



# Volunteer Needed

## **Representative to The Canadian Council of Churches: Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group (1 vacancy)**

*Who can keep up with the dizzying pace of developments in life sciences and biotechnology? The Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group (FLSRG) revels in sharing ethical reflections on these developments and discerning principles for how best to respond.*

### **Mandate**

The Canadian Council of Churches is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body now representing 26 member churches, including Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, and Historic Protestant traditions.

The Faith and Life Science Reference Group (FLSRG) revels in sharing ethical reflections on developments in life sciences and biotechnology and discerning principles for how best to respond. The current priorities for 2021–2024 for the FLSRG are artificial intelligence, gene editing, and bio-enhancement.

Gene editing and bio-enhancement technologies intersect with a number of social, ethical, and theological issues, including the human quest for healing and improvement, concerns about transhumanism and radical biomodification, anthropological and spiritual questions about who we are as God-created human beings, effects on the environment and on agriculture, challenges to traditional cultures, and decisions about how we choose to shape our world.

Artificial intelligence and related technologies are being adopted at an increasing rate. Some AI is clearly helpful. At the same time, more and more ethical questions are being raised about limitations, about human capacity being outstripped by machines, about changes in education, and about the effects on spirituality as questions of consciousness develop.

Beth Baskin, Network Coordinator, Identity and Mission, is the staff resource to the United Church's representative. Dr. Peter Kuhnert and Dr. Rosemary Meier are the co-chairs of the FLSRG. The group is made up of members who have a background in ministry, theology, ethics, science, or medicine.

### **Skills and Experience**

Representatives on the FLSRG should have an openness and interest in AI, gene editing, and bio-enhancement as these relate to ethics and faith issues. A knowledge base in ethics, theology, and some aspect of science is an asset. We are seeking people who are

- critical thinkers, able to make complicated concepts more accessible to the church as a whole
- discerners, who can synthesize information and consider principles to guide faithful responses
- curious, ask questions and seek to understand the implications of evolving technologies on faith and humanity

The representative will be a member of a United Church community of faith or ministry who is

- passionately committed to the calling of the United Church and willing to discern God's yearnings for this work
- predisposed to collaboration and teamwork
- able to listen and discern
- committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination
- comfortable with and able to participate in electronic meetings
- able to commit the time required for this responsibility

### **Equity Commitment**

The United Church is committed to working toward the full participation of people with disabilities; youth and young adults; people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, racialized, or francophone; people active in French ministries; people who speak a primary language other than English or French; and people from marginalized communities not named here. This is a part of the United Church's commitments to equity and self-determination, as well as eliminating barriers and working toward the full participation of all peoples. Individuals with these identities and lived experiences are encouraged to express interest.

### **Expectations and Term**

The term of appointment is three years, beginning November 2024, with the possibility of reappointment for an additional term. The group currently meets monthly on the last Monday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET, but timing may change depending on group availability. The meetings consist of a mix of learning and reflecting on issues and developing events (such as webinars) and materials.

The representative is expected to attend a United Church orientation to this work and remain in communication with relevant staff throughout their term.

### **Learn More**

Additional information can be found on the [Reference Group's](#) webpage.

See [united-church.ca/opportunities](https://united-church.ca/opportunities) for information on this and other opportunities.

Use this [online form](#) to nominate someone or express your own interest.

**Deadline: Thursday, October 24, 2024**