

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FIRST DAWN EASTERN EDGE REGIONAL COUNCIL
REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE
June 5, 2025 at 9:30am via video conference

RC1

ATTENDANCE

Attendance

Doreen Cave, Jocelyn Cook, Elizabeth Dawson, Oliver Dingwell, Faith March-MacCuish, Liberty Matabire, Emma O'Rourke, Rebecca Pike-Winter, Susan Sheppard, Elsie Squires, Dorcus Yohan.

REGRETS

Regrets

Juanita Andrews, Limon Daka, James Ravenscroft.

WELCOME

Welcome

The newly installed President, Elsie Squires, welcomed members to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to newly appointed members to the regional council; Juanita Andrews, United Church Women representative; Limon Daka, Human Resources chair; Liberty Matabire, Communities of Faith Support & Planning chair; Susan Sheppard, President-Elect; and Dorcus Yohan, General Council representative.

OPENING DEVOTIONS

Opening
Devotions

Elsie Squires led the opening devotions based on the theme of gardens. The President offered a reading from an unknown author, *God and I*, and opened the meeting with prayer.

QUORUM AND CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL

Quorum

The President, Elsie Squires, noted that a quorum was present and constituted the council in the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, for all the business that shall properly come before it.

Constitution of
the Court

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

Acknowledging
the Land

The President began the meeting by acknowledging the land on which we gather, work and worship. The island of Newfoundland is the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We also recognize the Inuit and the Innu as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful partnerships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation.

AGENDA

Agenda

MOTION: (Doreen Cave/Elizabeth Dawson)

That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

CHECK-IN

Check-In

New and returning members of the Executive took time to introduce themselves and to check-in with each other.

MINUTES

Minutes

MOTION: (Jocelyn Cook/Emma O'Rourke)

That the minutes of the March 4, 2025 meetings of the Executive be adopted.

CARRIED

MOTION: (Rebecca Pike-Winter/Oliver Dingwell)

That the minutes of the April 4, 2025 meetings of the Executive be adopted.

CARRIED

Business
Arising**BUINESS ARISING**Green Bay
South Review**Green Bay South Review**

The Executive Minister provided an update on the items coming from the review. There is one remaining workshop to take place, and the Regional Minister is currently working with the pastoral charge to set a date for this work.

UPRC
Vacant Land
Proposal**United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) – Vacant Land Proposal**

The Executive Minister noted that a meeting took place on June 4, 2025 with Miriam Bowlby to provide UPRC with the details regarding the square footage requirements for the new building space. Another meeting will be planned with a small working group to further determine the proposed future building specifications. The Executive Minister, a representative from the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources and Oliver Dingwell from the Executive, agreed to be part of this small group. Once completed, a revised proposal will come back to the Executive.

George Street
UC Property
Task Group**George Street United Church Property Task Group**

The Executive Minister reported that the task group met this week, and also hosted a tour of the property with a developer. The developer will prepare a proposal for presentation. The Executive Minister reported that the current struggle with the task group is in finding a property manager for the space.

MOTION: (Oliver Dingwell/Rebecca Pike-Winter)

That the George Street United Church Property Task Group be enabled to negotiate with Kindred Works regarding building management of the property.

CARRIED

(Dorcus Yohan left the meeting)

Cochrane Street
UC**Cochrane Street United Church – CCOPC**CCOPC

The Executive Minister provided an update on this property. The congregation has made the decision to close, however the region is currently working with the congregation to determine the future of the outreach ministry before the disbanding can happen. The CCOPC board wishes to transfer the property to First Light and the congregation are in agreement with this action. The details of the debt and financial responsibility of the building and its creditors have not yet been determined. The region's lawyer is currently working through a response from the board to determine the next steps.

100th
Anniversary**100th Anniversary**

The Executive Minister provide an update on the 100th anniversary celebrations. Many representatives from across the church are arriving for the celebrations, including Executive Ministers and Presidents from across the country. During the visit, staff leadership meetings will be taking place, and volunteers will be working throughout the community in food banks, outreach ministries and clean-up projects. On Sunday morning, two staff leaders will attend local area churches, with one staff being the guest preacher. The national anniversary service will take place at 7:00pm on Sunday, June 8. Gower Street United Church is hosting this service. Efforts are underway for an additional commemorative service in Blackhead in the fall, as the site of the oldest Methodist church in North America.

Garnish-
Frenchman's
Cove PC**Garnish-Frenchman's Cove Pastoral Charge**

The Executive Minister reported that the commission has now been named. Work to hold an annual meeting and work on governance and future directions will now begin.

Regional Grant**Regional Grant for Repairs and Maintenance**

This work is currently with the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources. A proposal will come to the Executive once it is ready.

Hillview Pastoral Charge**Hillview PC**

The Regional Minister and Acting Chair of Pastoral Relations have visited the pastoral charge and are working through possible future directions with the communities of faith. The Regional Minister is currently working through the Mission Articulation Plan (MAP) with the pastoral charge.

Cemetery Policy**Cemetery Policy**

The Executive Minister reported that a cemetery policy has been drafted by the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources. The policy provides guidelines for pastoral charges in developing policies and keeps in mind the sacred trust that lies with the church for the care and operation of cemeteries. The draft document will be circulated to Executive members for review and feedback so that the policy can come to the September meeting for approval.

Blanket Insurance**Blanket Insurance**

The Executive Minister noted that a special meeting of the Executive will be required to look at this matter. The Division of Finance and Administrative Resources are currently gathering necessary information from pastoral charges for decision making.

Toward 2035**Toward 2035**

This discussion will come to the fall Executive meeting in September.

Affirm Vote**Affirm Vote**

The Executive Minister reported that the Affirm vote passed with a great endorsement at the annual meeting. The next steps will be for the committee to work with the region and Affirm United regarding the celebration service. The Affirm Committee has not yet met to have this conversation and planning.

CORRESPONDENCE**Correspondence**

1. Rev. Roscoe Cole – Letter received with thanks for the Christmas gift received from the region.
2. Rev. & Mrs. George LeDrew - Letter received with thanks for the Christmas gift received from the region.

Thank you**BREAK****Break****REPORTS****Reports****PRESIDENT****President**

The President, Elsie Squires, noted her excitement for the work ahead, and reported that she has already represented the region through attendance at several funerals and anniversary celebrations.

EXECUTIVE MINISTER**Executive Minister**

The Executive Minister reported that the three annual meetings are now completed for the eastern regions. The Executive Minister offered thanks and appreciation to all who planned, prepared and presented the pieces for the annual meetings. With heavy hearts, the staff committee will soon be starting work on filling the position for the regional minister in Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council. The Executive Minister also noted that General Council will meet in August.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH SUPPORT AND PLANNING**Communities of Faith Support and Planning**

Liberty Matabire, chair, noted that the division met on June 3, 2025. The division discussed many issues, including an update on Pastoral Units and a report from the Mission Consultation and Accountability Team, which highlighted some issues with the MAP process.

Finance and
Administrative
Resources

FINANCE AND ADMINSTRATIVE RESOURCES – Appendix A

The Executive Minister presented the report on behalf of the division, included in the appendix.

MOTION: (Liz Dawson/Susan Sheppard)

That First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council Executive empower the Executive Minister to obtain a fair market value appraisal of the Cochrane Street United Church premises, as well as an evaluation of the rental income for the fifteen (15) apartments on the property.

CARRIED

Human
Resources

HUMAN RESOURCES

No report.

Nominations

NOMINATIONS

Emma O'Rourke, chair, noted that no meetings have taken place since the annual meeting. The committee will be working next week on filing vacancies remaining after the annual meeting took place.

MOTION: (Emma O'Rourke/Jocelyn Cook)

That the following be added to the respective committees: Valerie Peyton Kingsbury, Annual Meeting Planning Team, Secretary, and Alice Moores, Affirm Committee member.

CARRIED

Regional
Council
Services and
Support

REGIONAL COUNCIL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Rebecca Pike-Winter reported that the division will meet again soon. The chair asked that everyone complete the annual meeting survey when it is circulated, and asked Executive members to please help in suggestions to fill vacancies on the division.

General
Council
Representative

GENERAL COUNCIL RESPRESENTATIVE

In the absence of the new representative, Oliver Dingwell offered a report, highlighting the August meeting of the 45th General Council, and the national website for information coming from General Council.

Tri-Regional
Staff Support
Committee

TRI-REGIONAL STAFF SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Doreen Cave, reporting member of the committee, noted that two persons have been named for the interim replacement of the regional minister position in Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council. Work of the committee will continue with the search for the successor for the Regional Minister, as well as working with staff to revise the Memorandum of Understanding for the three regions.

United Church
Women

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

No report.

Affirm
Committee

AFFIRM COMMITTEE

No report.

MOTION: (Jocelyn Cook/Liberty Matabire)

That the reports of the region be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

(Jocelyn Cook left the meeting)

MOTION: (Doreen Cave/Emma O'Rourke)

That Jenny Stephens be a corresponding member to the June 5, 2025 meeting of the Executive.

CARRIED

REGIONAL COUNCIL STRUCTURE EVALUATION

Regional
Council
Structure
Evaluation

The President welcome Jenny Stephens, consultant, to the regional council. The consultant provided an update on the evaluation of the regional council structure, including the context for the report, process, scope, and key findings; noting that the full report will be available in late June. The consultant began with a scripture reading from 1 Peter 2:4-5 and 9. The consultant reviewed the current structure, and priorities identified by the region.

Over the course of the evaluation, the consultant completed four (4) surveys, attended meetings, and reviewed minutes, newsletters and governance documents. The consultant noted that there was an approximately 10-30% (ten to thirty percent) response rate among the four surveys. The consultant noted that, while not a particularly strong response, the surveys did provide important data for the evaluation.

The consultant reminded Executive members that there is a significant change curve in emotional response that occurs with major change. The 2019 restructuring of the United Church caused great disruption, resulting in fear and resistance. Recovery from disruption takes time to recover from, before acceptance and openness brings confidence in the new.

The consultant provided key findings, including the fact that regional members are offering the best leadership they can in this time of transition, although sometimes this work is not visible to the region. It was noted that since the change in structure, there has been a change in the context in which the church exists, there are more struggling communities of faith and more feelings of isolation. Members are providing information to communities of faith, committees are well run, and participants in the structure are satisfied. Data was shared from the results of each of the four surveys, highlighting key points based on the feedback received; that the regional council is making progress in living out its values and mission.

In conclusion, the consultant provided an overview of widely held organizational principles to guide the next steps including having decision making closer to the issue or task; empowering volunteers and staff; focusing on those served; listening to one another; streamlining and strengthening; being flexible; and ensuring strategic focus that requires fewer volunteers. As a result of the evaluation conducted, the consultant recommends that the Executive become more strategic; that the current divisions be re-named and re-grouped into three divisions; that licensing and pastoral relations be added to the Division of Communities of Faith Support and Planning; that one layer of governance be removed by having teams kept as working groups; and that orientation be offered to support those engaged in the work of the region; that more connections be fostered with communities of faith; that more ways be implemented to hear from communities of faith; and that plans continue to roll out the Health, Joy and Excellence Institute.

The consultant invited the executive to consider the following from the information presented: any surprises?; what's missing?; what do you notice?; what do you wonder about? And completed her presentation with prayer.

The President thanked Jenny Stephens for her extensive work on the evaluation and for her presentation and attendance at the meeting. The President expressed that the region looks forward to seeing the full report.

MEETING DATES 2025-26

Meeting Dates
2025-26

The Executive discussed meeting dates for the 2025-26 year. The following Executive meeting dates were agreed upon:

September 4-5, 2025 – in person at Regional Council Office

(beginning at 9:00am on September 4)

November 26, 2025 at 9:30am – via Zoom

March 24, 2026 at 9:30am – via Zoom

June 24, 2026 at 9:30am – via Zoom

It was noted that additional meetings will be called by via Zoom video conferencing, if needed, for business arising.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the President declared that the meeting adjourn.

Next Meeting

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Executive is scheduled on September 4-5, 2025 at the Regional Council Office in St. John's, beginning at 9:00am on September 4, 2025.

Benediction

BENEDICTION

The President, Elsie Squires, closed the meeting with benediction and prayer.

Rev. Elsie Squires
President

Rev. Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister

Appendix A

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES

**REPORT TO
FIRST DAWN EASTERN EDGE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE
June 5, 2025**

In the absence of a Division Chair, I am pleased to provide this report on behalf of the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources relating to items discussed at a meeting held on April 4, 2025.

CEMETERY GUIDELINES

For some time the Region has noted the absence of, and need for, guidelines relating to United Church cemeteries in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over past months, information was gathered from various sources, following which a preliminary draft was prepared and reviewed by members of the Division and Regional Office staff.

The following motion was carried:

That the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources recommend to First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Executive adoption of the draft Cemetery Guidelines.

COCHRANE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PERFORMANCE CENTRE (CCOPC)

The following motion was carried:

That the Division of Finance and Administrative Resources empower the Executive Minister to obtain a fair market value appraisal of the Cochrane Street United Church premises, as well as an evaluation of the rental income for the fifteen apartments on the property.

REGIONAL INSURANCE POLICY – FOR INFORMATION

The Executive Minister has received forms that are necessary to gather insurance-related information, and they will be circulated to pastoral charges/congregations with a request for completion and return in July.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Andrews - Secretary