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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Ever since its inception in 1925, The United Church of Canada has embraced change as it strives to better serve its members. Accepting new ideas is in keeping with the Bible's teaching, which instructs us to "Be strong and courageous...for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Presbyteries might keep those words in mind as they consider remits approved at last summer's 42nd General Council in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Delegates there authorized that eight remits should be considered by presbyteries (five of them are also being considered by pastoral charges), as the approval of any or all of these eight will bring about substantive, denomination-shaping changes to our church's Basis of Union.

The three remits being voted on by only presbyteries are: (5) Ministry Partners within Mutual Recognition of Ministry Agreements, (7) Candidacy Pathway, and (8) Towards a New Model of Membership. The five remits being voted on by both presbyteries and pastoral charges are: (1) Three-Council Model, (2) Elimination of Transfer and Settlement, (3) Office of Vocation, (4) Funding a New Model, and (6) One Order of Ministry.

It is vitally important that every presbytery cast a vote on all eight remits, as an absolute majority is needed for a remit to pass, not just a majority of those who vote. If an absolute majority of presbyteries pass a remit (plus an absolute majority of pastoral charges for each of the five sent to them), the remits will then go to General Council 43 for approval in 2018, to be held in Oshawa, Ontario.

Please note: If a presbytery does not vote, that is considered a vote AGAINST the remit question.

The eight remits and comprehensive study guides are available on the 42nd General Council website at GC42.ca/remits. Paper copies are being sent only to those pastoral charges lacking electronic access. For the sake of the environment, and in recognition of modern communications practice, the majority of the remit material will be online.

Each study guide explains how the church's operations would change if the remit is approved, along with detailing what is currently in place. **Please note the deadlines, highlighted at the end of this document.**

Explanatory videos and webinars will also be offered on GC42.ca/remits. During the webinars, senior staff and elected members will answer questions from participants across the country about a specific remit. These live video conferences will focus on, for example, the proposed Office of Vocation (accreditation and discipline of ministers), Assessment and Finances (how the United Church is funded), and One Order of Ministry (moving from having three streams of ministry to one).

If you can't catch these webinars live, look for links on GC42.ca/remits to view them at any time after they are first shown. To receive e-mails alerting you to upcoming videos or webinars, subscribe to [news updates](http://newsupdates.gc42.ca/news) (gc42.ca/news—click "Subscribe here" in the first line).



In addition, church members at any level can e-mail their questions about the proposed changes to remits@united-church.ca. All queries will be answered by one of our staff members.

Keep in mind that while each of the remits should be considered separately, changes sparked by the approval of one remit will automatically be applicable to the others. For example, if Remit 1 passes, changing the church's four-council structure to three, all references to the four-council structure in other remits should be considered a reference to the three-council system.

Please follow the instructions on the ballots you receive in the mail and send us back the ballots by the dates highlighted at the end of this letter. If you need a replacement ballot, contact Alison Jordan at ajordan@united-church.ca. In voting, you will be responding to both the question posed and the proposed new wording of the Basis of Union.

These are exciting times for us, and times of change provide the perfect opportunity to reflect deeply on what it means to be a church—this church—and to act on those reflections.

So please carefully read the study guides, and prepare to make important decisions about the future of The United Church of Canada.

Yours in Christ,



Nora Sanders
General Secretary, General Council
The United Church of Canada

Important remit deadlines

Remits 1, 2, 3, and 4 results must be received by June 30, 2017.

Remits 5, 7 and 8 results must be received by February 17, 2017.

Remit 6 results must be received by February 28, 2018.

Mail ballots to:

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(or fax 416-232-6006)