Volunteers Needed

# **General Council 44 Equity Support Team (up to 6 vacancies)**

*We are looking for people to form a team to support General Council 44 as it strives to be a space of equitable participation and decision-making.*

## Mandate

The General Council 44 Equity Support Team is part of the Council’s leadership. It has responsibilities before, during, and after each regular and any special meetings of General Council 44.

Equity realizes that in order to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all peoples, we need to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some people and groups, particularly from marginalized communities. Equity moves closer to justice, and it is part of the work of the whole church. While working toward equity is a collective responsibility of everyone, the members of the Equity Support Team have a particular role in helping to highlight equity issues at governance gatherings. The Equity Support Team members for General Council 44 will need to be familiar with the Calls to the Church by the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, and will also play a role in helping the church to continue to live its commitments to becoming an intercultural and anti-racist denomination.

## Responsibilities before the Meetings

* Participate in Equity Support Team orientation, including reading background education and policies, as well as engaging in training on equity.
* Attend occasional planning meetings, as needed, to prepare for the Equity Support Team role.
* Work with the General Council Planning Committee and staff to clarify the role of the Equity Support Team within the General Council meetings and how this role differs from and relates to other leadership roles that may be present, such as theological reflectors, chaplains, and Elders.
* Provide a biography, interview, and/or short video as a way of introduction to registered General Council participants and the United Church as a whole.

## Responsibilities during the Meetings

* At the beginning of each meeting, offer a covenant, equity agreements, intercultural lens questions, or other related protocols that can help work toward equity at the gathering.
* Be available (by phone and/or e-mail) to participants at the meeting who would like to share about any equity-related issues over the course of the meeting (including affirming processes or hearing particular challenges that people are experiencing).
* Help the meeting work toward the full participation of peoples of all identities.
* Be attentive to microaggressions, unhelpful power dynamics, harm, intercultural conflicts, oppressive practices, or other inequities.
* If hurt or harm has been identified, relay the information to the moderator or chair of the meeting to be addressed at an appropriate time.
* Offer advice and feedback on the functioning of the meeting in terms of equity, including what has been going well. At minimum, give feedback at the end of each session of the Council (Learning sessions, Discussion sessions, and Decision sessions) and more frequently if the need arises.
* Feedback should focus on the issues and not on specific individuals. Feedback could also include concrete suggestions on how the whole court might continue to practise equity and make the meeting a more anti-oppressive space for all.
* Work collaboratively with staff throughout the process.

## Responsibilities after the Meetings

* Provide feedback about equity for subsequent meetings, identifying what has worked well, what should continue, what requires adjusting, and what needs to be included for future meetings of General Council 44.
* After the 2022 Council meeting, write a report that includes recommendations for future General Council meetings.

## Membership

The General Council 44 Equity Support Team is made up of appointed members who reflect the diversity of The United Church of Canada (diversity with respect to gender identity, racial identity, age, geography, and vocation). Individuals serving as Equity Support Team members cannot be General Council 44 Commissioners.

## Skills and Experience

Equity Support Team members will be active participants in a local pastoral charge or ministry who are

* passionately committed to the mission of the United Church and willing to discern God’s yearnings for this work
* committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their relevance to ministry personnel, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination
* comfortable with and able to participate in electronic meetings

At this time, we are seeking individuals who

* have an understanding of equity and diversity and how these play out in meetings and decision-making
* are able to listen carefully to questions and concerns from meeting participants
* have experience as a member of a committee or working group
* understand processes and governance
* have a willingness to offer proactive strategies or make recommendations to advance equity and challenge discrimination on committees
* can be the non-anxious presence in difficult situations
* bring grace and compassion to the difficult reality of human failings and conflict

This team would additionally be strengthened by someone who brings an intercultural lens to this work based on

* lived experience as an Indigenous, racialized, or francophone person, or
* leadership with Indigenous, racialized, or francophone communities, or those that include a diversity of cultures

## The United Church is committed to working toward the full participation of people with disabilities, youth and young adults, and those who are Indigenous, racialized, francophone, or from other marginalized communities, particularly those identities not currently present on the committee. Individuals with these identities and experiences are encouraged to express interest.

## Expectations and Term

Equity Support Team members will be expected to provide support to General Council 44 in 2022 (Learning, Discussion, and Decision sessions) as well as to annual meetings and any special meetings that occur from August 2022 to July 2025. Some members will provide support on the General Council 45 Planning Committee as the Equity Support Team. Training and orientation for the team will take place in January 2022 leading up to the start of General Council 44 in February. All Equity Support Team members will work in collaboration with staff, and be resourced and supported by the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead staff.

The term of this appointment is until July 2025, with the possibility of reappointment for an additional three-year term.

## Key Dates for Team Members

* Sunday, February 13, 2022: General Council 44 begins
* Wednesdays, March 16 and May 4, 2022: Learning sessions
* June 17–19, 2022: Discussion sessions
* July 21–25, 2022: Decision sessions

**Nominate someone or express your own interest with this** [**online form**](https://unitedchurch.formstack.com/forms/servegc). **Deadline: Monday, January 10, 2022.**

## United Church Commitments to Equity and Self-Determination

The United Church of Canada has made several commitments related to equity and self-determination in recent years. These commitments include the following:

* adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice/un-declaration-rights) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
* adopting the [Calls to the Church](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/indigenous-ministries/calls-church) by the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship
* welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/gender-sexuality-and-orientation) into full membership and ministry in the church
* committing to becoming an [intercultural church](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/intercultural-ministries)
* committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/disability-and-inclusion),
* working toward [functional bilingualism and ensuring that francophone ministries are an integral part](https://unitedchurch.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/s/UnitedChurchCommons/EkJlw2lc22pJklhuMERRQaoBuS4u-yVXJrnYjq2XiFJZOA?e=WbUkPr) of the church’s identity, mission, and vision
* affirming a vision of [empowered youth and young adults](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/children-and-youth) partnering with others and continuing to enliven and transform the church in service of the mission of God
* [opposing discrimination](https://unitedchurch.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/s/UnitedChurchCommons/EpGW32VuFHBFrZ8fnR2IVjQB3eEPbUXPl3VzkjknZJ8y3w?e=I7MjUa) of any kind on the basis of identity
* developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism)