

GC45 – Calgary, Alberta (August 7-11, 2025)

The 45th General Council, held from August 7–11, saw United Church members from across the nation unite in faith and reflection on the church’s path forward, joined by global, ecumenical, and interfaith partners. Following the triennial meeting, The United Church of Canada renewed its commitment to justice, peace, the integrity of Creation, and the flourishing and well-being of all peoples and the world.

“Dreaming a Better World into Being: For the Sake of God’s Beloved World” stems from several decisions made at General Council 45 in Calgary, Alberta.

The church calls for urgent action on peace and justice issues internationally:

- ongoing genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza;
- violence and violation of human rights in many parts of Latin America; and
- lasting tensions on the Korean peninsula.

It urges all levels of Canadian society to:

- defend those Indigenous Peoples most affected by the climate crisis and those without access to clean drinking water;
- reiterates the church’s [apology to 2S and LGBTQIA+ communities](#) for harms done by the United Church past and present; and
- calls for government action to revoke harmful legislation related to these communities.

The statement includes urgent calls for action by government and wider society on several other issues, including:

- housing and mental health crises faced by youth and young adults;
- the overdose crisis and lack of harm reduction resources;
- increasing polarization; and
- erosion of democratic processes.

GC45 Decisions Made

Four Commissioner proposals

Four Commissioner proposals, received during Council, were presented to the court for learning and discussion.

Decisions

The Court spent most of the rest of the day in decision sessions with the following proposals approved:

[WF23: AUD01 Audit Committee Recommendations:](#) Carried.

[WF24b GCE05 Assessment Funding Rate for 2026-2028:](#) Carried.

[WF27: GCE03 Supporting Towards 2035:](#) Carried.

[GC45 WF25: COM04 Elected or Not:](#) Carried.

[GC45 WF26: GCE01 Review the Roles of the Moderator and General Secretary:](#) Carried

[GC45 WF37: YCOM01 National Youth Council \(NYC\):](#) Carried as amended.

[GC45 WF20: TICIF02 Revised Principles for Justice Work:](#) Carried.

[GC45 WF32: NAK01 Development of an AI Policy for the United Church of Canada:](#) Carried.

Omnibus proposals

Some proposals were addressed through Omnibus proposals:

GC45 GS10 Omnibus: Implementation for Summer 2025

Having reviewed the Way Forward proposals, where there was strong consensus among discussion groups, the General Secretary recommended the 45th General Council approve an omnibus proposal which resulted in the following being carried:

- [GC45 WF14: ARW01 Rejecting Christian Nationalism for Summer 2025](#)[GC45 WF19: SW04 Harm Reduction Sunday for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF34: PM01 Emerging Communities of Faith for Summer 2025](#)

GC45 GS11 Omnibus: Take No Further Action for Summer 2025

This omnibus proposal, addressing proposals where there was little to no support in discussion groups, resulted in the 45th General Council taking no further action on the following:

- [GC45 WF03 HF04 Vocational Review and Discipline Accountability Policy for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF28: COM02 Faith Workers Bill of Rights for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF29: COM03 Autonomy of Communities of Faith and Their Assets for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF30: EOO02 Gospel for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF31: HF03 Remit and Proposal Integrity Policy for Summer 2025](#)
- [GC45 WF39: EOO01 Accessibility of Church Decision-making for Summer 2025](#)

At the close of the decision session, the Council discussed the following way forward proposal: WF43 COM07 Living into Right Relations – All Relationships Need to be Rooted in Truth, Respect, Transparency, and Built on Trust.

The Council ultimately withdrew the way forward proposal, returning to the original COM07 [Living into Right Relations – All Relationships Need to be Rooted in Truth, Respect, Transparency and Built on Trust](#) proposal. This original proposal passed after a motion to extend the Order of the Day also carried.

GC45 Recall Meeting – Sept. 13, 2025

The 45th General Council met today in an online meeting to address unfinished business from the August 7-11 meetings in Calgary, Alberta. About 180 Commissioners joined the recalled session to deal with a number of Way Forward proposals, including several related to just peace in Palestine and Israel.

The following items were approved:

[GC45 WF13: Proposals on Israel and Palestine HF01, SW02, SW03, SW05](#): These four regional proposals and were combined by the Way Forward committee based on feedback during the discussion groups in August. The recommendations in HF01, SW02, SW03, and SW05 were affirmed, recognizing that many pieces of work are underway or have taken place. The court directed the General Secretary to apply the Principles for Justice Work as actions were planned and implemented.

[GC45 WF41: SW06 The IHRA Antisemitism Definition - A Threat to Charter Rights](#): This proposal passed with an overwhelming majority, including formally endorsing the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) definition of antisemitism instead of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

The General Secretary was also direct to apply the Principles for Justice Work in taking action such as:

- communicating the endorsement of the JDA definition to government and government agencies;
- and in developing, reviewing and enhancing existing educational resources concerning what is and is not antisemitic, focusing on advocacy on issues related to Palestine and Israel;
- And in developing strategies to increase understanding of United Church people and their efforts to help end the Israeli military occupation of Palestine and to bring equal rights and justice for all people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Further, the General Secretary was directed to communicate with the Canadian government to urge that the IHRA Handbook and IHRA working definition not be promoted for use in law enforcement, the legal system, education and educational institutions, government programming, work places and civil society because the IHRA working definition does not sufficiently respect the rights of Canadians guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[GC45 WF42: COM06 Emergency Resolution on Gaza](#) was carried, affirming the recommendations of COM06, and directing the General Secretary to apply the Principles for Justice Work in taking the actions as soon as possible

[GC45 WF22: PM03 Arms Embargo Now Signatory](#) was carried. Since The United Church of Canada has been a signatory to the Arms Embargo Now call since August 2024, no further action is required, but to encourage individuals in The United Church of Canada to write to their elected officials for Canada to enact a two-way arms embargo that is comprehensive and binding.

The Way Forward proposal, [GC45 WF15: BNS02 Development of a Post Gaza Theology](#), was also passed with an amendment for this work to be brought back to the General Council annual meeting in 2026, not the 46th General Council.

Following GC45 in Calgary, The United Church of Canada signed [open letters](#) with partners that included key commitments regarding the current situation in Gaza

Summary – GC45 Recall September 13, 2026

The recall meeting for the 45th General Council moved smoothly through several Way Forward proposals outstanding from the in-person meetings in Calgary, Alberta, in August. About 180 Commissioners joined online with a small group of General Council Office (GCO) staff gathered in person at the GCO with the Moderator, The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, and General Secretary, Rev. Michael Blair. Elder Lorraine Kakegamic was also online, offering leadership support, including prayer midway through the gathering. There was also the provision of equity support and chaplaincy

The moving multilingual opening worship, planned by Rev. Dr. Miriam Spies and Rev. Dr. Alydia Smith, included “Rab ki hove (Blest be God),” a traditional *bhajan* (devotional song) sung by Christians across South Asia, and the celebration of Communion.

The chair of business planning, Rev. Dr. Kenji Marui, outlined the business and procedures, and guided the court through the Way Forward proposals and recommendations scheduled for this recall meeting. The following proposals were carried:

[GC45 WF33: GCE04 Funding Strategic Growth Initiatives](#)

Just Peace: Israel-Palestine proposals:

- [GC45 WF13: Proposals on Israel and Palestine HF01, SW02, SW03, SW05](#)
- [GC45 WF41: SW06 The IHRA Antisemitism Definition - A Threat to Charter Rights](#)
- [GC45 WF15: BNS02 Development of a Post Gaza Theology](#)
- [GC45 WF42: COM06 Emergency Resolution on Gaza](#)
- [GC45 WF22: PM03 Arms Embargo Now Signatory](#)

Just Peace: the Philippines: [CG45 WF12: COM01 Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines](#)

Apologies

- [GC45 WF18: NS01 – Apology from the United Church of Canada to the African Diaspora for Slavery and the Legacies of Slavery in Canada](#)
- [GC45 WF17: GS07 Updated Apology for United Church Participation in Residential Institutions and PM02 Truth Telling and Reconciliation Action](#)
- [GC45 WF44: COM08 Land Return – National 20% of All Property Sales Given to The Indigenous United Church](#)

The council also approved two additional Way Forward proposals:

[GC45 WF35: SW01 Support for Broadview Magazine for Summer 2025](#)

[GC45 WF16: CS01 A Call for Full Inclusion and Pastoral Support for Individuals Accessing MAID Under Track Two for Summer 2025](#)

The General Council covenanted with incoming members of the Executive before the General Secretary brought the business of the 45th General Council to a close. In a prayerful close to the meeting the Moderator invited participation in a litany prepared during the August meetings: A Litany of Invitation to the Church from GC45, Calgary, which is also [available in French](#).

For more information, please visit: <https://generalcouncil.ca/news>