
WINTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**March 15-16, 2024**

Theme: "Contextual Ministry"

The Nakonha:ka Regional Council of The United Church of Canada held its Winter Annual General Meeting on Friday evening, March 15th and Saturday morning, March 16th 2024. The theme was 'contextual ministry', and presentations explored ministry from a variety of perspectives (urban, suburban, rural, indigenous, linguistic, cultural, community-based).

THE FOLLOWING REGISTERED THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE BUSINESS MEETING

Ministry Personnel (44)

Beryl Barraclough, Mead Baldwin, Wayne Beamer, Janet Bisset, Norman Robert Boie, Arlen Bonnar, Dale Breittkreutz, Barbara Bryce, Linda Buchanan, Florence Bukam, Kent Chown, David W Clinker, Gonzalo Cruz, Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Rosa Elena Donoso, Pierre Goldberger, Attila Gyorgy, Éric Hébert-Daly, Helen Hliaras, Lee Ann Hogle, Reg Jennings, Jan Jorgensen, Mher Katchikian, Andrew Lairenge, Rosemary Lambie, Steve Lawson, Joelle Leduc, David Lefneski, Patricia Lisson, Darryl Macdonald, Marie Claude Manga, John Matheson, Alice McAlpine, Jennifer Mountain, Birgit Neuschild, Angelika Piché, Cynthia Reynolds, Maureen Scott-Kabwe, Read Sherman, Darla Sloan, Phyllis Smyth, Tami Spires, Doug Throop and Neil Whitehouse.

Lay Delegates (30)

Denis Ashby, Judy Bachelder, Guy-Lin Beaudoin, Elsa Beaumont, Peter Bisset, Diane Campbell, Jennifer Carroll, Alan Coffey, Elva Crawford, David Drew, Lynn Drew, Undeg Edwards, Johanna Fehlmann, Harvey Satewas Gabriel, Vivienne Galanis, Gerard Gouw, Marc Grenon, Norman Haslam, Marion Hodge, Thomas Kent, Janice Knowles, Jan E. Langelier, L. E. Moir, Johanna Morrow, Valerie Nickson, Helga Ovando, Natacha Sanson, Ivylin Scott, Dorothy Shaw, Frederick (Rick) Sheffer, Paul Stanfield, Diane Stevenson-Cantin, James Vanstone, Fiona Wardrop, and Emilie Wood.

Corresponding Members - Candidates (6)

Adedeji Sunday Akintayo, Lisa Byer-de Wever, Jean-Philippe Dubé-Goupil, Ozioma Obijiofor, Robert Patton and Virginia Wallace.

Regional Council Staff and Office of Vocations Ministers (7)

Shanna Bernier, Judy Coffin, David-Roger Gagnon, Rev. Daniel Hayward, Rev. Éric Hébert-Daly (voting member), Joel Miller and Brian Ruse.

General Council Staff (3)

Rev. Cameron Fraser, Director of Growth and Ministry Development, Rev. Caroline Penhale-Lukacs, Office of Vocation Minister, and Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Tehindrazanarivelo, Responsable des Minstere en francais.

Guests of the Regional Council (9)

Hugh Ballem (interpreter), Alicia Loria (interpreter), Bob Patton, Katherine Pigott, Carol Porter, Alma Ransom, Craig Sauvé, Sarah Wicks-Potter, and Sue Young

Regrets (11)

Carol Bircher, James Christie, Beverly Clark, Denis Fortin, Christine Marie Gladu, Balikis Hassoun, Elisabeth Jones, Floriane Mepoubong, Tolulope Okoilu, Asabi Abiodun Olusola, and Jesse Zink.

Quorum

This meeting had quorum.

EVENING SESSION

November 24, 2023

Registration

Attendees were invited to register online at 6:30 PM for the evening session.

Gathering Music

“Let Us Build A House” Chad Linsley Marie-Claire Saindon

Special Instructions

Rev. Kent Chown, Zoom technical-support for this meeting, provides zoom meeting instructions to participants in particular, the simultaneous translation feature, muting and unmuting, raising and lowering hand, the use of chat, and voting.

Ohenton Kariwatekwon / Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Prayer

Ronwahaweta (Robert) Patton led the Ohenton Kariwatekwon / Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Prayer.

Welcoming to the Land

Satewas (Harvey) Gabriel welcomed delegates to Mohawk Territory. As part of raising awareness of his having completed the translation of the Bible into Mohawk Bible translation project, Satewas read Psalm 46 from the Mohawk Bible.

Land Acknowledgment

Marc Grenon, President, led the Land Acknowledgement:

Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Aboriginal Peoples. It is recognition of their presence, both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation...

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have walked on this land. Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. May we live with respect on this land; united in peace and friendship; as all its people.

In order to promote mutual respect and understanding we acknowledge that the present geographic bounds of the Province of Québec and the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council of the United Church of Canada are located on the Traditional Territory of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Nations Indigenous to Québec are Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Huron-Wendat, Innu, Inuit, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), and Naskapi.

Reminder and Update to Vote on Remit 1 Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

Marc Grenon, President shared that 73% of Pastoral Charges within the regional council have voted; 16 (out of 99) Pastoral Charges have not voted yet. Marc reminded all that it is the governing bodies that vote, and that results can be emailed to the General Council office. It was reported that the National average (at time of this meeting) was 58.6 %.

Welcoming New-Comers and Candidates

Marc Grenon, President recognized that following newcomers to a regional council meeting: Sue Young, Sarah Wicks-Potter, Virgil Joel, Tori Mullin, Cameron Frasier, Carol Porter, Bob Patton were among people designated.

Opening Worship

Rev. Marie-Claude Manga and Virgile Kamga led the opening worship. Delegates were greeted and welcomed with an opening blessing following by a hymn: “Seigneur, Nous arrivons des quatre coins de l’horizon chez Toi”. Following the hymn Scripture was read: Matthew 18:1-4, 18-20. Virgile Kamga shared a reflection entitled

“Listening, Communities Together for a More Accessible Church” Followed by an opening prayer and the singing of hymn: “Mimekupata Yesus”. Rev. Marie-Claude Manga shared a brief reflection on the theme “contextual ministry” and encouraged all to listen for what the Spirit would be teaching through the presentations. Worship concluded with the singing of hymn “Sachez que l’éternel est Dieu Comment ne pas te louer”, and then a closing blessing.

Call to Order

Marc Grenon, President, called the meeting to order

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Sovereign head of the Church, and by the authority of the Conseil Régional Nakhonha:ka Regional Council of the United Church of Canada, I hereby declare this general meeting duly constituted and to be in session for conducting the business which will properly come before it.

Omnibus Motion

Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly, Executive Minister

2024-03-15-16_001 MOTION (Éric Hébert-Daly/Valerie Nickson) that the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council move the following:

1. That the agenda be adopted as distributed;
2. That the minutes of November 24-25, 2023, Fall General Meeting be approved as circulated (see **Appendix A**);
3. That the 2023 Financial Statements of the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council be received as circulated (see **Appendix B**);
4. That the Regional Council appoint BCGO S.E.N.C.R.L. to conduct the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council’s 2024 review engagement;
5. That the 2023 Financial Statements of the Finance & Extension Board be received as circulated (see **Appendix C**);
6. That the Regional Council appoint BCGO S.E.N.C.R.L. to conduct the Finance & Extension Board’s 2023 review engagement;
7. That candidates and those present as invited guests of this Regional Council, be named as corresponding members of the Court
8. That the following people serve as Scrutineers: Rev. Kent Chown and Norm Haslam;
9. That the following person serve as Parliamentarians: Rev. Rosemary Lambie (Friday), Rev. Darryl Macdonald (Saturday);
10. That the following people serve as Chaplain: Rev. Cynthia Reynolds and Normand Robert Boie;
11. That Rev. Rosemary Lambie, Lisa Byer-de Wever, Virgile Kamga G., Shanna Bernier and David-Roger Gagnon serve as the Equity Support Team;
12. That this meeting includes the behavioral covenant:

One Voice: Called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and place as we offer our varying gifts,

Many Voices: We commit to keeping God at the center of everything we do;

One Voice: We confess, that we have not always lived up our vision of community, we need the Spirit to reorient us, to live an emerging faith, challenging us to live by grace rather than entitlement,

Many Voices: We commit to be truthful in our communications by: speaking for ourselves; and speaking purposefully;

One Voice: We are called as a diverse community of people celebrating our differences;

Many Voices: And so, we commit to honouring our intercultural vision through welcoming the conflict of ideas; making space for the full and equitable participation of all, enabling especially people who are quiet to speak; being mindful of our body language; listening carefully without interruption and separate people from problems;

One Voice: We are called to be bold disciples,

Many Voices: As we live into our call to discipleship we will hold one another to account when we do not keep to our commitments; We will take a future orientation in our discussions and imagination; demonstrate appreciation; And honouring the decisions of the body;

One Voice: We are called to lead in hope with purpose and vision as members of a community held and inspired by God, partnering with God in the mending of the world

Many Voices: So, we commit to keeping the discussion at the table and to be faithful stewards of our time.

All: We affirm that we are Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, to offer leadership to The United Church of Canada as it seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice. Amen

In the 2022 Manual (see page 204), the expression Holy Manners is translated as rules of conduct based on respect and benevolence.

CARRIED

Equity Support Team

A small presentation and video was shared giving examples of the unconscious processes shaping observation and perception, and how people engage with one another. Those in attendance were asked to remember that they are continuously making associations, ordering, understanding, and interpreting their world, and to pay attention to how their unconscious perceptions are influencing their engagement. The Equity support Team included the following people: Rosemary Lambie, Lisa Byer-de Wever, Virgile Kamga N., Shanna Bernier, and David-Roger.

Chaplains

Chaplains for the meeting were: Rev. Cynthia Reynolds and Norman Robert Boie.

Theme Presentations

- All presentation are available on the regional council website: <https://nakhakaucc.ca/event/regional-council-gathering-march-2024-online/>
- a) **Advantages and Disadvantages of small rural churches**
Carol Porter, member at Ayer's Cliff United Church, highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of small rural churches.
- b) **Rural/Urban Context**
Rev. David Lefneski, minister at Cowansville United Church, highlighted contextual ministries from and urban and rural context, emphasizing community partnerships, and what they can look like in both contexts.
- c) **Small Group Discussion**
Following these presentations, participants were invited to breakout into small groups for discussion, focused on contemplating the following question:

1. What stood out for you in these presentations?

Theme Presentations

- All presentation are available on the regional council website: <https://nakhakaucc.ca/event/regional-council-gathering-march-2024-online/>

a) **Gifts of the Small Rural Church**

Rev. Tori Mullin, Growth Animator for the regional council, highlighted the gifts of the small rural church. Tori defines what is meant by rural, focused on some of the challenges, suggested some growth initiatives for rural congregations and shared some resources, like the United Church Rural Ministry Network <https://ucrmn.ca/>.

b) **Indigenous Context**

Ronwahaweta (Robert) Patton, Kahnawake, QC, highlighted the Mohawk-Cree Teepee project taking place in Kahnawake, and of which Robert's son Bobby Patton is extensively involved in. The project is designed to allow Cree and other First Nations Peoples traveling from northern territories to find a culturally safe place to gather, cook traditional food and do traditional activities near Montreal.

c) **Small Group Discussion**

Following these presentations, participants were invited to breakout into small groups for discussion, focused on contemplating the following question:

1. What stood out for you in these presentations?

Good Night Blessings

Rev. Marie-Claude Manga and Virgile Kamga shared a closing Blessing and a video presentation of a song sung by the Kigali Choir, called "Sachez que l'éternel est Dieu".

MORNING SESSION

March 16, 2024

Gathering Time

Attendees were invited to log on at 8:45 AM for the morning session.

Gathering Music

"Jesus Christ is Waiting" Chad Linsley Marie-Claire Saindon

Special Instructions

Rev. Kent Chown, Zoom technical-support for this meeting, provides zoom meeting instructions to participants in particular, the simultaneous translation feature, muting and unmuting, raising and lowering hand, the use of chat, and voting.

Welcoming Back!

Marc Grenon, President, welcomed all participants back to the meeting and invited any newcomers to acknowledge themselves and be welcomed.

Morning Blessing

Rev. Marie-Claude Manga and Virgile Kamga lead the morning blessing, opening with a call and response, and prayer. This was followed by a some video presentation of Comme le chandelier by Dorcas Kaja.

2023 Report Book

- See Report Book (2023) as **Appendix D**

- a) **President's Report** – Marc Grenon, President shared some highlights from the President's Report in the Report Book (2023)
- b) **Executive Minister Report** – Rev. Eric Hebert-Daly shared some highlights from the Executive Minister's Report in the Report Book (2023)

2024-03-15-16_002 MOTION (Éric Hébert-Daly/David Clinker) that the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council receive and approve the Report Book (2023). **CARRIED**

Updates to Governance Handbook

Marc Grenon, President brought attention to a policy change as it related to the regional council's property and finance leadership team, as well as an updated terms of reference for the regional council's strategic fund.

- a) **Delegation of all Property & Finance matters to the Finance and Extension Board (F&E)**
 - see *Policy on delegation of all Property and Finance matters the Finance and Extension Board (F&E)* as **Appendix E**

2024-03-15-16_003 MOTION (Peter Bisset/David Clinker) that the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council receive for information the Policy on delegation of all Property and Finance matters to the Finance and Extension Board (F&E), having taken effect on January 18th 2024. **CARRIED**

- a) **Nakhonha:ka Regional Council Strategic Fund Terms of Reference**
 - See *Nakhonha:ka Regional Council Strategic Fund Terms of Reference* as **Appendix F**

2024-03-15-16_004 MOTION (Denis Ashby/Rick Sheffer) that the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council receive and approve the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council Strategic Fund Terms of Reference (funding has been made available starting with the February 15, 2024 granting cycle). **CARRIED**

There was some concern that the amounts of money available were not significant, and that new initiatives takes staff time. The example was given that an intern's salary in an « entry position » in The United Church of Canada would be paid more than 10k \$.

Updates from the Nominations Leadership Team

- a) **Reconsidering the Position of President-Elect**
Rev. Linda Buchanan, chair of the nominations leadership team, mentioned that the Nomination Team is considering eliminating the position of President-Elect, which would reduce the amount of time expected for the President to serve (down to two years instead of three). This consideration also takes into account the difficulty of finding volunteers to commit for extended periods of time.
- b) **Reconsidering the structure of the Executive**
Linda also shared that the nominations leadership team, in response to the mandate it was given at the past annual general meeting to reconsider the structuring the Executive, has held two consultation meetings, open the members of the regional council and member of La Table. Having considered the feedback received during these meetings, the nominations leadership team proposed the following recommendation:

2024-03-15-16_005 MOTION (L Buchanan/Jennifer Mountain) that the Nakhonha:ka Regional Council extend its directive to the Nomination Leadership Team to study and prayerfully reflect on the Regional

Council's terms of reference of its Executive, and report back its recommendations at the annual general meeting in March 2025. **CARRIED**

Message from General Council

Cameron Fraser, General Council Representative, Director of Growth and Congregational Development brought greetings from the General Council office. Cameron highlighted that on June 9th there will be a kick-off celebration, launching a series of celebrations planned for throughout the year, marking the 10th anniversary of The United Church of Canada. Cameron also shared that during the month of June, young people, young adults and youth leaders will gather in St Catherines, Ontario, as part of the Rendez-vous gathering, shared this year by The United Church of Canada and Presbyterian Church. In the fall of 2024, the Moderator will be in the regional council offering her Flourishing workshop. Lastly, Cameron reminded all to vote by March 31st on Remit 1: establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization.

Theme Presentations

- All presentation are available on the regional council website: <https://nakonhakauc.ca/event/regional-council-gathering-march-2024-online/>

a) Community Perspective

Craig Sauvé, City Councillor – Southwest Borough of Montreal, shared a viewpoint from a community perspective (that being outside the church). Craig, in his role, named what he referred to as the 3 P's: 1. Presence, 2. Proactivity and 3. Pertinence, as tenants of creating good visibility within his community. Craig also highlighted that it is important to remain focused on the primary objective of any obligation or purpose, which is usually established at the beginning of a mandate or project, before expanding to other areas. Craig shared his experience of working with Saint-Columba House, and highlighted its work within the community, how they are nourishing people by providing space for fellowship (which he stressed as being important when people are feeling stresses economically, environmentally, and socially), and how they are a hub of activity within the community. Craig encouraged any organization wanting to branch out into the community to follow this same approach (creating space for people to share their burdens and stresses in healthy ways and reestablishing a sense of support within the community), and emphasized how the church is uniquely positioned for this role in any community.

b) Community Ministry

Katherine Pigott, interim Executive Director, Saint Columba House, shared that Saint-Columba House was established in 1907, served 10, 185 hot meals to low-income residents in 2023, and that it offers a range of intergenerational programming (listing examples). Katherine explained that among a few existing challenges, is the changing demographics of the community (gentrification and growing income inequality). Saint Columba is addressing this and other challenges by looking towards making urgent repairs to its building and strengthening ties with community partners to strategize how to respond to the communities' changing needs.

There was some discussion following this presentation: 1. highlighting that there has been a recognition of Saint-Columba House by the borough for its good work, 2. That Saint-Columba House does not consider Christian evangelism and witness as one of its functions (instead it acts specifically in serving the needs of the community) 3. That funding for repairs should come from the National Church (as it is the official owner of the property).

c) Small Group Discussion

Following these presentations, participants were invited to breakout into small groups for discussion, focused on contemplating the following question:

1. What stood out for you in these presentations?

Break

A 10 minute break was shared by all.

Gathering Music

“There is Room for All” Chad Linsley Marie-Claire Saindon

Building and Strengthening Relationship Project

Rev. Dan Hayward, Pastoral Relations Minister, highlighted the activity stream “Building & Strengthening Relationship with Communities of Faith”, which is part of the strategic plan focusing on renewal. This activity stream’s goal is to reconnect communities of faith and ministries to be more supportive across the urban-rural differential. To achieve this objective, teams will be established to build relationships and provide support to each community of faith. The teams will be equipped to accompany the communities, enabling honest discussion and sharing news of best practices. Each month throughout 2024 six teams of two will be preparing to visit a number of ministries.

Theme Presentations

- All presentation are available on the regional council website: <https://nakonhakaucc.ca/event/regional-council-gathering-march-2024-online/>
- a) **Respect & Kanoronhkwátshera (respect and love)**

Lisa Byer-de Wever shared that Respect & Kanoronhkwátshera is a project of the Living into Right Relations of the regional council and thanked the Seeds of Hope Grant and the regional council for their collaboration with the project. The project has many goals, and its desire is to emphasize First Nations Peoples justice activities while facilitating contact between First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous organisations. The project has three phases, which include, building a database of content, engaging people with content, and connecting with groups to create or support advocacy and events for justice.
- b) **Welcoming Migrants**

Adedeji Sunday Akintayo, to begin his presentation, share a music video of Sunmisola Agbebi singing Aileyipada (Unchangeable). Adedeji shared that in 2023 the Darién Gap jungle in South American saw 520,000 people passing through it to cross to USA and Canada. In 2022 the refugee organization at Beaconsfield United Church welcome 11 Africans who passed through this jungle before crossing into Canada. Many migrants were driven from their homes to escape economic crises, government repression, violence, corruption, and attacks and killings of LGBTQ2+ people. Adedeji emphasized that The United Church of Canada needs to continue to open its doors for spiritual and physical healings of these migrants’ multi-various pains. Moreover, the church needs to defend and speak for the persecuted migrants.
- c) **Urban Cultural/Linguistic Communities**

Rev. Rosa Donoso, Église unie Camino de Emaus, highlighted many of the ongoing activities at the church, which includes, providing a place of worship, celebrating marriages and funerals, worshipping with Église unie St-Jean, providing a space where the community can come together and share meals, participate in ecumenical worships, celebrating with children, taking care of seniors, hosting a family Bible camp, holding fundraisers for those in need, and being a family to all who do not have any family. Église unie Camino de Emaus is celebrating its 28th anniversary this year.
- d) **Small Group Discussion**

Following these presentations, participants were invited to breakout into small groups for discussion, focused on contemplating the following question:

 1. What stood out for you in these presentations?

Congregational Health and Growth in Urban, Suburban and Rural Contexts

Cameron Fraser, General Council Representative, Director of Growth and Congregational Development, called upon participants to reflect on what it meant for them, that growth is the principal priority of The United Church of Canada, as it sets out to respond to its vision and call of bold discipleship, deep spirituality and daring justice. Cameron highlighted that to achieve this objective of growth, The United Church of Canada is working hard at intensifying its invitation and renewing existing ministries to help them grow. Cameron asked participants to reflect on what was happening in their own communities of faith, where there were already signs of growth, and what are some of the causes for helping growth.

Equity Report

Rev. Rosemary Lambie, Past-Executive Minister, and part of the Equity Support Team shared that this meeting was being evaluated using an equity scorecard. On average, the meeting proceeded very well. Participants were reminded to introduce themselves when participating in group discussions. Rosemary highlighted that it was good to see a diversity of ministries and outreach methods within the regional council. It was suggested that timing on the agenda needs to be spaced out a little more, as not to take away from discussion time, and that perhaps in the future, teaching sessions could be offered at different times throughout the year. It was highlighted that when voting, abstention is reserved for those in a conflict of interest. Also, that is a good place for offering thanks and appreciation to leaders and presenters.

The equity scorecard is available on the regional council website, and all are encouraged to use it for their meetings.

Closing prayers

Rev. Marie-Claude Manga and Virgile Kamga closed the meeting in prayer and shared a hymn video entitled “Chorale sainte famille” Sung by La paroisse sainte face de Jesus.

Ne wahtkwanonweraton - Thanksgiving Prayer (Closing Words)

Rev. Read Sherman, Co-Chair of the Living Into Right Relations Leadership Circle, shared the closing words of the Ne wahtkwanonweraton - Thanksgiving Prayer.

Next General Meeting Dates

- Spring General Meeting, May 24-25th 2024 (location to be determined);
- November 1-2, 2024
- (2025 dates are on the website)

Conclusion

The Chair declares that all of the business having come before this Annual General Meeting has been duly completed, and that the meeting be concluded at 12:35 PM .

Marc Grenon, President

Rev. Éric Hébert-Daly, Executive
Minister

Joel Miller, Recording Secretary**Appendices**

Appendix available on the Regional Council website (under download documents):
<https://nakonhakaucc.ca/event/regional-council-gathering-march-2024-online/>

Appendix A Minutes of November 24-25, 2023, Fall General Meeting

Appendix B	2022 Financial Statements of the Nakonha:ka Regional Council
Appendix C	Amended 2022 Financial Statements of the Finance & Extension Board
Appendix D	Report Book (2023)
Appendix E	Policy on delegation of all Property and Finance matters the Finance and Extension Board (F&E)
Appendix F	Nakonha:ka Regional Council Strategic Fund Terms of Reference