 2024
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide terms of reference for the Facilitation Forum	

Purpose

The Facilitation Forum supports the Council Elders, East Central Ontario Regional Council scheduling and preparing for gatherings of the Regional Council Spring and Fall meetings, Celebration of Ministry Services and may include educational and special presentations.

Membership

The Facilitation Forum is made up of individuals appointed by the Council Elders with consideration of their experience, knowledge and interest in the governing procedures and needs of the Regional Council for the purpose of preparing gatherings of the Regional Council. It is recommended that the Facilitation Forum include Elders, individuals familiar with the work of the Leadership Teams, and those who have agenda and planning experience. It would be recommended that the Speaker of the Assembly of Elders serve on the Facilitation Forum.

The Facilitation Forum may include and shall work closely with representatives of host communities responsible for local arrangements.

Meetings

Members of the Team may be assigned specific responsibilities such as AV/IT, worship, agenda planning, local arrangements. The Facilitation Forum shall typically meet monthly but more frequently in the lead up to in person meetings of the Regional Council for the purpose of coordination and integration of planning.

Duties

The Council Elders shall set and approve the Budget, specific purpose and objectives of the Regional council meetings and the Facilitation Forum shall report plans and developments to the Council Elders. The Facilitation Forum shall not introduce new business without the specific direction of the Assembly of Elders.

The Facilitation Forum shall:

- i. Propose dates for Spring and Fall meetings of the Regional Council including any pre or post meeting events, to schedule dates for Celebration of Ministry services as required.
- ii. Seek and recommend host sites for meetings, provide required instruction and direction to local arrangement teams.
- iii. To plan and support the meetings of the Regional Council balancing discernment, business, worship, fellowship, and education.
- iv. To secure appropriate leadership and resources for all meetings of the Regional Council

Staff Support

The Facilitation Forum is supported by the Executive Minister and, as required may utilize all staff for the design and leadership of meeting components. Additional staff may be assigned to support ongoing work.

Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team

Leadership Team: Mission Through Property & Finance Team	Date Approved: October 1, 2024
	Review date:
Purpose: To assist the East Central Ontario Regional Council meet its responsibilities as outlined in <i>The Manual</i> C.2.	

Commission Powers:

2024-04-19-20-006_MOTION (P. Reed/K Ostrander) that the East Central Ontario Regional Council approve that:

the Mission through Property and Finance Team is granted Commission powers to conclude the sale of Property declared surplus by the executive body of the regional council when the sale meets any imposed criteria and falls within 20% of the proposed sale price. CARRIED

Purpose

The Ministry through Property & Finance Team of the East Central Ontario Regional Council shall assist the East Central Ontario Regional Council meet its responsibilities as outlined in *The Manual* C.2.

The Ministry through Property & Finance Team shall exercise specific responsibilities to serve, support and provide oversight of the financial responsibilities of the East Central Ontario Regional Council and of the financial viability and property matters of the Communities of Faith.

Membership

The Ministry through Property and Finance Leadership Team shall consist of 11 elected voting members as recommended by the Nominations Team for approved by the ECORC following recruitment and discernment practices. The members serve a three-year term with an annual rotation of 1/3 of the members. The East Central Ontario Regional Council Executive Minister; and the East Central Ontario Regional Council Treasurer shall be Ex officio members of the Leadership Team. The Treasurer shall also be a voting member of the team.

An Elder appointed by the Council Elders and Chairs of Team Forums may serve as corresponding members.

Role of Members

Members of the Team make decisions and recommendations upholding the overall vision and mandate as given by the East Central Ontario Regional Council and reflected in polity and policy. Team Members are expected to prepare for meetings of the Team and participate fully in the deliberations of the Team. Members may expect to be given specific assignments for completion such as assignment to work with a Forum.

When representing a Forum or presenting a report the Team member should voluntarily limit participation to the nature of a corresponding member to avoid the perception of bias

Role of Corresponding Members

Corresponding members do not vote and do not participate in discussion unrelated to the area of representation. Corresponding members provide a specific and contextual knowledge and level of awareness that is important to the deliberations of the Team. Corresponding members share make sure the elected members have the information they need to discern a course of action.

Corresponding members also have the responsibility to ensure that the body they represent is informed of the work and decisions of the Leadership Team.

Meetings

The Ministry through Property & Finance Team will meet as needed, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the committee may meet in person.

Quorum

Quorum shall be 50% plus one of the eligible members.

Chairperson

The Leadership Team shall select from among the elected membership the Team Chairperson and a Chairperson Designate, and a Secretary. The names of the individuals to be reported annually to the Council of Elders. The Chairperson shall not serve more than two consecutive years. The three-year term of an elected member may be extended by one year if serving as the Chairperson. The Chairperson and the Secretary shall be responsible for reporting Team activities and actions to the Council of Elders monthly as required. They shall attend Council of Elder meetings upon request of the Council of Elders.

Vacancies

A member of the Team unable to fulfill their term may resign. A member failing to fulfill the responsibilities may be removed from the position by a 2/3 majority decision of the remaining members.

Vacancies are filled by the Nominations Team during an annual election cycle.

To provide continuity of task, or for the purpose of securing a chairperson, the Team may request of the Council of Elders or Nominations Team to extend the membership of a member by one year.

Forums

The Covenant Support Team may be assisted in the work by creating Forums of knowledge and expertise to support and undertake directed work. Forums may consist of one or more individuals and be short term or permanent. It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to determine the Terms of Reference of the Forums, to recruit and appoint Forums. Forums may be authorised to undertake necessary steps to complete the assigned activities but may not make decisions on behalf of the Leadership Team. Forums shall report to the Leadership Team regularly.

Authority as a Commission

The Leadership Team is appointed by the Regional Council as a Commission for designated matters of a routine nature that are supported by policy and precedence. Commission powers shall be noted in the Mandate printed in italics with the date granted.

Duties

The Ministry through Property and Finance Team shall have responsibility for the completion of the mandated duties, making *decisions as authorized*¹ and making recommendations to the Council Elders as required. The responsibilities shall include:

5. The promotion of stewardship to communities of faith and the Regional Council
6. The oversight of finance including annual budget and investments
7. Supporting community of faith with property maintenance and usage and maintaining properties assumed by the Regional Council

The Team shall have responsibility for the establishment of Forums and the oversight of same. The Team shall appoint Chairpersons of the Forums.

The Team is accountable to the Council Elders for all activities and decisions (with exception of those for which it is empowered to operate as a commission); and shall report annually to the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Mandate

1. Stewardship

- i. to encourage promote and support individual generosity and discipleship of resources.
- ii. to encourage, promote and support Communities of Faith engagement in Stewardship Campaigns.
- iii. to consult and work with the East Central Ontario Regional Council Stewardship & Gifts Officer.
- iv. to encourage, promote and support Communities of Faith engagement with the Mission and Service; and
- v. to participate as requested in determining priorities for mission and ministry work through the Mission & Service.

2. Finance

- i. provide oversight of all revenues, expenses and funds of the East Central Ontario Regional Council including revenue from denominational assessments.
- ii. prepare and manage the core operating budget of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.
- iii. propose and manage an annual budget supporting the mission objectives and strategies as determined by the East Central Ontario Regional Council and Council Elders.
- iv. set any additional regional assessment for any additional services the East Central Ontario Regional Council wishes to undertake; and
- v. receive, review and make recommendations to the Council Elders on requests from Communities of Faith for financial assistance and grants.

3. Property

- a. provide support and guidance to Communities of Faith on all matters pertaining to property.
- b. make recommendations to the East Central Ontario Regional Council on the meaning of the terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” and communicate the

- meanings of those terms to each community of faith within the bounds served by the East Central Ontario Regional Council.
- c. receive and provide guidance to Communities of Faith requesting to buy, sell, mortgage, exchange, renovate, lease, develop or otherwise deal with community of faith property.
 - d. review and make recommendations to the Council Elders regarding the buying, leasing or major renovations of community of faith property or other major assets including the proposal of financing the transactions.
 - e. review and make recommendations to the Council Elders the disposition of surplus property resulting from closure, mergers, disbanding or amalgamations, including the distribution of proceeds within denominational policies and guidelines and in accordance with East Central Ontario Regional Council established policies.
 - f. make recommendations on the property of Communities of Faith remaining after the Communities of Faith cease to exist.
 - g. review and, in consultation with the Covenant Support Team, make recommendation to the Council Elders on the plans of Community of Faith property transactions and the utilization of the proceeds of such transactions due to altering or changing ministry focus; and
 - h. upon direction of East Central Ontario Regional Council, oversee the buying, selling, leasing, development and renovating of regional property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines.
 - i. *The Ministry through Property and Finance is authorized to operate as a Commission to complete a transaction in keeping with the direction and terms set by the Council of Elders as it relates to all activities resulting from the approved, by ECORC, sale of property, renewal of Community of Faith leasing arrangements and property management of properties held by the region in the regional land Trust.*¹

¹*Items printed in italics are decisions the Ministry through Property and Finance Team may take on behalf of the Council Elders and Regional Council*

Doing Mission Together – Funding Application

Funding Projects and Activities furthering the Mission objectives of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Title: _____

Summary: _____

Applicant: _____

☐ ☐ Network ☐ ☐ Cluster ☐ ☐ ☐ Congregation ☐ ☐ ☐ Other

Contact : _____

Date _____ Amount Requested _____

Provide with this request Supporting Documentation.

Please be guided by the following to ensure full consideration:

- Description of the program / activity / event
 - What is happening?
 - Who is involved; who is invited?
 - When is it occurring?
 - How will it be done?
- What will be the outcome?
 - Who will benefit?
 - What is the measurable change?
- What is the Total Budget and how will it be funded?
 - Provide an Income Expense Statement
 - What commitment is being made by participants?
 - How much is being requested?
- Any additional supporting material to be reviewed.

The East Central Ontario Regional Council will award “Doing Mission Together Grants” totaling \$50,000 to support Networks, Clusters and Communities of Faith further the mission objectives of the East Central Ontario Regional Council. In 2019 Grant Applications will be reviewed and grants awarded throughout January – February. Up to \$25,000 will be available and awarded during this period of time. An additional \$25,000 will be made available to support fall programming, the deadline for consideration of fall Funding is June 21, 2019.

“Doing Mission Together Grant applications to be received and awarded twice a year. \$25,000 to be awarded each go-around.

Application Deadlines

- June 21, 2019 for Fall 2019
- Nov 15, 2019 for January to June 2020
- April 15, 2020 for July to December 2020
- In subsequent years the application will be April for fall programing and November for winter and summer programming.
- Grant applications may be submitted earlier

- Grants are awarded for projects being initiated in the six month time frame – funding may be distributed over a 12-month period.

Criteria for selection will include:

- Designated priority of the Regional Council
 - Priorities to be reaffirmed by Annual Meeting each year
- Quantitative and qualitative valuation
 - number reached or helped
 - vulnerable sectors
 - number of participating Communities of Faith
- Other Funding sources
 - Positive consideration for partnerships and or participant commitments
- Maximum Grant request not to exceed \$5,000
- Granting Body may consider less than full amount of request
 - Application to indicate whether partial funding to be considered
 - If requests exceed \$25,000 granting body might consider applications for less than full funding. This might apply particularly to applications that less fully match above criteria. i.e.: is it all or nothing? If full funding is not available would partial funding be acceptable?
- Granting Body may consider granting in excess of \$5,000
 - In consultation with an applicant additional funds may be awarded for a particularly critical or worthy project.
 - If total requests are less than \$25,000 the balance may be distributed among approved applications

Policies

Policy Regarding Funding Request at Regional Council Meetings

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Funding Requests at the Regional Meeting of the East Central Ontario Regional Council	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	<i>Review date:</i>
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify limits of the budget process. The Manual C.2.5.	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy and best practices regarding requests for funding at a Regional Council meeting which have not been reviewed by the Ministry through Property Team.

Policy

It is the policy of East Central Ontario Regional Council to affirm and uphold the use and function of the Business Committee for matters coming to the floor of the meeting of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

It is the policy of East Central Ontario Regional Council that any motion committing the East Central Ontario Regional Council to the expenditure of non-budgeted sums of money be required to have a budget attached, in time for a presentation to be given at a Regional Council meeting;

It is the policy of East Central Ontario Regional Council that any motion committing the East Central Ontario Regional Council to non-budgeted expenditures which are presented during the Annual Meeting be automatically referred to the Mission through Property and Finance Team, who will make recommendation to the Council of Elders;

It is the policy of East Central Ontario Regional Council that in the interests of fairness and justice, requests for funding of projects or groups not covered in the existing Financial budgets be subject to conditions and criteria similar to those that are currently expected of requests for Mission Support, and other funds available within the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Marriage Practice and Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) Policy

POLICY NAME: Marriage Practice and Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) Policy	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this practice outlines the relationship and responsibilities of a ministry personnel and the Community of Faith. <i>The Manual 1.2.5.3</i>	

As Christian marriage is a pastoral function, Christian marriages, performed by United Church Ministers, should be related to a Christian Community of Faith.

This pastoral function comes under the oversight and discipline of the East Central Ontario Regional Council. In terms of marriage itself, it would come under the oversight of a Session or its equivalent and members of the Order of Ministry would work through and with a Session or its equivalent as outlined in United Church Polity. Marriages shall be recorded in the records of a Community of Faith.

Ministers who are retired or not in a covenant relationship must be formally aligned with a Community of Faith if they are to be licensed to perform marriages. (see below re: Voluntary Associate Ministers*).

Each year the East Central Ontario Regional Council will prepare a list of those eligible to perform marriages. The Executive Minister of the East Central Ontario Regional Council will inform the Provincial authorities of additions and removals as required by Provincial statute.

These principles will also be followed in the case of Ministers requesting a temporary license to perform marriages within the bounds of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Policy for Voluntary Associate Ministers

- A. Communities of Faith acting through the Session, Official Board or Unified Board could approve an application for Voluntary Associate status for a retired or other minister not in a covenanted relationship and would apply to the East Central Ontario Regional Council to have this person appointed to this office.
- B. A retired minister or a minister not in a covenanted relationship could present a request for Voluntary Associate status to a Session, Official Board or Unified Board. There is a requirement of the ministry personnel to have a current Police Records Check and all United Church of Canada mandatory trainings completed. The Office of Vocation can confirm such information and provide a letter of Good Standing.
- C. The East Central Ontario Regional Council will receive each completed application if satisfied that the following conditions were being fulfilled, namely:
 1. That all Christian marriages performed by United Church Minister be related to a Community of Faith;

2. That this pastoral function come under the oversight and discipline of the East Central Ontario Regional Council;
 3. That all marriages be registered in record books that remain the property of an ongoing Community of Faith.
- D. Having met the requirements in C above, the Council of Elders will instruct the Executive Minister of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to include this person so appointed on the list of those eligible for certification to perform marriages.
- E. The East Central Ontario Regional Council will review these appointments annually. This is done to ensure that those who have moved from the Community of Faith or who have ceased to be willing or able to fulfill the pastoral responsibility be removed from the list. The VAM forms will normally be processed in the spring and voted upon at the same meeting as the Roll of the East Central Ontario Regional Council.

Voluntary Associate Minister Appointment Form for use within East Central Ontario Regional Council	
Community of Faith	
enters a voluntary relationship with the following Ministry Personnel as described in this form and mutually agree to the following: - Pastoral functions performed come under the oversight and discipline of Regional Council. - Ministry Personnel named in the agreement may receive honoraria for weddings or funerals and for presiding and/or preaching in regular worship; however, there is no expectation of honoraria, stipend, or travel allowance from the Community of Faith to which they are accountable. - All United Church of Canada Ministry Personnel who are performing marriages will be visibly related to a Community of Faith or Regional Council Recognized Ministry. - All marriages will be registered in record books that remain the property of an ongoing Community of Faith or Regional Council Recognized Ministry. - It is the joint responsibility of the Voluntary Associate Minister and the Community of Faith to renew the annual appointment and to return the forms to the office of the Executive Minister by July 1st. VAM will be approved as part of the Annual Roll of the Regional Council.	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
☐ Retired ☐ Retained on the Roll	
Areas of Responsibility: (if applicable, annex a mutually agreed statement that outlines more than what is provided hereinabove)	Please check all that apply: ☐ Pastoral care ☐ Weddings ☐ Coverage for incumbent ☐ Christian education ☐ Funerals ☐ Other (specify):
Marriage Registration Number # or Authorization # (if applicable): _____ (marriage license can be obtained through the Administrative Support for the Executive Minister (514-819-2926))	
Approval by the Community of Faith (to be completed by Community of Faith passing the motion) The Official Board/Unified Board/Council of _____ Community of Faith Has received assurance that the marriages performed a) will be a pastoral function under the oversight and discipline of the Regional Council, and b) will be properly registered in records maintained by a pastoral charge of UCC and will comply with the provincial requirements. and approves the request of _____ (name of member of Order of Ministry) To be recognized as a Voluntary Associate Minister of the Community of Faith.	
Date: _____ Signed: _____ Office Held: _____	
Date Racial Justice Training _____ Date Sexual Abuse Prevention & Response Policy Training _____ Date of Level 2 Police Check _____	
For Regional council office use only Approval by Regional Council: The East Central Ontario Regional Council Executive has approved the VAM application by motion (date of meeting _____). The appointment begins July 1, 202_ and finishes June 30, 202_.	
Date: _____	For Regional council office use only Executive Minister: _____
<i>The user retention and disclosure of personal information from this form is done in compliance with privacy legislation including, but not limited to, the Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (2000)</i>	

Please return application to the office of the Executive Minister (C/o Rev. Susan Garrod-Schuster, Pastoral Relations Minister, 347 Richmond Rd, Ottawa, ON K2A 0E7, sgarrod-schuster@united-church.ca, 365-400-1210).

Community of Faith Supervisors Practice and Policy (To take effect on January 1st 2020)

POLICY NAME: Community of Faith Supervisors	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose is to outline the roles and responsibilities of a Community of Faith supervisor, of the Community of Faith and the compensation for such ministry. The Manual I.2.5.2	

Appointment

If a Community of Faith that is a pastoral charge has no called or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister who has been recognized by the East Central Ontario Regional Council, the East Central Ontario Regional Council is responsible for appointing a member of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to the pastoral charge as a pastoral charge supervisor. The East Central Ontario Regional Council may also appoint a pastoral charge supervisor in any other situation where the East Central Ontario Regional Council decides it is appropriate.

(Added 2022-02-25-240 MOTION) When the Regional Council assigns an appointee to provide supervision and guidance to a specific task of a pastoral charge, either active or disbanded, the Regional Council may designate the position with a differing title and responsibility. Regardless of title and responsibility, the supervisory role is compensated by this policy.

Responsibilities

The pastoral charge supervisor is responsible for:

- i. supporting any ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge;
- ii. general supervision of the work of the pastoral charge;
- iii. ensuring that a chair is elected for the pastoral charge governing body, the trustees, and meetings of the congregation and pastoral charge;
- iv. ensuring that the sacraments are administered, and new members are received following the requirements of these bylaws;
- v. if there are ministry personnel serving the pastoral charge, delegating responsibility for the functions of ministry in the pastoral charge to the ministry personnel as appropriate; and
- vi. reporting to the East Central Ontario Regional Council on the state of the pastoral charge.

Compensation for Ministry Site Supervision Policy

Hourly Rate

The Community of Faith receiving supervision, or the equivalent, **will be responsible** to pay an hourly rate for the supervision. The costs will be:

- i. \$30 per hour, including travel time;
- ii. The supervised ministry site will pay the supervisor directly;
- iii. Note: there are income tax implications (issuance of a T-4A for remuneration over \$500 over a period in a given year).

Travel Expense

The Community of Faith receiving supervision, or the equivalent, **will be responsible** to pay Travel expenses. The costs will be:

- i. Travel expense paid according to the General Council rate
- ii. All travel expenses will be paid to the supervisor by the Community of Faith being supervised.
- iii. If the mileage costs for the Supervisor exceeds more than \$100 per round trip, ECORC will re-imburse the Community of Faith the Difference. It should be noted that this is a very rare circumstance as we always try to find Pastoral Charge supervisors who are closer to the Community of Faith and the use of technology means that travel is reduced.

Equity Monitor Policy

POLICY NAME: Equity Monitor	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: This policy outlines the purpose and function of the Equity Monitor.	

History

The United Church of Canada and the General Council, in its commitment to be an equitable and accessible national church is being called to establish the role of Equity Monitor and encourage all levels of the church to implement a similar role.

The Bay of Quinte Conference, the Executive, various committees and the Presbyteries have adopted the role of Equity Monitor in all their meetings.

Purpose

The role of Equity Monitor is to ensure web content, meetings, workshops, or events follow established protocols for equity, accessibility and communication related issues. As an example, the Monitor can encourage that all PowerPoint slides comply with an established font size protocol.

Many sectors in Canada have established the role of Accessibility Coordinator, similarly, the Equity Monitor can act as a resource between individuals and the various structures of the United Church of Canada to identify gaps or barriers.

The United Church of Canada has committed to be an inclusive church. Should a gap be identified, the Equity Monitor will be available to receive and direct concerns for resolution.

Duties

The volunteer Equity Monitor(s) will work with the planning team of the event/meeting and work through the Equity checklist (see attachment). The Equity checklist is to be used as a guide to strive towards, recognizing that we might not be able to meet all of the points. It is helpful to name what is available on the meeting invite. The Equity Monitor(s) are introduced at the beginning of the event/meeting with a brief description of their role. Equity monitors are to be open and approachable to work through a solution for any additional concerns that may arise during a meeting/event. We have found comfort increase in recent years for people to bring forward their concerns.

Areas of equity concerns that have been identified are:

- meetings held in accessible locations;
- visual loss accommodations (materials sent out 48 hours in advance);
- scent free/nut free environments;
- assistive listening or amplification of speakers;
- speakers self-identifying;

- concern for dietary needs;
- sensitivities for chemicals/scents/food;
- materials printed for those without access to computers/printers;
- when printed items provided also include some large print;
- gender neutral washrooms (can be identified temporarily for that meeting);
- accessible washrooms;
- respect for pronoun use and identity
- inclusive language (also sensitivity to language complexity)
- American Sign Language interpretation
- accommodations for persons with various mental health concerns (quiet spaces available)

Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer Practice and Policy (To take effect on January 1st 2020)

POLICY NAME: Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose is to outline the roles and responsibilities of a Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer and the compensation for such ministry. The Manual I.1.5	

Appointment

An East Central Ontario Regional Council liaison or another East Central Ontario Regional Council representative will, at minimum, touch base with a Community of Faith and a ministry personnel at the following times:

- i. for any discussion about the pastoral relationship;
- ii. any time support is needed to explore a living faith story, whether or not the community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations;
- iii. when a change in pastoral relations has been requested;
- iv. when the community of faith begins writing their profile;
- v. when the community of faith is ready to post their profile;
- vi. when a search team is appointed;
- vii. when the governing body calls a meeting of the community of faith to hear the recommendation of the search team; and
- viii. at the covenanting service.

Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer is appointed to assist a Community of Faith through a Search process.

Responsibilities

An appointed Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer will:

- i. consult with the East Central Ontario Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister and the governing council to determine scope and needs of the community of faith
- ii. provide support and guidance during pastoral relationship negotiations and change.
- iii. shall physically attend and provide a training session for Search Committees before interviews are initiated;
- iv. be present at the meeting called by the governing council to receive a recommendation from the Search Committee;
- v. to attend and represent the East Central Ontario Regional Council at a Service of covenanting
- vi. to attend when requested by the governing Council or Search Committee

Compensation for Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer Policy

The Pastoral Relations Liaison role is a dual volunteer/paid responsibility shared by the East Central Ontario Regional Council, Community of Faith.

Members of the East Central Ontario Regional Council, lay and ordered, volunteer to serve as trained liaisons sharing wisdom and guidance.

The East Central Ontario Regional Council is responsible for the costs of training and the expenses of volunteers to attend training events.

The East Central Ontario Regional Council will pay travel expenses to Liaisons to attend the Liaison Forums.

The Community of Faith will be responsible to pay for the Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer to attend required and requesting meetings including those identified as Responsibilities: iii, iv, v, and vi above.

The costs will be:

Hourly Rate

- i. \$75 dollars per diem will be paid for each of the five touch-point meetings (see Handbook: Pastoral Relations: East Central Ontario Regional Council Liaisons (January 2019) https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/pastoral-relations_regional-council-liaisons.pdf;
- ii. The Community of Faith will reimburse the Pastoral Relations Liaison officer directly;
- iii. If the Pastoral Relations Liaison Officer is serving the Community of Faith in an appointment, these costs do not apply;
- iv. Note: there are income tax implications (issuance of a T-4A for remuneration over \$500 over a period in a given year).

Travel Expense

- i. travel expense paid at the General Council rate
- ii. travel expenses will be paid to the Pastoral Relations Liaisons by the Community of Faith.
- iii. If the mileage costs for the Liaison exceeds more than \$100 per round trip, ECORC will re-imburse the Community of Faith the Difference. It should be noted that this is a very rare circumstance as we always try to find Liaisons who are closer to the Community of Faith and the use of technology means that travel is reduced.

Community of Faith ‘Filling Internally’ Practice and Policy

POLICY NAME: Filling Positions Internally	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: A procedure to allow for filling positions internally without engaging in an open Search.	

Proposal

When a Vacancy is declared to follow an appointment and if the current appointee is to accept the Call; the governing council, designated team or Search Committee, in consultation with the East Central Ontario Regional Council Liaison, shall give consideration and make a decision on the suitability of the appointed minister. A decision may be made to:

- i. invite the incumbent into negotiation;
- ii. interview the incumbent and make a decision whether to extend Call; and
- iii. inform the incumbent that a Search will be undertaken and confirm that the appointment will end.

Background

There are two specific changes in pastoral relations - amalgamations and provisional calls or appointments - where a Liaison can help the Community of Faith navigate a modified process of calling or appointment of ministry personnel. However, it is up to the East Central Ontario Regional Council to decide how the pastoral relations process should be followed during these two specific instances. From the United Church of handbook Pastoral Relations: Regional Council Liaison page 7]

There may exist other circumstances when an appointee may be eligible and of consideration to a Community of Faith. It is prudent to allow the appointee to know as early as possible if they being considered for the Call and it is unfair to solicit and interview if the incumbent appointee is being sought for the position.

In circumstances in which an incumbent appointee is eligible for the Call, a decision on the suitability of the incumbent may be made prior to an open Search.

Policy Regarding Proceeds from the Sale of Property

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Proceeds from the Sale of Property	Date Approved: May 1, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify expectations of Communities of Faith regarding the sale of Church Property. The Manual C.2.6.	

Preamble

This document outlines the **Eastern Central Ontario Regional Council's** policy and best practices regarding the disposition of proceeds from the sale of congregational property and/or Investment and cash assets. It should be noted that properties being considered for sale must first be reviewed by the Mission Through Property of ECORC to assess whether said property might be a candidate for development by the UPRC. (United Property Resource Corporation)

Policy

Not Disbanding

When Congregational property is being sold by a Community of Faith that is **not disbanding**, the following guidelines for the use of net proceeds from the sale:

- a) 10% be remitted to the United Church of Canada for the on-going support of Indigenous Ministry. *This decision is about living into Reconciliation through our Indigenous ministry*
- b) 10% be remitted to the Eastern Central Ontario Regional Council to support the Mission Strategy of the Regional Council. - ECORC COF Assistance Fund
- c) 10% be remitted to the United Church of Canada Mission and Support for on-going support of the ministry of the wider church.
- d) 70% be retained by the Community of Faith with an approved ministry plan by the Regional Council for the use of the proceeds that is viable for sustaining the COF's ongoing Ministry and Outreach mission as stated in their Mission statement. *Communities of Faith can refer to Covenant Support Leadership and the Mission Through Property Teams.* The Regional Council will normally require that the remaining capital from the sale be protected / invested and that the Community of Faith be limited to drawing up to 5% of the value of the invested capital in any given year to support its operating budget. If the Community of Faith puts before the Regional Council a ministry plan, the Regional Council may allow the Community of Faith to use some or all of the remaining capital from the sale to implement the ministry plan. This may include capital expenses.

Disbanding

When Congregational property is being sold by a Community of Faith that **is disbanding**, the following guidelines apply for the disposition of net proceeds from the sale:

- a) 30% be remitted to the United Church of Canada for the on-going support of Indigenous Ministry. *This decision is about living into Reconciliation through our Indigenous ministry.*

- b) 10% to the Toronto United Church Council's Sustainable Energy Loan Fund.
- c) 20% be remitted to the Eastern Central Ontario Regional Council to support the Mission Strategy of the Regional Council. – ECORC COF Assistance Fund
- d) 20% be remitted to the United Church of Canada Mission and Support for on-going support of the ministry of the wider church.
- e) 20% be directed for purposes within The United Church of Canada, as recommend by the Community of Faith, and which is approved by the Regional Council before the disbanding of the Community of Faith. If a Community of Faith disbands without such a plan, it becomes the responsibility of the Regional Council to determine the disposition of the remaining funds.

If the Congregational Property is a Manse please refer to the Manse Sale Policy

Note: Net proceeds means the amount left over after all expenses directly related to the sale of the property have been paid, e.g.: real estate fees, legal fees, cost of surveys and so on.

The Manual 2021 section re:

C.2.6 Property

The regional council is responsible for:

a) co-operating with the community of faith in buying, selling, leasing, and renovating community of faith property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational policies and guidelines, including

- i) making decisions on requests from communities of faith to buy, sell, mortgage, exchange, renovate, lease, or otherwise deal with community of faith property;
The regional council makes decisions relating to the property of amalgamating congregations. See Congregational Life G.1.4.5.
- ii) making decisions on the meaning of the terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” for that regional council;
The terms “other major assets” and “major renovations” are explained in Congregational Life G.2.1.2 and G.2.1.3.
- iii) communicating the meanings of those terms to each community of faith within the bounds served by the regional council; and
There are three exceptions to the regional council's responsibility for making decisions about the property of communities of faith that are congregations. They are set out in Congregational Life G.2.2.2, G.2.2.3, and G.2.2.4.

b) making decisions on the property of communities of faith remaining after the communities of faith cease to exist; and

c) buying, selling, leasing, and renovating regional property, and distributing any proceeds within denominational guidelines.

Major Renovation Threshold Policy

POLICY NAME: Major Renovation Threshold Policy	Date Approved: March 3, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: To establish when permission is needed by the regional council to undertake major renovations	

2026-04-07-013 MOTION (S-M Young/T. Meyers) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders approve the recommendation of the Ministry Through Property and Finance Leadership Team to Change Policy to increase the Renovation Threshold for Community of Faith development requests from \$50,000 to \$70,000.

Urgent Decisions on Matters of Property Development Policy

POLICY NAME: Urgent Decisions on Matters of Property Development Policy	Date Approved: March 3, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: To deal with urgent decisions on matters of property development	

2026-03-03-004 MOTION (M. Brotherton/T. Meyers) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders concur with the recommendation of the Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team (MTPF) to approve that a policy be instituted where: a trio of United Church Property Committee (UPRC) personnel in consultation with the Executive Minister and a representative of the Ministry Through Property & Finance Leadership Team (MTPF) be tasked with the urgent decision on matters of property development using the threshold established by (MTPF), long term leases, purchases and any other matters pertinent to the operations of property and finance.

The East Central Ontario Regional Council Travel Policy

POLICY NAME: The East Central Ontario Regional Council Travel Policy	Date Approved: September 25, 2020
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify limits of the compensation. The Manual C.2.5.	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy and best practices regarding requests for travel compensation for those attending regional gatherings.

Policy

1. It is the policy of the East Central Ontario Regional Council that said Council reimburse travel at 100% the General Council Rate for Ministry Personnel not in a call or appointment, chaplains and retired Ministry Personnel not in a call or appointment, traveling to meetings of the East Central Ontario Regional Council, and an additional \$0.02 per km for each additional person in the vehicle.
2. It is the policy of the East Central Ontario Regional Council that Communities of Faith reimburse travel at 100% the General Council Rate for Lay Persons, and Ministry Personnel in active paid accountable Ministry, attending general meetings of the East Central Ontario Regional Council
3. It is the policy of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to reimburse travel at 100% the General Council Rate for persons travelling to meetings of the Council of Elders, Leadership Teams, Forums, and staff-led training. An additional \$0.02 per km for each additional person in the vehicle.
4. The Regional Council recommends that Communities of Faith pay travel costs for lay persons traveling to meetings of clusters, networks.
5. It is the policy of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to reimburse travel at 100% the General Council Rate for appointees by the Covenant Support Team for transition work.

Note: It is expected that active paid accountable Ministry personnel will be reimbursed for travel to the East Central Ontario Regional Council general meetings by their Community of Faith.

Policy for Electing Commissioners to serve at the General Council

POLICY NAME: Policy for Electing Commissioners to serve at the General Council	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date: Next general meeting
Purpose: To establish a policy for the election of members to serve on the General Council, from the East Central Ontario Regional Council.	

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the East Central Ontario Regional Council to elect commissioners to

- a) attend the triennial in-person General Council meeting,
- b) attend the annual electronic meetings of the General Council,
- c) other special meetings of the General Council as required.

Voting

When voting, members of the Regional Council are asked to elect commissioners that reflect the diversity of the church in the region, including diversity of identities of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, theology, age, life-stage and many others.

Elections, when to be held

- a) Elections of members to serve on the regional council will be held at two meeting separate meetings of the regional council.
- b) A minimum of four (4) positions shall be elected at the annual meeting held in the year of the regularly scheduled face-to-face meeting of the General Council, to ensure diversity.
- c) All other positions shall be elected at the annual meeting held in the year prior to the regularly scheduled face-to-face meeting of the General Council.

Vacancy on the list of elected persons

- a) If a person is elected to serve as a Commissioner to the General Council at the meeting of the Regional Council the year prior to its face-to-face meeting, and is either unable to fulfill their duties or is no longer eligible, the position shall be filled in one of two ways.
 - i) If the meeting of the regional council, in the year the General Council meets face-to-face, has not occurred, the vacant position shall be placed on the appropriate ballot at the meeting.
 - ii) If, in the year the General Council meets face-to-face, the meeting of the regional council has already occurred, the vacancy shall be filled from list of alternates created at that meeting of the regional council.

Nominations Process

- a) The nominations team will call for nominations in advance of the meeting, and ask nominated persons to provide a brief written biography to be shared with the regional

council in advance of voting.

- b) Nominations will also be received from the floor of the regional council meeting, and nominees will be asked to provide a brief written biography to be shared with the regional council in advance of voting.

Ballots

- a) At each election, there shall be two ballots, known as Ballot A and Ballot B.
 - i) Ballot A, for lay-members of the United Church of Canada, whose membership is in a community of faith within the bounds of the regional council.
 - ii) Ballot B, for persons identified as ministry personnel of the United Church of Canada, serving within the bounds of the regional council, or in the case of retirees, living within the bounds of the regional council.
- b) From among the elected commissioners, the Regional Council shall elect one to serve as the “Leading Elder”, who will be a member of the Council of Elders for the Triennium.
- c) The number of persons elected from Ballot A and Ballot B shall be as close to equal as is possible, given the number of persons to be elected.

Voting procedure

- a) Voting may be by paper ballot or by a digital means. The means of casting a ballot shall be decided in the opening motions of the regional council meeting at which voting takes place.
- b) Each ballot will contain a list of candidates for the positions.
- c) Members of the regional council will be asked to rank the candidates in order of their preference, as follows, making as many ranked choices as they wish.
 - i) Put the number 1 in the box next to the name of the candidate who is your first choice
 - ii) 2 in the box next to your second choice
 - iii) 3 in the box next to your third choice and so on.
- d) A vote is considered valid if at least one choice is marked.

Counting procedure

- a) The regional council shall elect scrutineers to oversee and ensure the proper counting of the ballots.
- b) Ballots may be counted by hand or by digital means. The means of counting a ballot shall be decided in the opening motions of the regional council meeting at which voting takes place. Candidates may observe the counting of the ballots.
- c) First, the scrutineers will separately total the number of valid votes cast for each of Ballot A and Ballot B.
- d) Second, the scrutineers will separately calculate the quota necessary to be elected, for Ballot A and Ballot B, using the formula for each of the two Ballots.

$$quota = \frac{Valid\ Votes\ Cast}{(number\ of\ positions\ to\ be\ elected + 1)} + 1$$

- e) The counting of Ballot A and Ballot B shall then proceed as follows.
 - i) The number of first preference votes for each candidate shall be tallied.
 - ii) All candidates whose number of first preference votes reaches or exceeds the quota value are counted as elected.
 - iii) If a candidate is elected, and the number of votes exceeds the quota, surplus votes will be transferred to other candidates.
 - (1) If counting by hand, there shall be a random drawing of ballot papers from the pile of paper ballots for the elected candidate. The number of randomly drawn papers shall equal the number of surplus votes. The randomly selected ballots will be transferred to other candidates based on the next preference indicated.
 - (2) If counting electronically, the ballots shall be transferred proportionally, based on the fraction calculated automatically using the formula

$$\frac{Surplus\ votes\ to\ be\ transferred}{Quota\ of\ votes\ needed\ to\ be\ elected}$$
 - iv) If any candidates now meets or exceeds the quota, they are considered elected, and the scrutineers return to step iii.
 - v) If no candidate meets or exceeds the quota, and the remain vacant positions to be elected, the count proceeds to step vi, otherwise it proceeds to step
 - vi) The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on the next preference indicated on the ballot
 - vii) If a candidate now meets or exceeds the quota, they are considered elected, and the scrutineers return to step iii.
- f) If only two candidates are left at any stage, and only one vacancy exists, then the one with the most votes will be to be elected, even if they do not reach the quota.
- g) The counting ends when all positions are filled.

Alternates

- a) In the year of the face-to-face general council meeting, the counting will continue until two persons are chosen as alternates for each of Ballot A and Ballot B.
- b) Alternates will be selected by continuing the counting process above, after all positions are filled, to fill two alternate positions with the next two preferred candidates.

Property & Finance Community of Faith Conflict Review Funding Policy

POLICY NAME: Property & Finance Community of Faith Conflict Review Funding Policy	Date Approved: November 9, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: This policy outlines the funding allocations when Community of Faith or Ministry personnel undergoes a review.	

Background and Context:

Under the former governance structure, reviews of the communities of faith and ministry personnel were overseen by the Presbyteries and where it was necessary to utilize outside professionals the fees were split evenly between the Conference, The Presbytery and the Community of Faith.

Under the current structure, reviews of ministry personnel are handled by the Office of Vocation while the Regional Council oversees the review of communities of faith. As reviews normally involve conflict between members of the community of faith and there is a conflict resolution process in the Manual these are dealt with within the community of faith. Resolution of conflict between the governance body and groups within the community of faith are overseen by the Regional Council Covenant Support Team. There may be instances when the Covenant Support Team determines the conflict cannot be resolved informally and a professional person is necessary to perform formal review.

Funding Policy of Reviews:

- Reviews of ministry personnel are handled by the Office of Vocation.
- Review and resolution of conflict between members of the Community of Faith are handled and funded by the Community of Faith with assistance from the Regional Council Covenant Support Team.
- Formal reviews called for by the Covenant Support Team requiring the hiring of professionals are funded by equally splitting the costs between the Regional Council and the Community of Faith.

Ministry Personnel involvement in a former Community of Faith Policy

POLICY NAME and PRACTICE: Ministry Personnel involvement in a former Community of Faith Policy	<i>Date Approved: February 25, 2019</i>
	<i>Review date:</i>
Purpose: The purpose of this policy and practice outlines the relationship and responsibilities of ministry personnel who have left a Community of Faith. The Manual I.2.5.3, I.2.5.4	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy and best practices regarding ministry personnel * transitioning out of pastoral relationships (appointment or call). The goal is to create a smooth transition from the departing minister to the incoming minister. Ending pastoral relationships can be anxious times for both the minister and the community of faith. Denominational policy (provided at the end in Appendix A) and the policies and best practices that follow are meant to create healthy endings and new beginnings.

Ministers who are leaving a pastoral relationship will hopefully have an awareness of important boundaries that honour and respect the new pastoral relationship, thereby strengthening the Body of Christ (the church) to carry out its mandate in the world.

East Central Ontario Regional Council - Contact with Former Community of Faith

The Manual (2019) provides policies around a minister returning to a former community of faith to carry out ministerial duties (see Appendix A) but does not speak to the issue of ministry personnel attending worship at a previous community of faith, visiting occasionally, conducting weddings and funerals, or attending special events/occasions. This policy is meant to cover these situations.

The following practices help to promote the best possible conditions for the establishment of a new pastoral relationship:

- a) That the minister ensures that a proper “goodbye” is made to the community of faith. A “returning of the symbols” or an “end-of-covenant ceremony” can be helpful.
- b) That the minister not return to their former community of faith in any professional or non-professional capacity (to visit, attend worship or other services) for a period of three years with the exception of the following situations:
 - i) The minister is invited to a wedding as a guest.
 - ii) The minister attends a funeral.
 - iii) The minister is invited by the governing body (session, council, board) or current Minister to attend a special event.
 - iv) In situations where a minister has served in an isolated rural community of faith, remains living in the area, and where there are no other United Church communities of faith easily accessible, the minister shall contact the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister to

facilitate a dialogue with the incumbent minister to determine if the past minister may worship there, and establish terms of the relationship.

v) If the need arises, there may be a case-by-case decision - in consultation with the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Minister, incumbent minister and local Church Council/Board – as to how the needs of the community of faith are best met.

c) After at least three years has passed, the former minister may return to their former community of faith after consulting with the incumbent minister and the Church Council/Board concerning expectations and the level of involvement with which both parties would be comfortable. A covenant between former minister, the incumbent minister and the community of faith is one strategy that could be used. It is recommended that the ministers and the community of faith review arrangements and understandings periodically as circumstances often change.

d) Below is a check list of things to remember for departing ministers:

- Minimize your influence and presence with members of the congregation and other staff during the period after you leave. Don't say "*I'm not allowed*" but rather indicate that you are declining in the interests of the community of faith and in support of the establishment of a new healthy pastoral relationship.
- After three years, no ministerial contact with community of faith members or other staff until a covenant is made between you, the incumbent minister and the community of faith. Remember to define the nature and limits of your participation.
- Prepare the community of faith while you are still with them to understand the need for disengagement and how that might affect them. Often, the minister leaving a pastoral relationship is asked back by community of faith members. If you think your leaving may be particularly difficult for your community of faith, request the assistance of the Regional Council to explain the importance of disengagement before you leave.
- Ending a pastoral relationship might also mean an end to ties that your family members have with the community of faith.
- As they are leaving the community of faith, departing ministers will be presented a copy of the list of guidelines for departing ministers. This is to hopefully prevent future problems and solve all misunderstandings.

Interim Ministry: In circumstances where the community of faith enters into a period of Interim Ministry or Transitional Ministry, the length of time that the former minister should be absent from the community of faith includes both the interim/transitional ministry period and a subsequent two years of the new call or appointment.

East Central Ontario Regional Council – Current VAM Policy (January 2019)

"Whereas some ministry personnel who leave a ministry site due to retirement or change in pastoral relations continue to live within the area, and whereas in-coming ministry personnel need time and opportunity to develop relationships with the community of faith, therefore the East Central Ontario Regional Council Executive has determined that in order to be eligible, the ministry personnel in the categories of non-settled ordained or diaconal minister, retired ordained or retired diaconal minister may apply to be a volunteer associate minister after a lapse of at least

three years before they can serve as a Voluntary Associate Minister for their former community of faith.

“It is recommended that ministry personnel allow for a period of three years from the end date of their pastoral relationship before they become a VAM in a former community of faith where they served in call or appointment. Becoming a VAM is at the discretion of the incumbent minister.”
Carried

Minister Emeritus/Emerita

In the United Church of Canada, there is no formal practice of naming a minister emeritas/emerita. Some communities of faith will chose to honour retired clergy in this way. There are some mixed messages being sent to both parishioners and minister when a community of faith names someone as “emeritas/emerita” but the Regional Council restricts a retired minister from pastoral functions in that specific congregation. Therefore a community of faith is expected to let the requisite three year period pass before naming a retired minister to this role. It is expected that the retired minister will actively discourage former parishioners if they request his or her services. The church in which the retired minister has worked long and hard to nurture and sustain now needs the retired minister’s help in establishing a healthy relationship with its new leader.

Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

All ministry personnel, both active and retired, shall follow The United Church of Canada’s “*Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*”.

<http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/ethical-standards-practice-ministry-personnel.pdf>

Police Records Check

All retired ministry personnel, whether in paid or voluntary positions, shall adhere to the United Church of Canada’s policies regarding Police Records Checks.

http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_police-records-checks.pdf

The Family of Ministry Personnel

In the event of the retirement of ministry personnel, a particular concern arises for the needs of other family members, especially the minister’s spouse. Quite often family members have joined the community of faith at which their spouse/parent was serving and have become involved in the community of faith’s life and programs, as well as establishing personal friendships with other church members. The Regional Council has no direct jurisdiction over the lay members of ministers’ families, but it strongly urged that the spouse, in the context of those relationships, not do anything that would undermine the transition necessary for the community of faith or the development of a relationship with Interim, Supply or newly called or appointed ministry personnel. It would be wise to consider not worshipping with the former community of faith at all during the period of pastoral vacancy or while an Interim Minister is present.

Appendix A

THE MANUAL (2019) - RETURNING TO A FORMER PASTORAL CHARGE

Section I.2.5.3 (Functions of Ministry -- Outside Pastoral Relationship)

Section I.2.5.4: (Request of Previous Pastoral Charge)

I.2.5.3 FUNCTIONS OF MINISTRY—OUTSIDE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

At any time that ministry personnel are not settled in or appointed to a community of faith, they may carry out the functions of ministry in the United Church only if

(a) they have a formal association with a community of faith, are acting on behalf of that community of faith, and have the approval of the community of faith's governing body; or

An example of a "formal association" with a pastoral charge would be where the minister has been designated as a "voluntary associate minister" or "honorary associate minister" by the pastoral charge or its governing body.

(b) they have been appointed to a community of faith to exercise the functions of ministry associated with it.

2.5.4 REQUEST—PREVIOUS PASTORAL CHARGE

If a ministry personnel is asked by a member or adherent (or their families) of a community of faith where they had previously been settled or appointed to preside at a baptism, communion service, wedding, or funeral, the ministry personnel

(a) must refer the request to a member of the order of ministry who is settled in or appointed to that community of faith; **and**

(b) may preside only with the approval of the community of faith's governing body.

Policy Regarding Manse Funds

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Manse Funds	Date Approved: August 28, 2019
	Review date: Next general meeting
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify expectations of Communities of Faith regarding Funds created from the sale of Manses. The Manual C.2.6.	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy and best practices regarding creation of funds from proceeds of the sale of manses.

Background And Context

All property of communities of faith are held in trust for the United Church of Canada by the trustees. This includes land, buildings, funds and investments and any other kind of property. The Trustees must comply with the United Church of Canada's requirements for Boards of Trustees in matters related to communities of faith property. A manse is such a property, but the Regional Council is responsible for making decisions on requests from communities of faith relating to the purchase or sale of a manse and for the use of proceeds arising from the sale of a manse property. The Regional Council will respect existing arrangements supported by motion. Permission to use funds must be addressed to the Regional Council of Elders.

Use of Manse Funds

1. Manse Capital Funds and Use of Income. The capital of manse funds shall be invested by the Board of Trustees and the income from investment may be used by communities of faith to fund ministerial compensation. The ECORC Mission Through Property & Finance Team will be able to approve a onetime use of income from manse funds to a maximum of \$25,000 provided all other criteria within this policy are met. Requests over \$25,000 will go to the Regional Council for discussion and consideration. If a community of faith returns with a second request for use of income, this will come to the Regional Council for consideration.
2. Other Permitted Uses of Excess Manse Capital Funds & Regional Council Mandated \$150,000 Manse Reserve Fund The Regional Council will allow greater flexibility with respect to usage of manse capital, subject to the approval of the ECORC Mission Through Property & Finance Team, some or all of the manse capital funds held by the Trustees that are in excess of the mandated \$150,000 manse reserve fund, may be used for the following purposes:
 - a. To fund the purchase of ministerial housing,
 - b. For a mortgage for ministerial housing,
 - c. Bridge financing to facilitate the sale of church property, if needed during an amalgamation,
 - d. Capital renovation projects within the community of faith's property, and
 - e. Other major capital projects that may be needed by a community of faith.

Caution: If any capital funds are expended for the purposes as noted in Items a) to e) above, the income from that capital will no longer be available to offset ministerial compensation and the income must then be derived from other sources.

3. Minimum Manse Fund Reserve, \$150,000 The minimum value of the unencumbered manse fund reserve to be held by the Board of Trustees shall not be less than \$150,000 or the net proceeds from the sale of the manse. Where manse fund capital values are currently less than \$150,000, this change in policy will have no effect.
4. Uses of the Mandated \$150,000 Manse Fund Reserve The manse reserve fund shall be retained by the Board of Trustees for potential use, with prior Regional Council approval, for ministerial compensation where a community of faith is not able to fulfill its financial obligations to a minister or for other uses related to the closing/ disbandment of a community of faith, as approved by the Regional Council.

Policy Regarding Anti-Racism

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Anti-Racism	Date Approved: April 30, 2022
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to ensure behavior compliant with The UCC's declaration to becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination of October 2020	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy and best practices regarding respect for the dignity and worth of every person and a commitment to eliminating racism in the life and ministry of the East Central Ontario Regional Council. This includes all communities of faith and those leading and attending gatherings of clusters, networks, staff-led training, and partner events

Policy

It is the policy of East Central Ontario Regional Council to acknowledge that racism exists and further, to enact its obligation to principles of procedural fairness and justice as defined by Church and protected by the Human Rights Code of the Province of Ontario. The Regional Council acknowledge and reinforce that each person has the right to live, worship, receive services, and participate fully in an environment free of discrimination and harassment based on bias, bigotry or prejudice against a race or racialization of an individual or a group within Church and Canadian society. Racism will not be tolerated in ECORC and its member communities of faith. We are committed to eliminating racism.

Definitions and Understandings

The Institution/Structure

refers to The East Central Ontario Regional Council of The United Church of Canada.

Race

shall include: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship and religions, in accordance with The United Church of Canada's Anti-Racism Statement and the prohibited grounds of Ontario's Human Rights Code.

Racism

is alive in Church and Society; we begin by acknowledging that racism exists. It is a learned behaviour based on fear and ignorance of the unknown and personalized perceptions and assumptions. Racism can be blatant, subtle, hidden or internalized and is often denied. It can be practiced culturally, environmentally, structurally, and institutionalized

Impact of Racism

It is our understanding that Racism will destroy the fabric of our pluralistic, multicultural society we live in, if it remains unchallenged and it is not stopped. ECORC faces its obligation to principles of procedural fairness, and Justice as defined by Church and protected by the Human Rights Code of the Province of Ontario.

To strengthen Church and Community awareness of the existence of racism in all its forms, in Ontario, in order that we can eliminate it; and

To provide a model through behaviour and education, thereby creating the framework for all United Church of Canada members and adherents to work together in achieving the Strategic Directions of this Policy.

ECORC Commits to

- recognize racist attitudes and behaviours at all levels of the organization
- recognize attitudes, language, humour that encourages racism
- confront denial and micro aggressions in appropriate ways
- address the issues of Anti-Racism and implicit bias at all levels of ECORC life (Regional Council, Teams/Forums, Communities of Faith, etc.)
- unlearn racism
- unite against racism
- eliminate racism
- Admit to and address the lack of knowledge of Canadian and Newcomer religious and cultural diversity

Implementation

The cost of the following ECORC anti-racism training will be covered with a line item in the ECORC yearly budget.

- a. All licenced lay worship leaders serving communities of faith within ECORC be required as part of their training to take a United Church of Canada provided anti-racism course (an anti-racism course provided by The United Church of Canada or the ECORC) prior to their licensing, and
- b. That all leaders serving on the East Central Ontario Regional Council governing body be mandated to attend a United Church of Canada provided anti-racism course (an anti-racism course provided by The United Church of Canada or the ECORC), within 6 months of their election and
- c. That all leaders serving on the governing body of a community of faith as well as all committee and board chairs be strongly urged to attend a United Church of Canada provided anti-racism course (an anti-racism course provided by The United Church of Canada or the ECORC) within 6 months of their election.

We encourage you to read the background information attached below.

Rationale and Background Information

“We are called to speak and act, not to be silent.....Today, and in the weeks, months, and years to come, our raised voices will articulate concrete actions for healing wounds and transforming systems and structures to a diverse and inclusive society”

ECORC statement of June 12, 2020

RACISM “is at its heart the belief that we are born different, deep inside our bodies, perhaps even in character and intellect, as well as in outward appearance. It’s the notion that groups of people have certain innate qualities that not only are visible at the surface of their skins but also run down into their innate capacities, that perhaps even help define the passage of progress, the success and failure of the nations our ancestors came from”.

An ecumenical partner of The United Church of Canada, defines Racism in the following way: Racism is the belief, reinforced by power and privilege that one race is innately superior to other races. Systemic racism occurs when the power and privilege of one racial group results in the exclusion, oppression or exploitation of other groups of different racial origin. Racism also manifests itself in individuals in the form of racial harassment when a person or persons belonging to a privileged group behaves in ways that intimidate, demean, or undermine the dignity of others on the basis of their race”.

Acknowledging and agreeing with ECORC’S declaration that “racism is present in our society and our church, and throughout time has manifested itself in many forms in varying degrees,” the core leadership anti-racism group of FNJT met in August 2020 to begin the process of standing together against racism in our Region. Following many discussions, we present to you the rationale, and an anti-racism policy, for consideration. Our assumptions and researched ideas are presented under the following categories:

The Theological case – through the lens of racism.

As believers our theological perspective is the foundation for understanding our solutions to racism and all forms of discrimination. Therefore, we offer three major areas of Christian thought, that make a contribution to our work in this area:

(a) The all encompassing nature of the Divine as understood in the Judaic-Christian Tradition. Living in the 21st century this leads us to recognize the integrity of the Search for God by those outside our Faith. (See General Council- “Report of the Commission on World Mission” - November 1966:137.)

(b) Created in the Image of God. Working against racism we do not view respect for human life as only one value among many. For us as Christians, being created in the image of God is a non-negotiable Theological principle. Our understanding of the sanctity of human life flows directly from the proposition that it was not we who created God in our image but God created humanity in God’s image. This means that each of us in ECORC must wrestle with the sources of extremism, racism, and all other discriminatory practices that compromise human dignity. We apply this principle towards all immigrants and refugees living and working in East Central Ontario, (towns and rural areas) as well as established non-white citizens of various cultures and religions.

(c) The Trinity – through the lens of racism. As followers of Christ, and Canadian citizens, we live in an age in which several diverse destinies are interconnected. The same is true of East Central Ontario geographical region. Therefore, when difference leads to subtle segregation and obvious conflict, we all lose. When it leads to mutual enrichment, all sides gain. The concept of the Trinity supports our sense of enlargement by the presence of others. Each particular person

lives in the conscious presence of difference, co-existing within the spiritual energy of the Divine, while remaining secure and connected with God's substance of Goodness and Wisdom.

The Trinity sustains and moves our body, mind, and spirit towards building concrete relationships with diverse neighbours throughout ECORC, making space for one another, overcoming long histories of estrangement and bitterness. Its spiritual power does not diminish difference. The three-persons are not threatened by one another's presence and thoughtful activity. Their interdependence is a model of balance, respect for the particular and unique contribution each offers. Here we witness unity within diversity.

God calls us to respect the goodwill and dignity of those unlike us. Our Trinitarian principles stir us away from racism and an artificial uniformity. Their strength and glory is Diversity. The communication of our spiritual and theological values underlying the work against racism is crucial. To be deprived of these resources is to disadvantage any significant movement for moral and social change.

The Biblical Case – through the lens of Racism.

A Church with Purpose: Towards an Ecclesiology for The United Church of Canada in the 21st century, the report to the 41st General Council (2012), declares: "The church does not belong to humans but to God through Christ.....The UCC is governed by scripture..."

Writing as an Orthodox Jew, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks reminds us that "every great faith has within it harsh texts which, read literally, can be taken to endorse narrow particularism, suspicion of strangers, and intolerance toward others. Every great faith also has within it sources that emphasize kinship with the stranger, empathy with the outsider, the courage that leads people to extend a hand across boundaries of estrangement or hostility. The choice is ours. Will the generous texts of our tradition serve as interpretive keys to the rest, or will the abrasive passages determine our ideas of what we are and what we are called to do? No tradition is free from the constant need to reinterpret, to apply eternal truths to an ever changing world, to listen to what the message of scripture requires of us, here, now".

In our focus as UCC members *Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination*, the East Central Ontario Regional Council will be inspired and sustained by scripture, its biblical principles of Justice and Mercy as found in the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Ezekiel. Within the **Hebrew Scriptures**, fertile interpretive potential exists in (a) the heritage of Abraham, which Jews, Christians and Muslims claim as their own, (b) the covenant with Noah – the moral basis of a shared humanity, (c) the story of Creation with its astonishing diversity of life forms, (d) the concept of covenant which became the central form of relationship, laden with religious and moral significance....Covenant is the attempt to create partnership without dominance or submission. In Deut. 29:14-15 we are handed an interpretive key for our day, by Moses showing that covenants are intergenerational, reminding us that we are guardians of the past for the sake of the future. (Sacks 2003).

Racism keeps people enslaved. Part of our journey in *Becoming an anti-racist church* is the awareness from History that the use of the Bible for slavery was both strong and consistent. There was, however, a moral case to be made, and the morality for that case was made from the Bible

itself. Here, the Bible’s moral principles stood against the social practices to be found within biblical stories. Principle took precedence over practice and claimed for itself the sanction of the Bible (Gomes 1996). Racism in Canada is connected to the history of slavery and colonialism - (note that in 2012 the United Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery). A key for reading, interpreting, and applying the **New Testament** in the context of racism, is the understanding that biblical texts used to justify racism were all historically, social and economically conditioned. Today, in the Canadian context, these need to be “overruled and superseded by the biblical principles of love and charity towards neighbours as exemplified in the teachings of Jesus.”

English Methodist evangelist John Wesley made this case against the slave trade in English North America - “inconsistent with an understanding of the New Testament’s paramount teachings on spiritual rebirth, sanctification, and evangelism.....The Bible could not be used to justify actions contrary to the moral law of Christ” (Gomes 1996).

Both the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament provide the moral mandate, and clear moral principles for our Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination. For us in East Central Ontario Region, UCC Theologian Robert C. Fennell provides clarity through his statement that “The UCC has not relegated the Bible to the status of “mere myth”, one more curious document in the vast smorgasbord of spirituality. Indeed, it remains central for the denomination, its life and its work” (Schweitzer, Fennell, Bourgeois : 2019).

The Ecclesial Case: Drawn from the UCC Anti-Racism Policy Statement

We believe we are all equal before God.

We believe racism is a sin and violates God’s desire for humanity.

We believe racism is present in our society and in our church, and throughout time has manifested itself in many forms in varying degrees.

We believe that the struggle against racism is a continuous effort. Therefore, our anti-racism policy statement is only a first step. It provides the basis for the creation of a Church (and a Regional Council) where all are welcome, where all feel welcome, and where diversity is as natural as breathing.

We believe change is possible. We believe in forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation and the potential to learn from stories and experiences.

We believe we are all called to work against racism and for a society in which the words of the gospel are realized among us.

We believe in a vision of society in which the words of the gospel are realized.

The Scientific case against Racism (one example)

The book *Superior* (2019) tells the disturbing story of the persistent thread of belief in biological racial differences in the world of science. “A worldwide network of intellectual racists and segregationists quietly founded journals and funded research, providing the kind of shoddy studies that were ultimately cited in Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray’s 1994 title *The Bell Curve*, which purported to show differences in intelligence among races”..... “At a time when racialized nationalisms are a resurgent threat throughout the world, *Superior* is a much-needed examination of the insidious and destructive nature of race science – and a powerful reminder that, biologically, we are all far more alike than different”.

Author of the above mentioned book, Angela Saini is an award-winner. Her work has appeared

on the BBC and in the Guardian, New Scientist, Wired, the Economist, and Science. A former Knight Science Journalism Fellow at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she won the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Kavli Science Journalism gold award in 2015. Saini has a Master's in Engineering from Oxford University.

Since the Province of Ontario is influenced by British History, and East Central Ontario is consciously aware of its past, the scientifically researched data presented by Saini keeps us relevant and informed on the topic of racism, and helps us promote The United Church of Canada's goal in Becoming an Anti-racist Church. You are invited to read her book, while I quote from one piece of scientific evidence for our document:

I saw it for myself at London's Natural History Museum in early 2018, a package no fancier than a bunch of old bones.

The skeleton is laid out neatly in a small corner of the museum....this is the frame of one of the oldest dead bodies ever found in the country, some ten thousand years old. And it's full of secrets. Almost as soon as the bones were discovered in caves in Cheddar Gorge in Somerset in 1903, giving their owner the name Cheddar Man, people began to wonder how this individual must have looked. They wanted to put a face to one of our early ancestors.

This is where the genetic study of the bones of our distant ancestors, of their ancient DNA, came in. It has achieved what the Human Genome Diversity Project couldn't. The DNA of living people offers a limited and fuzzy picture of the past. When it comes to tracking human migration patterns over thousands of years, even archaeology and linguistics can't provide all the detail that ancient DNA can. By around 2010 genetic sequencing techniques had developed far enough to tease out highly reliable samples of DNA from ancient specimens (a bone just behind the ear turned out to be best) and use them to help reconstruct entire genomes of long-dead people. The use of this technique has mushroomed in the last decade. It has been credited with solving historical mysteries at a stroke. Thousands of skeletons from all over the world have been analyzed already, and as the British public were about to learn in early 2018, Cheddar Man was one of them.

Scientists at the Natural History Museum and University College London revealed that Cheddar Man probably had blue eyes and curly hair – no surprise here. But what came as a real shock to many Britons was that his bones also carried genetic signatures of skin pigmentation more commonly found in sub-Saharan Africa. It was probable that Cheddar Man had dark skin. So dark, in fact, that by today's standards he would be considered black. The revelation.....made front-page news and television bulletins.

"The whole Cheddar Man thing, I was amazed initially at just how much press coverage it got," I'm told by Mark Thomas, of University College London, who worked on the finding.....He is one of the world's leading experts on ancient DNA, and from this position of authority he has a tendency to tell it how it is. For geneticists like him, the Cheddar Man discovery was unremarkable given what they already knew. They had

more or less expected it.....Evidence as it stands indicates that, like the Cheddar Man, many other pre-farming hunter-gatherers who lived in Western Europe during this time and at least up until as recently as seven thousand years ago would have had light eyes, dark hair, and dark skin, and that the first farmers to come into the region later from the east brought with them their lighter skin and brown eyes”. (*Superior*, pages 110-112)

The Historical Case – through the lens of Racism

All religious practice declares that we inherit certain kinds of insight and perspective; and that to understand why we think as we do, we need to be aware of History, reminds a former Archbishop of Canterbury. He invites us to acknowledge and accept the fact that for most of the human race the values of society are still shaped by one or another history of religious belief.

The United Church of Canada has reflected on its history of racism in church and society. The institution has been aware, since 1947, “of racism directed against Jews, Chinese, Japanese, East Indians, and Eastern Europeans”. While in the late 1940’s the Church had spoken against racial discrimination experienced by the Japanese, and Chinese, it had also “asked the Government to prioritize immigrants who were of British stock and were healthy and able to work.” (GC12:73).

The February and March 1956 publications of *The Observer* validate the fact that racism was well and alive in Canada. “It wasn’t until 1960 that it (UCC) first referred to racism against African Canadians.....When the Church began to realize that the problem lay more with the society at large than with African Canadians, presbyteries and conferences began to address this in 1963, although Ministers were less inclined to deal with it at a congregational level where action was needed.” (L.M. Shepherd). UCC Minister, Rev. L.M. Shepherd points out that during the early 1970’s the then Board of World Missions did see that congregations remained stuck in an outmoded sense of Mission in which “Missionaries go from the West to the rest, from superior to the inferior, from the religious to the pagan to convert and develop” (*The Observer* February 1971:24) Needless to say, these are some of the attitudes and habits of thought that contribute to racism in the church.

Racism against Indigenous Peoples in Canada is now well documented, as is the fact that they were sidelined at presbytery meetings because of language barriers and decision-making processes based on British parliamentary procedures while they came from Indigenous churches where the consensus-based governance structures were the norm. Support for the development of self-governance began rising. This initiative helped the church realize the impact of British culture upon its own practice of ministry and its imposition of British culture upon the First Nations.

It seems as though Saskatchewan Conference took the lead in recognizing that “the cost of giving up talking of truth (historical truth, in this anti-racism context) is high: it means admitting that power has the last word”. Acknowledging the existence of racism against Indian and Metis peoples, the Conference, in 1979 decided to call for one year of repentance. This year gave them the opportunity to prayerfully prepare for an apology and to make amends with Indian and Metis peoples. This precedent set the stage for the 1986 GC apology to First Nations. (L.M. Shepherd) Rt. Rev. Bob Smith made the following statement at GC 1986: *We confused Western ways and culture with the depth and breadth and length and height of the Gospel of Christ. We imposed our civilization as a condition of accepting the gospel. We tried to make you be like us and in so doing we helped to destroy the vision that made you what you were. In her book A Church with the Soul*

of a Nation, Professor Phyllis Airhart informs us that beginning in the early 1970's, the UCC began to uncouple Christianity from British Culture (page 223).

Moderator Bill Phipps addressed the congregational reticence in the 1998 apology - “*we know that many within our church will still not understand why each of us must bear the scar, the blame for this horrendous period in Canadian history. But the truth is, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors and therefore, we must also bear their burdens*”. (GC Executive 1998). A *Wall of History* slide show has been created by the National Church for education and training purposes. See also: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/slavery-s-long-shadow-the-impact-of-200-years-of-enslavement-incanada-1.4733595> This is a 2 part series, CBC (Canadian context.)

The Educational and Training case – through the lens of Racism

Our East Central Ontario Region is in dire need of Cultural and Religious Literacy.

We need to build on our Church's awareness and initiatives since 1947, and recognize Canada's 1971 Multiculturalism Policy which moved away from concepts and practices for assimilation and integration of Indigenous and Immigrants into Anglo-Canadian culture (which is what the former UCC Board of Home Missions sought) towards Pluralism (The Observer, November 1978). UCC and Canadian History have brought us to consciousness of how we have engaged with those others who are now living in our midst throughout East Central Ontario. The Anglo-Saxon culture in Britain has also acknowledged that “a society in which religious and cultural diversity exists is invited to recognize that human history is not one story only. Even where a majority culture and religions exists, (as in East Central Ontario) it is part of a wider picture. Education will open up and highlight the many ways in which diverse traditions share a heritage at various points in history”. Faith Formation, in light of the Church's declaration to Become an Anti-Racism Denomination, will be impacted.

For Church and Society visions and mission, the work and recommendations of Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and UNDRIP recommendations as they pertain to systemic racism help church members participate in public discussions and engage in advocacy. When connected to Biblical principles and spiritual values, through Christian, and Inter-religious education and dialogue, the foundations are strong. “However, it was not until 1980 when the UCC, through DWO, recognized traditional Indigenous teachings not as superstition, but as another religion with which to dialogue” (The Theology of the United Church of Canada, 2019:299).

How a Cultural and Religious Literacy program in the context of East Central Ontario's lived realities can be effective, will be addressed in the Anti-Racism Policy, as well as in our list of implementation strategies.

The Legal case – through the lens of Racism

As the article *It Cannot Be Business as Usual* in the Anglican Journal (Oct. 2017) and the Picton Gazette, September 19, 2019 story *Hatred, bigotry and anti-Semitism have no place in the County* prove, as well as the incidents at Madawaska Pastoral Charge in 2020, we as Church and Society-East Central Ontario Region need to maintain high vigilance regarding racism in our Communities. In addition, through the Holocaust story we are reminded that this historical evil took place in one of the most educated, most progressive, most cultured countries in the world. Biblically, we are

aware that the Ministry and education of Jesus was carried out within the Jewish culture and tradition. Abrahamic, and non-Abrahamic communities of faith are spread across cities and rural areas of East Central Ontario Region. (see www.bancroftthisweek.com/?p=11153)

Promotion of all National (Church, and Government) Provincial and Municipal legal documents/rules against racism – both individual and systemic are crucial. They protect the legal rights and freedoms of all Citizens. One example – The Ontario Human Rights Commission and its publications. Nationally – the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. On a wider level – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, authored by Canadian lawyer and scholar, John Humphrey.

The Business Case – through the lens of Racism

Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Sacks is clear about the fact that “the world is not a single machine. It is a complex, interactive ecology in which diversity – biological, personal, cultural and religious – is of the essence.....A primordial instinct going back to humanity’s tribal past makes us see difference as a threat. That instinct is massively dysfunctional in an age in which our several destinies are interlinked. Oddly enough, it is the market – the least overtly spiritual of contexts – that delivers a profoundly spiritual message: that it is through exchange that difference becomes a blessing, not a threat.....we must attend to the particular.....we will make peace only when we learn that God loves difference and so, at last, must we. God has created many cultures, civilizations and faiths but only one world in which we live together – and it is getting smaller all the time”.

Our Ecumenical partners, The Anglican Church of Canada, published two articles of interest through the anti-racism lens. Please read *IT CANNOT BE BUSINESS AS USUAL* (page 4) by M.N. Sison and *AN UNHOLY TRINITY* (page 5), by Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada – at the link below.

<https://www.anglicanjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/aj-oct2017/-web.pdf>

May God grant The United Church of Canada in the East Central Regional Council wisdom to do the right thing with Faith, Hope, Grace, and Love.

Acronyms used:

DWO	Division of World Outreach (former)
ECORC	East Central Ontario Regional Council
FNJT	Formation, Nurture and Justice Team
GC	General Council
UCC	The United Church of Canada
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Policy Regarding licences to administer the Sacraments

POLICY NAME: Policy regarding Licences to Administer the Sacraments	Date Approved: October 16, 2021
	Review date:
Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify expectations regarding licences to administer the Sacraments. The Manual 2021 Sections I.2.4 and I.2.5.2 b	

Preamble

This document outlines the East Central Ontario Regional Council's policy regarding licences to administer the Sacraments.

Policy

1. General Policy

The Regional Council may grant a licence to administer the sacraments to

- a designated lay minister, candidate supply, diaconal supply, ordained supply, or retired diaconal minister;
- lay people who were serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement and who had been recognized by the regional council as a designated lay minister; and
- members of communities of faith without a called or appointed member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister. A member holding a licence to administer the sacraments is called a "sacraments elder." There are policies for the qualifications, assessment, and education of lay people to be sacraments elders

2. Diaconal Ministers

The Regional Council must grant a diaconal minister a licence to administer the sacraments when the diaconal minister is serving in a call or appointment, or are employed in another ministry position. The licence will be for the duration of the call, appointment, or other ministry position.

3. Process

The Regional Council is responsible for making a decision on whether to grant a person a licence under section I.2.4.1 above. The community of faith may initiate the process by making a request to the Regional Council that a licence be granted.

In the case of a candidate supply, a letter from the training institution/professor/instructor/mentor noting the completion of a course of study on the sacraments is required and six months of experience with the requesting community of faith. The rationale is that based upon the Candidacy Pathway: Policy Handbook (January 2019), there are three different training paths for ministry. The focus for each is initially on the theoretical and theological. Page 18 "*Acceptance into the Designated Lay Ministry Diploma Program is contingent on approval of an appointment.... Each candidate for ordained and designated lay ministry must satisfactorily complete a Supervised Ministry Education program that involves learning goals based on the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership, reflection on the practice of ministry, and regular supervision and evaluation.*"

Practical experience only happens once appointed to a community of faith, and based on learning goals. There are many concrete lessons to be learned, and relationships to be developed. Therefore, the Regional Council requires the first year to focus on the administrative and pastoral responsibilities of leadership to a community of faith.

4. Terms of Licence

- a) A designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council may administer the sacraments within the bounds of the regional council where they are a member for the duration of the appointment.
- b) A candidate, once having fulfilled the academic and six (6) months of-experience requirements (as explained in Process above), or a diaconal supply who has been appointed to a community of faith may administer the sacraments in that community of faith for the duration of the appointment.
- c) A member who was serving as a designated lay minister at the time of their retirement, and who had been recognized by the regional council as a designated lay minister may administer the sacraments within the bounds of the regional council who is granting the licence. They must act in co-operation with the governing body of the community of faith where they are administering the sacraments.
- d) A Sacraments Elder may administer the sacraments in their community of faith for a 12-month term that may be renewed. The licence automatically ends if a member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister is called or appointed to the community of faith.

The requirements to name and licence a lay person as a sacraments elder can be found in the Sacraments Elder Handbook: https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_sacraments-elders.pdf

The Regional Council:

1. Recognizes that the office of Sacraments Elder was intended for exceptional circumstances, such as the community of faith being considered remote, in that there are no other ministry personnel available with a reasonable distance of the community of faith who are able and willing to administer the Sacraments. *(From Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel (2021) A location is considered remote if at least one of the following apply: • No all-weather road access, and no/very limited scheduled air or rail passenger services; • All-weather road access, however, over 250 km (or 2.5 hours' drive via Mapquest) from a population centre more than 5,000.)*
The absence of a settled, called or appointed minister on a community of faith does not, in itself, trigger the licensing of a Sacraments Elder.
2. The Covenant Support Team confirms the need for a Sacraments Elder and the suitability of the proposed person before the training takes place. The Regional Council of Elders may not concur with the recommendations.
3. The Sacraments Elders Workbook will be the principal guide for instruction on the administration of the sacraments. The Pastoral Relations Minister shall be responsible to provide the training. The training is approximately 16 to 20 hours, timing to be divided between two to four modules with sufficient time between them for reflection.
4. The Covenant Support Team will recommend appointing an ongoing mentor, potentially the pastoral charge supervisor.

5. Upon completion of this process, the Covenant Support Team will bring a motion to the Regional Council of Elders for action.

Administering the Policy

The Regional Council of Elders has adopted the following practice to administer the Policy (MOTION 2021-11-26_006):

Prior to granting such license, the Council of Elders shall:

1. Review and assess the applicant for
 - a) theoretical and theological training acquired through the completion of an accredited course of study on the sacraments. Dependent on the training path verification may be required by the Office of Vocation, the training institution/professor/instructor/mentor.
 - b) practical experience and reflection undertaken with the supervision and guidance of an education or pastoral charge supervisor, or other designated mentor appointed by the Regional Council. Opportunities to gain such experience may include occasions of pastoral visitation in preparation for Baptism, participation in sacramental worship preparation and shared leadership in the administering of sacraments. A verbal or written report of the Supervisor is required.
2. Shall decide based on the experience and learning of the applicant and not on the duration of time. It is noted that the learning goals are candidate specific, learning is contextual, and the opportunities differ among Communities of Faith. In the formation of a new pastoral relationship and dependent on context, adequate practical experience and reflection opportunities may not be available the first six months of a new ministry.

Fair Trade and Coffee Policy

The Regional Council of Elders has adopted the following practice to ensure the use of fair trade coffee and tea be used at regional council meetings (2023-10-03-005 MOTION):

That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders direct the Facilitation Forum to enact the policy that ECORC use fair trade coffee or tea during its general meetings and other events.

A Guide for LLWLs and Communities of Faith in East Central Ontario Regional Council

Policy: A Guide for LLWLs and Communities of Faith in East Central Ontario Regional Council	Date Approved: June 2, 2026
	Review date:
Purpose: Supplement to the United Church of Canada document Licensed Lay Worship Leaders	

Overview

This handbook is a supplement to The United Church of Canada (UCC) document [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#). It focuses on practices related to LLWLs in the East Central Ontario Region (ECOR), and as such may differ from other regions of the UCC. The licensing and relicensing requirements of LLWLs within the bounds of the ECORC are compliant with the document [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#) and are described in full in this handbook. It will be reviewed every year by the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Forum and Network and updated as necessary. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact the LLWL Forum chair or secretary. You may also wish to visit LLWL sections of the ECORC website, where you will find information about the [Forum](#) and [Network](#), a list of LLWLs available to lead worship, a list of frequently asked questions and more.

Please note that this guidebook uses “they” and “them” to refer to individuals in order to be respectful of all gender identities and expressions.

RESOURCES

<https://united-church.ca/leadership/entering-ministry/lay-ministry-and-discipleship/licensed-lay-worship-leaders>

<https://ecorcuccan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/ECORC-Governance-Handbook-May-2025.pdf>

Introduction

LLWLs are members of The (UCC) who have felt a call to serve God in worship leadership. They are licensed by and serve under the direction of the regional council. the East Central Ontario Regional Council (ECORC) to live out that call by serving communities of faith (CoFs) throughout the region. They bring a wide range of gifts from their careers in the business, government and non-profit sectors, in education and self-employment, as parents and volunteers, and as dedicated people of faith. They undergo special training to prepare them to create and lead worship services.

The range of responsibility of LLWLs is quite limited as compared with ordered ministry personnel in that the sole responsibility of LLWLs is to provide pulpit supply on a temporary basis. They are limited in the number of services they can lead and may not be employed by a CoF. They are not permitted to perform the sacrament of baptism, to preside at communion or to officiate at weddings. LLWLs can officiate at funerals, as may any lay person. They typically undertake training at their own expense and receive no pension or other benefits from the UCC. LLWLs must provide extensive documentation of their work and continued professional development in order to have their licences renewed by ECORC every three years.

Serving as an LLWL is a profoundly meaningful way for the laity of The UCC to offer their gifts to communities of faith (CoFs), to live out their calling, and to deepen their own spiritual lives.

The two-year on-line program through which LLWL candidates train offers adult students from all over Canada the opportunity to learn from a facilitator and each other. The mentors are knowledgeable and supportive and enrich the learning of the participants. Lay members of The UCC who discern a call to this path of ministry are encouraged to speak with the chair of the LLWL Forum or the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister and to visit the LLWL Network and LLWL Forum pages on the ECORC website.

All LLWLs and students from the East Central Ontario Region enrolled in the United in Learning/Church LLWL program are members of the ECORC LLWL Network, a group sponsored by the LLWL Forum. Its purpose is two-fold; educational and supportive. Usually, the LLWL Network meets 3-4 times annually, including two in-person LLWL professional development sessions, organized by the LLWL Forum. The sessions also provide opportunities for the LLWLs to share and learn from each other as a community of practice.

Licensing and Relicensing Requirements

Becoming Licensed

Longer-serving LLWLs may have taken their training in a wide range of formats, from intensive study in a small group to multiple weekends over a period of years. New LLWL candidates are trained through the United in Learning/ChurchX online training program, which consists of four modules: Liturgy, Preaching, Prayers and Music, and All Ages and Special Events in Worship. Not all who take the program discern a call to serve as an LLWL. Those who have successfully completed their training and who wish to do so then submit their names to the LLWL Forum for licensing in our region. In order to be licensed, the candidate must provide:

- a current criminal reference check including vulnerable sector;
- A letter of support from their home CoF. This letter simply needs to affirm that the candidate is a member in good standing of the CoF and that it supports the work of the candidate in their congregation and the region. This letter must be voted on by the membership at a congregational meeting or the governing body of the CoF, if the membership has delegated that responsibility to its governing body; and
- proof of completion of two mandatory online courses (Racial Justice and Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders).

The candidate will be interviewed by a group of two or three members of the Forum (one ordered ministry personnel and one or two LLWLs) to establish their suitability to serve as an LLWL and identify any areas for further reflection or work.

When the LLWL Forum is satisfied that the candidate meets the suitability and readiness requirements and has identified any areas for further reflection or work, the LLWL Forum member who is serving as the Corresponding Member to the Covenant Support Team (CST) requests the CST to approve the licensing of the candidate by the ECORC.

Services of Licensing and Renewal of Licences

At the fall meeting of the Regional Council in a service of worship led by the Speaker, ECORC covenants with both those LLWLs whose licences are being renewed and with those lay members who the ECORC has agreed have met the suitability and readiness requirements to be licensed to serve as LLWLs within the jurisdiction of ECORC and under the direction of ECORC. The license is for a three-year period and may be renewed.

Annual Requirements

In non-renewal years, LLWLs must provide these four documents to the LLWL Forum secretary by March 31:

- A new letter of support from their home community of faith. (The content and CoF approval is the same as the original letter of support.)
- an Annual Declaration form that they have no charges or convictions under the Criminal Code of Canada since their last criminal reference check (which must have been obtained within the past five years) OR a Police Vulnerable Sector Check if the last one was obtained more than five years ago;
- a Pulpit Supply Log for the previous calendar year;
- a listing of professional development (PD) activities completed during the previous calendar year; and
- a new Boundaries Refresher course confirmation if the previous course was not taken within the past five years.

Professional Development

LLWLs are expected to participate in at least one of the two workshops to be offered each year by the LLWL Forum. They are also expected to continue to improve their knowledge, leadership skills, and personal growth through participation in other forms of professional development, such as reading, watching documentaries and video series, listening to podcasts, and participating in workshops. Webinars offered by the UCC, individual communities of faith, ECORC, and social justice organizations are other sources of professional development. Participation in Bible studies or other faith development groups in their home CoFs are another source of professional and personal growth.

Renewing Licences

ECORC must renew the licences of LLWLs every three years. The renewal process begins with the LLWL submitting the four documents submitted in non-renewal years. In addition, the LLWL must meet the following requirements:

- submission of a sermon they preached on one of those occasions, together with sources used in its writing (e.g., books, websites, commentaries etc.). This can be submitted as written file or video;

- submission of one original prayer of the people/pastoral prayer and one original opening prayer;
- participation in an informal interview by two or three members of the Forum (one ordained clergy person and one or two LLWLs).

Note: Documents are required to be submitted via email to the LLWL Forum secretary prior to the date the secretary specifies:

Note: Due to the number of interviews required, a third of the LLWLs are interviewed every calendar year.

The LLWL Forum will submit the names of those LLWLs seeking to have their licenses renewed to the CST for approval.

Ending Service as an LLWL

When LLWLs opt to retire from service, they will be recognized by the chair of the Forum and the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister or designate at the fall meeting of the Regional Council.

Oversight and Discipline

The LLWL Forum supports the ECORC Covenant Support Team (CST) and the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister in recruiting, training, interviewing and recommending the licensing of LLWLs. The Forum is also responsible for oversight of the LLWLs and for calling to the attention of the CST any programmatic or performance issues that may arise, including any that may require disciplinary action.

Under the auspices of the CST and the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister, the Forum sets in place procedures to ensure adherence to the policies of The UCC and ECORC relative to LLWLs and to periodically review the practices and procedures described in the following pages.

Policies

In addition to the policies and procedures relative to the licensing and renewal of licensing and annual requirements laid out in the preceding pages ECORC has instituted the following policies governing the use of the services of LLWLs.

Frequency of Leadership

- Generally, ECORC policy is that an individual LLWL may lead worship in a given community of faith for only five of eight consecutive Sundays, to a maximum of 12 Sundays per year. But, as part of the 12 Sundays per year, an LLWL may lead worship in a community of faith for the entire season of Advent & Christmas Eve and/or Lent into Easter Sunday.
- As well, an LLWL may lead worship in their own home community of faith to a maximum of 10 Sundays per year.
- If a community of faith wishes to have an LLWL lead worship for more than this number of worship services, it must seek approval from the ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister. Any affected LLWL should also contact the LLWL Forum chair. These measures are intended to ensure that CoFs work toward a pastoral relationship with ordered ministry personnel rather than simply relying on LLWLs to provide worship without a consistent source of leadership and pastoral care.
- LLWLs are not permitted to serve as their CoF's regular leader; they are limited to providing worship leadership in their home CoF to 10 Sundays a year.

Remuneration

The pulpit supply rate compensates the LLWL providing pulpit supply for time spent on research, reflection, writing liturgy and message and communicating with church staff, as well as for the actual leadership of in-person or virtual worship. The following policies apply:

- ECORC policy is that LLWL minimal remuneration shall be in accordance with the Visiting Ministry Personnel rate as stated in the current UCC Minimum Salaries & *Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel* except that if there are two or more services and locations, the minimum remuneration pulpit supply rate is an additional 25% above the minimum rate of a Visiting Ministry Personnel.
- If there are other scenarios (i.e., three services on a given Sunday or two different liturgies required), the LLWL and CoF representative shall agree upon the remuneration in advance of the services of the LLWL.
- Mileage is also remunerated in accordance with the current UCC Minimum Salaries & *Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel*. This rate is a return rate from the LLWL's home to the preaching location, inclusive of travel between points if there is more than one location.
- The community of faith must provide a cheque (or eTransfer) that includes the Pulpit Supply and the mileage amount, to the LLWL on the same day they provide leadership.

- The pulpit supply rate is also paid in full in the event of a shift from in-person to online on a given Sunday.
- If a faith community cancels its service because of inclement weather, or other reason, the LLWL is still paid the agreed-upon Pulpit Supply remuneration.
- If the LLWL is unable to lead worship (i.e., personal illness, family emergency, hazardous road conditions) or for another legitimate reason, but provides in advance a fully prepared service (including all the prayers and other text, as well as a written sermon) to the point where someone else could lead the service, the LLWL should also be paid in full. Otherwise, there is no payment.

Provision of T4A Form

In accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency guidelines, the CoF must issue T4A forms to all LLWLs to whom it paid more than \$500 during the year. The amount on the T4A should include both a pulpit supply fee and any mileage reimbursement. More information for church treasurers is available through the ECORC website's [LLWL Forum](#) page.

Practices

Home Community of Faith

A CoF that has sponsored an LLWL is expected to invite them to lead worship at least once a year, with payment at the recommended rate, to show support and encouragement. LLWLs are not permitted to serve as their community of faith's regular worship leader.

Home CoFs are encouraged to reimburse a portion of the yearly professional development costs of those they sponsor as LLWLs.

User Communities of Faith

CoFs are encouraged to review their insurance coverage to ensure appropriate coverage of visiting worship leaders is included in their policies. The umbrella policy covering liability for Trustees and other Church officers does not provide coverage for LLWLs.

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Developing Relationship with Ministry Personnel

LLWLs are encouraged to develop a strong relationship with the minister of their home CoF for mutual support, theological and professional discussions, and more. In churches where there is no minister, or where an LLWL might be in a position that makes such a relationship conflictual (such as a the LLWL is a member of the Ministry & Personnel committee, a search committee, etc.), or if the minister is otherwise not available for this relationship, the LLWL should contact the LLWL Forum chair.

Respecting Local Practices and Traditions

Though LLWLs bring unique gifts to their work, they are also expected to ask about and take into account the preferences of the CoF they are serving in areas such as worship format, hymn selection and style of worship leadership.

Respecting Commitment to Community of Faith

On occasion, an LLWL may not be able to lead worship after having promised to do so. It is essential that they communicate as soon as possible with the CoF in order to allow a replacement to be secured.

Using Inclusive Language

In accordance with UCC practice, and because God is beyond words, we can only ever attempt to capture part of the nature of God in language. There are many ways to conceive of God, which is why LLWLs are expected to use a variety of ways to refer to the Divine. Limiting the language we use, particularly to traditionally male imagery, also limits our understanding even as it creates hurdles for some in their relationship to God and personal faith development.

Using Work Credited to Others

As is the case with clergy, LLWLs may wish to incorporate material in their liturgy from other sources on occasion. If so, the author of the material must be clearly credited in the order of service. The sermon, message or reflection should be the LLWL's own work. Plagiarism may be grounds for immediate suspension and non-renewal of an LLWL's licence.

Personal Worship Practice

In order to nurture their own spiritual life and faith development, it is important that LLWLs accept leadership invitations only to an extent that they are still able to attend worship themselves. LLWLs are also expected to read works related to spirituality, theology, the Bible, etc., and spend time in prayer and reflection.

Personal Conduct

Although LLWLs are not employees of the United Church, ECORC or individual communities of faith, they are representatives of the Christian faith and our denomination. They are expected to act accordingly, with honesty, compassion, fairness, inclusivity, integrity, humility and kindness.

Affiliation or Recognition with Other Religious Groups

In keeping with the ethos and practice of the UCC, LLWLs may not seek to be recognized by or affiliated with outside religious organizations in order to perform marriages. Doing so will result in revocation and non-renewal of one's licence.

Pastoral Care

LLWLs will refer any requests or requirements for pastoral care (counselling, home visitation, hospital visitation) to the called or appointed ministry personnel or the pastoral charge supervisor for follow-up.

ECORC

The ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister will organize a service of worship at which the Speaker will preside and which will (1) include worship and (2) will culminate in a liturgy of celebration and recognition of LLWLs who are retiring or have retired during the year, that celebrates and covenants with those LLWLs whose licences are being renewed and those those lay persons who are being newly licensed as LLWLs. The chair and secretary of the LLWL Forum will assist the Pastoral Relations Minister in the planning of the service

Procedures

Arranging for an LLWL to Lead Worship

A list of LLWLs is available on the ECORC website, specifically, the LLWL Forum webpage. CoFs may also gain access to the list by contacting the LLWL Forum secretary directly. The CoF representative is encouraged to contact a given LLWL well in advance and to confirm the number of points for which the services of the LLWL are being requested and the pulpit supply and milage rates, as stated earlier in this Guide;

At a minimum of two weeks before the LLWL is to lead the Sunday service, the representative should provide the following information:

- contact information for the church administrator/secretary;
- a recent order of service;
- information about when the order of service needs to be provided;
- contact information for the music leader, as needed;
- information about the CoF's preferences and availability for hymnal sources used, and other aspects of worship, including whether the order of service is printed or projected;
- details about whether there is a PowerPoint or other visual aspect, and if so, who prepares it;
- notice as to whether the service is simultaneously available live via Zoom (or other platform) to congregants, and/or recorded for viewing later online;
- an idea of whether the congregants tend to prefer a more formal or relaxed style;
- whether there is a requirement for a children's story time during the service;
- if there is a Christ candle, who lights it and when, whether it is battery-operated or a wick;
- participation of lay reader and other individuals during the service;
- whether those in attendance like to name people to be remembered in prayer;
- how the offering takes place;
- whether the choir wishes to meet with the LLWL prior to the service, and
- what typically happens after the end of the service.
- the website address so the LLWL can do a 'virtual visit'; and

- parking information.

Welcoming an LLWL to Your CoF

The first time an LLWL comes to your CoF, they will be unfamiliar with everything from the layout of the building to the way people interact before the service to where to park. It's a great idea to designate someone to greet the LLWL and show them around. Explain how the service works. Some things to explain might include:

- if a wireless microphone, get the LLWL setup, as well as doing an overall sound check;
- location of washrooms is especially helpful, as well as providing water (bottle or glass) for the visiting LLWL;
- If your church offers fellowship time before or after Sunday church service, extend an invitation to the visiting LLWL
- If there are other special elements in the service on a given Sunday.

Reporting Concerns about an LLWL

- In rare instances, your community of faith may have a bad experience with an LLWL. In that case, you are encouraged to contact the current LLWL Forum chair and/or ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister to express your concern so that the concern can be taken up with the LLWL. It is important to ensure ECORC is aware of any problems that may arise so that appropriate action can be taken and the standards of leadership be upheld.

Restricted and Non-Permitted Functions

Funerals

LLWLs may preside at a funeral, as indeed anyone can. An LLWL should, however, only preside at a funeral for members or adherents of a CoF at the invitation of the called or appointed minister. If there is no appointed or called minister in the CoF, the LLWL may preside at the invitation of the pastoral charge supervisor or the chair of the governing body of the CoF. If an individual, the family or a funeral home contacts LLWL directly about presiding at a funeral service, it is expected the LLWL will not enter into any arrangement before consulting as above. If an LLWL conducts a funeral, they must ensure that the information about the service is properly entered in the burial register of the CoF.

Funerals require competency in the area of pastoral care for which LLWLs are not normally trained; therefore, conducting funerals as a side business may be grounds for revoking and non-renewal of one's licence.

Non-permitted LLWL Functions

Being licensed to serve as an LLWL does not entitle a person to:

- serve as a pastoral charge supervisor or representative of the region at Official Board/Church Council meetings;
- apply to or fill pastoral vacancies.;
- use the title Reverend;
- wear a clerical collar, stole or gown;
- preside at services of communion or baptism;
- perform marriages;
- enter into an ongoing relationship of pastoral care with a community of faith or individual members of a congregation;
- advertise their services or solicit invitations to lead worship, through any means, except via appropriate venues designated by ECORC.
- be “on call” with local funeral homes.

Acronym List

CoF	Community of Faith
CST	Covenant Support Team
ECORC	East Central Ontario Regional Council
LLWL	Licensed Lay Worship Leader
PD	Professional Development
UCC	United Church of Canada

Network Information on Regional Council Website

The Regional Council of Elders has adopted the following policy when it comes to Network information on the regional council website (2024-02-06-028 MOTION):

That the East Central Ontario Regional Council Assembly of Elders adopt the policy that only networks' contact-information and a one-line description of the network be shared on the Regional Council website, effective immediately.

Communication Allowance

The Regional Council of Elders has adopted the following policy to support ministry personnel costs for telephone and internet communication plans (2023-11-07-011 MOTION).

That the East Central Ontario Regional Council Assembly of Elders require that the minimum communication allowance be enough to support ministry personnel costs for communication plans for telephone and internet at a value not less than \$1200 per year for both full-time and part-time calls and appointments, effective Nov. 7, 2023 (only affects calls and appointments going forward).

Executive Minister Authority to Approve Expenses Less than \$5,000 Policy

POLICY NAME: Executive Minister Authority to Approve Expenses Less than \$5,000 Policy	Date Approved: November 4, 2025
	Review date:
Purpose: To deal with emergent matters not included in the established budget	

2025-11-04-004 MOTION (J. Payne/S-M Young) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders amend the policy where the Regional Executive Minister is delegated authority to approve expenses for emergent matters not included in the established budget as long as the expenditure is less to reflect a total of \$5000 (not \$10,000) for the anticipated use of emergent matters not included in the established budget.

Amended Original Motion: 2025-10-07-006 MOTION (K. Ostrander/M. Brotherton) That the East Central Ontario Regional Council of Elders establish a policy where the Regional Executive Minister is delegated authority to approve expenses for emergent matters not included in the established budget as long as the expenditure is less than \$10,000 and the total of such emergent expenses in a given year does not cumulatively exceed 5% of the total annual budget. Any expenses over \$10,000 require Executive approval, as does exceeding the cumulative annual amount of 5% of the total annual budget.