

Report from the General Secretary and the Executive of the General Council

Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your children shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your elders shall see visions. —Joel 2:28

THE 45TH GENERAL COUNCIL convened under the theme of "Dreams and Visions" at the Telus Centre in Calgary, Alberta, from August 7-11, 2025. This was the first in-person gathering since 2018. It was a [good gathering](#), appreciated by the commissioners and global and ecumenical guests. Some of the highlights of the Council include:

- the apology to the 2S and LGBTQAI+ communities;
- the powerful reflection of the theme speaker, the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, USA;
- hearing from Youth Forum participants on their dreams and visions for the church
- a presentation on Toward 2035, the denomination-wide strategic initiative to strengthen communities of faith and planning for the future, which included some of the new ministry initiative across the country.

This Council saw the full participation and integration of youth and young adults as well as Youth Forum into the life of the meeting. There were about 94 Youth Forum participants, representing the diversity of the church; about 50% of the youth were racialized.

The [Alvin Dixon Memorial Walk/Run](#) achieved its best level of fundraising, raising more than \$31k. Alvin's daughter and granddaughter were present for the run along the river front in Calgary on Aug. 10, and were later introduced to the Council. We are grateful for all the participants and those who contributed. As you know, the funds are held in the Foundation for support of Indigenous education.

The Council also expressed its gratitude to former Moderator, the Very Rev. Dr. Richard Bott and the Very Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne. The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath was installed as the 45th Moderator.

The Council did not complete its work; usually the unfinished proposals would be sent to the Executive to complete. Part of the challenge was that several proposals came from Commissioners, which the Council committed to deal with. One of the proposals was related to a series of consultations with the Indigenous communities and another was related to the formula for assessment. The Council requested that the General Secretary offer to the Executive a new and more equitable formula that would see communities of faith with more wealth being assessed at a higher rate, and regional councils with more resources, receiving a lesser percentage of the assessment revenue.

The Council also approved a proposal to use 10% of Mission and Service giving for the work of supporting growth initiatives and the [Towards 2035](#) strategy. In addition, the opportunity for

communities of faith, regional councils and the denominational office to experiment with new and innovative ministries was approved.

We will be doing some work this year on the proposal process and our business process for future meetings. The General Council was recalled on September 13, 2025 to finish its work. Following the Council's meeting in Calgary, the new Executive authorized the statement, "[Dreaming a Better World into Being](#)," highlighting the church's commitment to justice and peace. This was a new addition to the work of the Council; a small Public Issues working group identified the issues raised in the Council. You can find proposals and decisions and daily summaries of the meeting here or on the [United Church YouTube channel](#).

Dreaming a new future – Global Partnership Program

After 100 years of ministry and mission, we have embarked on a process of imagining and developing a sustainable and effective global mission programme. As part of that process, we initiated the Pilgrimage of Learning initiative.

Between May and September, four regional delegations – 16 individuals from across The United Church of Canada – visited global Mission and Service partners across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as part of the 2025 Pilgrimage of Learning initiative.

As a transformative initiative, the pilgrimages strengthen global solidarity, amplify partner voices, and affirm the United Church's commitment to faithful presence and mutual learning across cultures and continents. The church's commitment to support its broader mission of decolonizing global partnerships. Learning from these visits will help shape the future of the programme. Mutual Radical Accompaniment supports its broader mission of decolonizing global partnerships.

Telling our stories

Two significant initiatives were launched as part of the Centennial celebration. Firstly, [100 Tables](#) invited communities of faith to share their ministries and welcome in a public and explicit way. Metropolitan United Church in Toronto [constructed a 100ft picnic table](#). Other [stories](#) can be found on the United Church website.

The other initiative is [A Place at the Table](#). This campaign is intended to reach out to Canadians to share the values of the church and to invite curiosity.

The Executive of the General Council (GCE)

The GCE met from September 25-28, 2025. This first meeting of the Executive of the 45th General Council was a time of orientation of the Executive to its work for the triennium. The Executive approved the principles and assumptions of the triennium budget 2026-2028. In November, management will present the budget, based on the assumptions for approval. The setting of the budget will face some significant challenges. We continue to live into the

structural changes with a focus on the Executive understanding and appreciating their role as governors.

We also continue to sharpen and refine the Strategic Plan. Once finalized, we will make this available to the church. A significant focus will be on Toward 2035, a denomination-wide strategic initiative. Toward 2035 envisions a future where the United Church thrives through a strong denominational identity characterized by cooperation and collaboration, better reflecting the diversity of Canadian communities.

It aims to foster resilient and inspired communities of disciples, accompanied by adaptive and effective ministry leaders, less burdened by property and governance requirements. As part of prioritizing this work, we will make a significant budget commitment. It will mean that we will stop some of our usual work.

For more information on the work of the Executive and the General Council, or to [sign up to receive updates](#), please see www.generalcouncil.ca

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Blair', is positioned above the printed name.

Rev. Michael Blair
General Secretary General Council