



NORTHERN SPIRIT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



January 16, 2024

**From:** Rev Helen Reed, chairperson, Northern Spirit Regional Council

**To:** Pastoral Charge Board or Council secretaries, chairs, and members; ministry personnel, pastoral charge supervisors, and lay delegates to the Regional Council:

Greetings again as we follow up with a second letter to all pastoral charges. The Regional Council again invites your careful consideration of a significant process underway across the United Church. Currently, a Category 3 Remit is before the church, focused on creating space for a National Autonomous Indigenous Organization within the United Church of Canada.

**What is the Remit?**

A “Remit” is a vote by Regional Councils or by Regional Councils and Communities of Faith to change the Basis of Union.

When Remits are authorized they are on important topics that should be taken seriously by all of our Communities of Faith. It is our responsibility to become informed about the topic and to respond faithfully to the question being asked. Should a Community of Faith fail to respond, then a vote against the Remit is recorded.

By March 31, 2024 the Board or Council of each of our Pastoral Charges should have responded to Remit 1, which asks:

Does the regional council/pastoral charge agree to amend the Basis of Union to reflect

1. That The United Church of Canada will be organized as follows: (1) a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council; and (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization; and
2. That once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established within The United Church of Canada, it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes, and, therefore will not be subject to the remit process under section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union; and



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3. The changes required for the establishment of the autonomous National Indigenous Organization.

When the structure of the United Church changed to the three-council system we now have, our Indigenous family members asked us to give them time to discern their place within the new structure.

The National Indigenous Council has named its vision of the two parts of the church (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) working side-by-side and asked that that “all the structural barriers to developing and sustaining an autonomous Indigenous Church with The United Church of Canada” be identified and removed.

They don’t want to separate from us, but want to decide their own structure with the United Church – as each Region did as they formed themselves.

This work we are all asked to do is part of our commitment to build on the Apologies, The Calls to the Church, and many other Right Relations commitments that the United Church has made.

**Checking in by phone**

In early February the Region will be calling pastoral charges who have not yet voted, to see what assistance the Regional Council can offer you.

**Invitation: Remit learning time 2, Tuesday January 30, 6:30PM MST, 7:30 PM CST**

We will again have an open learning conversation on the Remit. This time we are honoured to work with Gloria Cook, Fisher River Cree Nation and member of the National Indigenous Council; Rev Murray Pruden, Saddle Lake Cree Nation and Executive Minister, Indigenous Ministries and Justice; Rev. Shannon McCarthy, Regional Council Executive Minister. [Please click here to register](#). Be sure to check your email spam folder if you do not get the automated reply from Zoom in your inbox.



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All welcome, whether your pastoral charge has voted or not. We strongly encourage everyone to read, prior to the gathering, the [latest letter from the General Secretary](#) and to watch two short videos first: [Perspectives on the Remit from the National Indigenous Gathering](#), and a new video on [questions addressed by members of the non-Indigenous church](#).

**Further resources**

There are many national and regional resources, videos, and opportunities for conversation around this Remit. Take advantage of them to engage in this important decision. All of them [can be found on our Regional Council Remit page](#).

Please take your responsibility to make an informed decision to heart.

If you feel a “No is the correct answer, then be sure that is an informed and deliberate decision.

If you feel that you can support this Remit, please don’t wait until the last minute to submit your “Yes”.

As of 15 January, 25 out of 91 eligible Pastoral Charges in Northern Spirit have voted on the Remit. That will mean that, within the next two months, we need 75% of our Pastoral Charges to send their votes in. We are being asked to support people who are already an integral part of our church.

Please make sure your vote is submitted soon.

Blessings,

Rev Helen Reed, *Chairperson:*  
Northern Spirit Regional Council