

Northern Spirit Regional Council

The United Church of Canada

The Regional Council



As of January 1, 2019, the Northern Spirit Regional Council of The United Church of Canada came into being. It is made up of elected Lay and Youth Representatives of Communities of Faith, Ministry Personnel (active and retired), and others within a geography encompassing 1,567,442 km² and the territories of Treaties #6, #8, #10, #11.

The Regional Council also includes several incorporated and other associate ministries, which are connected to The United Church of Canada, and fulfill specific ministry needs throughout the Regional Council.

The Regional Council Structure was established by a Transitional Commission that was appointed by the 43rd General Council of The United Church of Canada in 2018.

At the inaugural Gathering of the Northern Spirit Regional Council in May 2019, the Transitional Commission was replaced by an elected Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive. The Regional Council Executive has the powers of the Regional Council between full Council gatherings, except for those areas the Regional Council intentionally reserves only for itself. According to The Manual (2019), the Executive may also serve in the place of the full Regional Council for the purposes of holding its annual meeting.

Two presiding positions within the Regional Council were established: the Annual Gathering Convenor, and a separate Chairperson of the Regional Council Executive.

The Convenor of the Annual Gathering, upon election, presides at the next Annual Meeting, and is a corresponding member of the Regional Council Executive. The Convenor is a member of the next Annual Meeting Planning Team. The Convenor also has a role in encouraging ecumenical and interfaith linkages within the Region, and represents the Regional Council at local community of faith events and milestones.

The Chairperson of the Regional Council Executive presides at the much more frequent Executive meetings. The Chairperson is the public spokesperson for the Regional Council if needed, and attends occasional meetings within the United Church requiring a Regional Council Executive representative.

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Governance Structure

With the Regional Council Executive, two Commissions and several committees form the basic working structure of the Regional Council: a Pastoral Relations Commission, a Property Commission, Committees for Ministry Personnel Support, Communities of Faith Support, Lay Leadership Support and Nominations, and an Annual Meeting Planning Team. A regional Youth Council is being formed. Together with the Executive, the Commissions and the Committees work with the Northern Spirit Regional Staff to provide decision-making and follow-up action for the basic goals and functions the Regional Council must fulfill within our developing structure.

Task Groups are established as necessary to carry out specific work as assigned by the Regional Council Executive. At present, these include the Affirming Ministry and the Mission and Ministry Grants Task Groups.

In order for the Regional Council to be a community of connexion that encourages mission through different ways of leading, thinking, and gathering, funds are made available to support clusters and networks within the bounds of the Regional Council.

Local clusters of communities of faith provide community and support for their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning.

In 2019-2020, the Regional Council supported gatherings of the North-Eastern Ministries Cluster, the Northern Ministries Cluster, and the Indigenous Ministries Cluster.

Networks link people working on specific issues (e.g. supportive housing, intercultural ministry, youth ministry), or for project work (e.g. event planning) that serves the whole church, depending on the issue. Networks are not necessarily based on geographical area.

In 2019-2020, the Regional Council supported the Being Good Relations and Western Intercultural Ministries networks, as well as the network of Women of the United Church.

The Regional Council Structure is not chiseled in stone. As its vision, and the mission and ministry needs and focuses of its Communities of Faith evolve, the Northern Spirit Regional Council is well able to adapt and grow into its future.

