

Template: Writing a proposal for the annual meeting of a Regional Council or for the General Council, The United Church of Canada

What is a proposal? Proposals call on the Regional Council or General Council to make a decision or set policy on behalf of the church. Proposals must reflect the responsibilities of the Regional Council or General Council. For example, if you would like the United Church of Canada to address a social justice or policy matter with the federal government, your proposal would be addressed to General Council. If you would like the Regional Council to adopt inclusive language commitments in its services of worship and business, the proposal would be addressed to the Regional Council.

Who can make a proposal? Any member of the Regional Council, any Community of Faith or other recognized ministry, or any governance body of the Regional Council. Clusters and Networks may make proposals through a member of the Regional Council. A member of the Regional Council is: someone who is ministry personnel; an elected lay representative for a Community of Faith; or an individual who has been made a member of the Regional Council by an act of the Executive or the Annual Meeting (for example, a lay member of a Commission).

When can we make proposals?

Generally, proposals are submitted to the annual meeting of the Regional Council. Proposals that need to go to General Council must still be submitted to the Regional Council meeting. It's strongly preferred that proposals be included in the official documents for the Regional Council meeting, so that delegates have time to reflect on it and staff have time to add and post the Proposal. Please check with your Regional Council office and/ or website for deadlines. Most Regional Council annual meetings happen in May or June, so the deadline is often no later than early April.

Who decides? The Proposal will be sent to the annual meeting of the Regional Council for discussion, discernment, and voting. The meeting has the right to make amendments to proposals to the Regional Council, and whether or not to submit the proposal to the General Council. In some circumstances, a proposal can be sent to the Regional Council Executive.

More information: The Manual (2021), Section F.1

And now: on to actually writing your proposal. Try to keep it brief, and please explain any acronyms or abbreviations, and any specialized language. Please include the following in your Proposal, using the headings in bold:

1. What is the issue? (Please give a short, clear summary.)

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- do something about...
- engage the topic of...
- respond to the challenge of...
- etc.

2. Why is this issue important?

What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

What is the history/background of this issue?

What are the principles informing this issue?

3. How might the Regional Council or General Council respond to the issue?

Name a possible response that the Regional Council or General Council might consider, such as:

- Study/discussion of an issue
- Adopting clear policy related to an issue or concern
- Action on the issue that could involve the church, others, or both.

These points could include:

The Regional Council or General Council directing that a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters. (Note: The Regional or General Council could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself, without making a policy decision or taking other action.)

The Regional Council or General Council encouraging/suggesting action by communities of faith and other ministries on the issue. (Note: Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process, but not as expectations of a particular outcome.)

Final check:

Ask someone less familiar with the issue to read this over for you if possible.

Is the Proposal making a request that is within the power and responsibilities of the Regional Council or General Council?

Is the wording as clear as possible? Have acronyms or specialized language been explained?

Can your Proposal meet the necessary deadlines?

Please submit your proposal in Word format to the Regional Council office.