



# 2018 Year in Review



The Right Rev. Dr.  
Richard Bott,  
Moderator



Nora Sanders,  
General Secretary

## Dear friends in Christ,

In 2018 our church made the most substantive changes to its governance structure since it was founded, not as an end in itself but to allow more room and energy for God's work and ministry in the 21st century, and for us to more clearly see and embrace the challenges of being church in a secular society.

Since the 43rd General Council, we have been greatly heartened by the new work that is emerging and by so many people coming forward to offer their gifts. The new General Council Executive is a vivid example of the changes in the church: a group of people who reflect the diversity in the church and are committed to leading it through the triennium. It's certainly an exciting time as we seek to live out God's work through the example of Jesus.

The 43rd General Council was a transformative and Spirit-filled event for us both and for the United Church as a whole. The Council not only made some very significant decisions, including supporting the Calls to the Church from the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle, but also conducted its business in a new and more transparent way. Then, in the final hours of the gathering, we heard passionate voices telling us of the continuing struggle for full inclusion by racialized people and people living with disabilities.

Now that the work of restructuring is complete—and here we'd like to express our deep gratitude to the many regional council staff and Transition Commission members for their tireless efforts!—we look forward to a renewed and revitalized focus on faith and discipleship, and to discerning how we can truly live into that call for change as disciples of Christ.

Photo: The United Church of Canada



The Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott was elected Moderator on July 26, 2018. Follow him on [www.facebook.com/ModeratorRichardBott](https://www.facebook.com/ModeratorRichardBott).

# Refugee Update

In 2018 The United Church of Canada was one year short of marking 40 years of refugee sponsorship.

As a denomination, we were among the first 10 organizations, mainly faith-based, to sign a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada in 1979.

There has been a marked increase in the number of congregations wanting to sponsor, particularly since 2015 with the global awareness of the Syrian Crisis of fleeing refugees. Afghans, Syrians, Pakistanis, Yemenis, Iraqis, Congolese, Eritreans in Israel, Rohingya, and LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people continue to be refugee populations of concern. We encourage more congregations to sponsor LGBTQIA2S+ refugees, who are one of the most marginalized and persecuted groups, either through the specific program for this group or through the government-referred program (Blended Visa Office Referred).



Photo: ACT/Paul Jeffrey

Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan

# Settlement Agreement: Lessons Learned

In November, 20 people gathered in Toronto to discuss the United Church's experience of one of the most important undertakings it, and indeed Canada, has undertaken: the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Residential school survivors, non-Indigenous allies, and current and former staff searched for lessons learned from the agreement in order to inform future agreements and our ongoing work of reconciliation.

The biggest lesson? That a legal agreement alone will never bring reconciliation—only



Photo: Sara Stratton/  
The United Church of Canada

relationship-building can do that. The United Church findings will be part of a broader report from all parties to the agreement, and will also help shape the church's next steps in reconciliation, *Being Good Relations*.



Photo: The United Church of Canada

The Rev. Lawrence Nyarko and the Rev. Ned Wells in the prayer room

## The Prayer Room

A small prayer room at the 43rd General Council in Oshawa became a space for commissioners and guests to pray together for their communities, their families, and the work of the church. At set times during the day, teams would gather in the room to pray for every pastoral charge and new region in the United Church, as well as for those named on prayer cards filled in by people on the plenary floor.

The room was just a small part of a much bigger three-year Faith Formation pilot

project that has as its goal nurturing Christian faith formation and discipleship across the church. Being able to articulate what we believe as a church and taking actions that are congruent with what we believe are becoming increasingly important in a secular world. The pilot will connect about 150 congregations to access best practices, provide training and mentorship, share information digitally, collaborate with partner denominations, and more.

Watch for more news on this Faith Formation initiative in 2019 through 2021.

## Diverse 43rd Executive

Where there used to be 50 voting members, the new church structure now has 18 voting members on the General Council Executive. They include the Moderator, Immediate Past Moderator, General Secretary, and one member chosen by the National Indigenous Council.

This group reflects the church's commitments to becoming an intercultural church; to the full participation of people with disabilities; and to our continuing journey to be a transformative, justice-seeking, and equitable church where there is full participation of all.

# Review of 2018 Giving



Dear Friends,

## **We give thanks for all gifts in 2018.**

We make great things happen through Mission & Service and through the ministry of our local churches. Thank you for generous giving that changes the world.

Thank you for \$22.257 million in giving by congregations, UCW, and individuals to the Mission & Service of the church!

Generosity continues to be practised across the church, with giving from congregations, UCW, and individuals. We did, however, see an overall decrease of \$948,000, or 4.09%, as the church continues to experience significant change and decreased numbers of members and adherents. We note with thanks that this is close to the previously budgeted decrease for 2018.

In 2018 an increase in giving from the United Church Foundation and in specific designations, combined with a decrease in gifts from wills and planned giving, resulted in total gifts of \$24.240 million to the Mission & Service of the church.

## **Contributions to Mission & Service**

1. \$22.257 million in annual giving by congregations, UCW, and individuals
2. \$0.855 million in giving through wills and planned giving
3. \$1.128 million giving from The United Church of Canada Foundation

**TOTAL:** \$24.240 million in total gifts to Mission & Service Unified Fund in 2018

## **Contributions to Mission & Service partners and other mission and ministries**

4. \$2.110 million in specific designations and *Gifts with Vision* catalogue gifts to Mission & Service partners
5. \$0.130 million in Emergency Appeal gifts
6. \$1.626 million in specific designations to other work of the denomination

**TOTAL:** \$3.866 million in total designated gifts in 2018

## **Total contributions received at the General Council Office: \$28.106 million**

**As we look forward into 2019 and 2020, there remains a significant opportunity to increase participation in congregational and Mission & Service giving through**

- articulating the strengthened role of the Mission & Service of the church with
  - the addition of Embracing the Spirit to Mission & Service
  - the clarified role of Mission & Service in mission and ministry as proposed in the new funding formula
- providing congregational and Mission & Service giving program leaders with proven resources as well as coaching and mentoring from our experienced staff

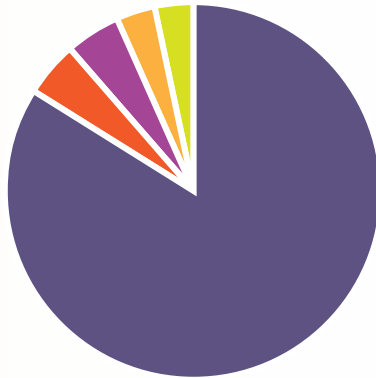
**Thank you all for your generous gifts.**



Photo: Springwater Hester-Meawassige/The United Church of Canada

# Thank You!

## SOURCES OF \$24,240,000 IN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MISSION & SERVICE UNIFIED FUND



- Congregations \$20.370 million
- Wills and Life Insurance \$0.855 million
- UCW \$1.133 million
- United Church Foundation \$1.128 million
- Individuals, Other Organizations \$0.754 million

“[L]ove the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30–31

You are at the centre of the **Mission & Service** story. Your generosity is a tangible example of God’s love in the world. Each and every day you are saving lives. Through giving for **Mission & Service** you are offering the world an outward expression of your faith in a loving God who calls us to care for creation.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of a grid of stained glass window panes. The panes are filled with various colors including yellow, blue, red, and white, with black lead lines separating them. The graphic is partially cut off by the right edge of the page.

# Financial Snapshot

## The United Church of Canada

With the ratification of structural changes by the General Council, considerable effort was focused on implementation planning and one-time investments to support the transition. Operating results were within expectations except for investment returns, which were especially weak at year-end and slightly negative overall for the first time in nine years. The financial result for 2018 is a small operating deficit and a reduction in total assets. The audited financial statements are available online (see [www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/ways-give](http://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/ways-give).)

The year 2018 was the first complete year working with reduced (by 60 percent) office space at the General Council Office in Toronto and various other initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint across the country. The new Faithful Footprints program offers educational materials and congregational grants for upgrading environmental efficiency. Electronic meetings are increasingly the norm across the country as a way of saving money to focus more resources on mission. Church bodies are increasingly using the same systems and tools as a way to achieve economies of scale and save money. All of these activities reflect the need for faithful stewardship and ongoing cost containment as the church at all levels lives into new ways of being church.

## The United Church of Canada Foundation

In 2018, individuals and communities across the country continued to generously support the long-term work of the church through the Foundation. We are grateful for the support the General Council has shown since the Foundation's inception, including the transfer of its long-term assets in 2013. As of December 31, 2018, the Foundation had \$66,953,135 in assets and provided a total of \$6,723,159 in grants. In 2018 the Foundation's Board awarded 54 grants from the Seeds of Hope Granting Program totalling \$449,966; 17 grants from the New Ministries Fund totalling \$396,800; 28 scholarships, bursaries, and academic awards totalling \$121,666.67; and 16 grants from the Good Samaritan Fund totalling \$228,988. The Foundation also granted \$1,169,372 to the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada and gave \$676,025 to Mission & Service partners and the United Church's funds and programs.

# Faithful Footprints

This year saw the official launch of Faithful Footprints, a program to reduce 80 percent of the United Church’s carbon emissions by 2050 in line with the Paris Accords, through grants of up to \$30,000 per community of faith.

The program offers trained consultants and engineers who can help communities of faith find everything from quick fixes to an extensive energy audit. They can recommend upgrades for all building needs, from lighting, heat, and hot water to solar panels, heat pumps, and more.

Visit [www.faithfulfootprints.org](http://www.faithfulfootprints.org) for more information and application forms. Take time to read the inspiring stories of



Photo: Woodlawn United Church

A Faithful Footprints grant, a successful “buy a panel” program, and the Halifax Regional Municipality’s Solar City loan program enabled Woodlawn United Church in Dartmouth, NS, to install this beautiful solar array that will reduce their carbon footprint and energy costs.

churches that found renewal and growth after their retrofit.

And if you are looking for worship and other action resources on climate change, visit the United Church’s Climate Change page on [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).

Faithful Footprints is a partnership of Faith & the Common Good and The United Church of Canada.

# Equine Assisted Learning Program

Ten Indigenous boys gathered in Prince Albert in July for a week of community, Traditional Teachings, and Ceremony, and to receive valuable lessons from some unique equine teachers. The Equine Assisted Learning Program at Cartier Farms provides people with the tools to improve their communication skills and further develop problem-solving skills.

Indigenous Ministries developed this program in response to the inequity these youth face in their lives. Traditional Teachers and Elders provided knowledge that is necessary for Indigenous boys to grow into



Photo: Wilf Dieter

strong men. We hope the tools they gained will assist them in navigating injustice and systemic racism.



Photo: Kim Uyede-Kai/The United Church of Canada

Iridesce display

## Iridesce: The Living Apology Project

Iridesce is a project of story-sharing with all affected by the church's 1988 decision to declare that "all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, who profess their faith in Jesus Christ are welcome to be or become members of The United Church of Canada" and that "all members of the United Church are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry."

The stories will help the church discern whether and how it might live into an apology to LGBTQIA2S+ people. Launched in late 2017, the project has visited 10 Conferences, collected 270+ stories, and engaged with 1,025 participants at 31 workshops.

As part of the project, an Iridesce Theatre Presentation based on the memories and words of Iridesce participants was presented at the 43rd General Council in July. The play starts off set in a time just before the

United Church's 1988 vote to welcome gay and lesbian people in membership and eligibility for ministry in our church. It then respectfully dramatizes the struggles and challenges some in our church faced around this vote. Finally, it explores the ongoing struggle that some allies and LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit ministers, students, lay people, and youth continue to face in our United Church communities of faith.

In 2019 Iridesce will reach out to more marginalized voices—racialized, Indigenous, Two-Spirit, disabled—as well as communities of faith that are not Affirming but want to engage the issues and may have in the past felt isolated from the conversation.

Learn more at [www.iridesce.ca](http://www.iridesce.ca) or e-mail [livingapology@gmail.com](mailto:livingapology@gmail.com) for more information.



# Change? What Change?

The year 2018 was a landmark one leading toward the biggest restructuring in the United Church's history since 1925, including changing from four courts to three councils, creating a new financial model, and establishing an Office of Vocation for the denomination.

**February 2018**

**1**

Boundaries are set for 16 new regional councils. Relationships for Indigenous communities of faith are to be decided at a later time by the Indigenous Church through ongoing consultations.

**2**

**March 2018**

Provisional Executive Ministers for the regional councils are appointed.

**June 2018**

**3**

A new assessment formula is communicated throughout the church.

**4**

**July 2018**

Remits are enacted by the 43rd General Council, leading to the restructuring. Regional Transition Commissions are appointed to take the steps to establish the new regional councils as of January 1, 2019.

**5**

**September 2018**

Board of Vocation members are appointed to oversee the new Office of Vocation, which will develop processes for entering ministry, and accreditation and oversight of ministers.

**6**

**October 2018**

*An Act to amend the United Church of Canada Act* is introduced in the Senate by Senator Peter Harder.

**December 2018**

**7**

The completely rewritten *Manual* goes online. The old structure with 85 presbyteries and 13 Conferences comes to an end. The General Council Executive is reduced from 50 voting members to 18 voting members.

All of this was accomplished by the implementation date of January 1, 2019, through countless hours of volunteer and staff time.



Photo: The United Church of Canada

Youth Forum members lead a Ceremony of Remembrance at the 43rd General Council.

## Youth at the 43rd General Council

Embodying the theme of the 43rd General Council—Risking Faith, Daring Hope—youth from across the church came to offer hope, strength, faith, and determination to the Council, even amidst their own challenges, enthusiasms, and feelings of helplessness.

One youth from each of the 13 Conferences was also selected to take part in a cross-country pilgrimage toward General Council in Oshawa, Ontario, that was concluded several weeks later. Travelling from east to west, these 13 representatives and their 2 young adult leaders met United Church members engaging in a variety of ministries that live out God’s mission in the world.

At General Council, the Youth Forum led a Ceremony of Remembrance, recalling the Apologies that were offered to Indigenous people for their loss of land and culture, and for the trauma caused by residential schools. During the ceremony, the youth invited table groups to braid together streamers—red, black, white, and gold—to remind members of the Council that our lives, faith, and health are woven together in various ways to create a strong and vibrant United Church of Canada.





Photo: The United Church of Canada

The Board of Vocation

## Office of Vocation

Faithful, equipped, and effective leadership is a critical component of vital pastoral leadership in our local communities of faith and beyond. Fifteen years of research, surveys, and studies led to the conclusion that a denominationally based Office of Vocation with regional connection would free up local energy for God’s mission.

After Remit 3: Office of Vocation was enacted by the 43rd General Council in July, work began in earnest to create the Office, the processes around accreditation and oversight of ministers, and several related committees and commissions.

With an appointed Board of Vocation, five standing committees, and seven candidacy

boards across the country, supported by staff deployed in the regions and at the General Council Office, the Office of Vocation will bring a new approach to consistent discernment and preparation for ministry, vocational support, and timely resolution when concerns are raised.





Photo: Chelsea Brooke Roisum, @cbrphotography

Women Peacemakers Delegation at Vancouver Convention Centre, January 2018

## United Church Stands with WomenPeaceKorea

“Prepare the table for peace!”

With this encouragement, an international Women Peacemakers Delegation gathered on the steps in early morning rain at the Vancouver Convention Centre to greet global leaders gathering for January 2018’s Summit for Peace and Security in Korea.

The delegation represented global women’s networks, peace movements, and faith-based groups and included the Rev. Moon-Sook Lee of the National Council of Churches in Korea—a Mission & Service partner—and Patti Talbot, United Church North East Asia partnership staff.

In May, the same women’s delegation walked alongside 1,200 other women in South Korea mobilizing for peace in the Korean peninsula. They reflected the long-standing United Church and partner commitment to promote engagement and dialogue on the Korean peninsula, challenge sanctions, work toward a treaty to end the Korean War, and strengthen the global movement to build peace, not conflict.

What can communities of faith do? Visit the [Join Korea Peace Now!](http://www.united-church.ca) webpage on [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) to find out how you can participate in the growing movement for a lasting peace.

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