

## **Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle Calls to the Church**

### **Preamble: The Words Before All Other Words**

The Indigenous ministries of The United Church of Canada have been about the work of ministry since the beginning in 1925 with roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century work of Methodist and Presbyterian ministries. 2018 marks the 193<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Grand River Methodist Mission. This long history has seen bright beginnings and dark days and is poised on the brink of a kairos moment as it faces the future.

Indigenous people have met regularly over many decades and held deep and ongoing conversations about matters relating to our Indigenous work and our relationship with the United Church. We have been evolving, struggling, adapting and growing since that time and even losing ground too. We do not want to lose the gains we have achieved through the years in any future developments.

Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration): The TRC Calls to Action embrace of the UN Declaration. The United Church adopted the UN Declaration and reported how their policies in reference to their Indigenous constituents reflect this on March 31, 2016. As the church implements this framework for reconciliation it has committed to developing mechanisms to report on its progress. The UN Declaration is about establishing and maintaining respectful relationship, Indigenous self-government, and Indigenous land rights in their traditional territories. This means the Indigenous faith community must exercise a truly Indigenous self-determination and possess a sustainable land-based support.

The Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples has been embraced by the United Church. The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, 42<sup>nd</sup> Moderator has noted the obligation to ensure "our policies, practices,

and programs align with the “principles, norms, and standards” of the Declaration. The United Church has apologized for its colonial application of the policy of assimilation and acknowledged its impoverishment by the rejection of an Indigenous understanding of spirituality.

It is the desire to live into right relations with a repentant church and pursue the original Indigenous desire for friendship, peace and the strength that comes from respect that the following calls are made. May they be received in the spirit of reconciliation in which they are made.

## **We Will Say What Indigenous Ministry Is**

British Columbia Elder Alberta Billy said, “We have our own way of doing things.” Other Elders have said the same thing especially when there was a conflict with the expectations of the broader western church. This is where colonial policies and procedures have worked against the Indigenous community. Our Elders have cried out for our own churches, leaders, training programs, and support systems.

We, the Indigenous ministries and communities of faith of The United Church, declare that we will tell our own story of what ministry means for us. We will decide for ourselves who we are, who constitutes our ministries groups and practices. Colonialism took community control away from us and placed it in a colonial center of authority. Recovery from colonialism is our path moving forward. We will determine an Indigenous Testamur, a training program for ministry preparation, that will help our leaders be competent as the healers and helpers our communities are crying out for. We will recruit and oversee the development of our ministry training students and assist their placement and support in our communities.

## **We Will Do Indigenous Theology**

Our own Indigenous understanding of the Christ story is what we need. We are Indigenous nations, tribes, confederacies with clans and Elders. Creator has placed us in our sacred lands and taught us to harvest the food just as the first humans in the Bible. Our ways, of seeing and being in this earth, are much like the Hebrew people. We can hear creation and have learned from all our relations, the animals, the water folk, the plant families, our mother the earth, etc. We hear in the groaning of the earth the sufferings of Christ. We feel the preciousness of life and the sanctity of

love in our communities and lands.

Part of our work will challenge the colonial vision of Jesus and western theology. Our Indigenous languages, ways of life, spiritualities, and connection to our traditional lands will be restored. We are finding our own spirituality and Indigenous understanding of Jesus and his work in our communities. We will see through our eyes who Jesus is and decide for ourselves what this means for us as ministries and communities of faith. We are thankful for our roots in the work of the church in our past but we will shape our future through our own perspectives. The Spirit gives us authority to do this and we will listen to our siblings in the larger community of faith.

## We Will Say Who We Are

The concept of identity is a complicated issue within Indigenous communities. The very notion of being an "Indigenous" person is a European construct. Prior to European contact, the people of Turtle Island identified themselves as members of their own tribes, nations, or communities. Inter-marriage was common and many children were "mixed-blood" as a result of this, yet accepted in their communities. Many nations have always practiced traditional adoptions, self-determining who is part of their communities.

With European contact, these many nations and tribes became lumped into one homogenous group known as "Indigenous, Aboriginal, or Indian". This has caused Indigenous people to be viewed as a single nation, erasing the reality of many nations with different social, cultural, and spiritual beliefs and traditions. Eurocentrism introduced identity politics based on race, blood quantum, and what people look like. This raises the question of whether being Indigenous is a racial, ethnic, cultural, legal, political, or genetic identity. Blood quantum, which serves no other purpose than to limit, and eventually, eradicate Indigenous identity is in direct opposition to the traditional notion of Indigeneity being one's connection to the land, culture, and recognition within a tribe, nation, or community.

We affirm that Indigenous people and Indigenous communities of faith will self-determine who is part of the Indigenous church.

## A Healing Church

Our “roots” as Indigenous peoples, are what the Creator has made us to be. We are embracing who we are as Creator made us. The Indigenous church will be an instrument of healing our identity and a place of renewal of our cultures. Our roots have been broken by colonialism and we will restore them.

Wounds came from being told we are wrong and the loss of language and culture. Our recovery from these negative influences means that we must have a process that is trauma-informed. We won't be healed by a western medical model but a trauma-informed approach. It is not helpful to treat people who struggle with addictions as criminals, but rather we must take a healing approach. The colonial system has been dehumanizing for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. We will expand our work from the end of life to the beginning of life. We will restore the whole circle of life: infancy and childhood, youth, adult and Elder stages.

We will maintain right relations with the broader United Church and educate them about our need to Indigenize our work and decolonize what continues to harm us. We do not want to experience the feeling of exclusion at the table of decision or have our concerns minimized by others. We will teach you who we are, what our values are, and place into practice how we want to work among ourselves and with others. We have faith that the Spirit of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of creation, and the love of God will move us forward on the road of true reconciliation so that we can know “the beloved community” of “All Our Relations.

## The Earth is Our Provider

The earth is our ground of being. The earth is our Mother. The earth is our sustenance. The earth is our Eden. Creator made us from our Mother the Earth. Access to the earth has been stolen from us and others now eat from her provisions. We have been marginalized and separated from our own lands. It was stolen from us by a false Doctrine of Discovery. This doctrine was repudiated by the United Church. We must return to the provisions of the land. The land will sustain us as it

has for millennia.

Furthermore, our traditional territories are not equivalent to reserves that were created and maintained by the colonial Indian Act. Many urban<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Peoples are still living in their traditional territory even though they no longer live, and perhaps may have never connected, on reserve. Indigenous spirituality is not confined to buildings, but is connected to the land.

The United Church is asset rich. Rich in land and properties. These lands were stolen by false promises in treaty negotiations. We meant to invite settlers to our lands and that we would share it. It would feed us both. But we are cut off from the land. Justice in land matters must be about reparations and not only apologies. Reconciliation is not just heads and hearts that feel bad but hands and feet that do tangible good. Selling church properties is a matter of Indigenous land justice or injustice. We are grateful for every effort churches, presbyteries, Conferences, and the General Council have done to give back to the Indigenous ministries when churches decommission and properties are sold. May this justice flow like a river.

## **Calls to the Church**

### 1. Concerning an Office of Vocation: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering all the meetings in our history where Indigenous and missional clergy met to fellowship, pray together, strategize and minister among Indigenous peoples;*
- *Affirming our support for all clergy ministering in our Indigenous communities;*
- *Acknowledging the need for clergy accountability in Indigenous communities;*
- *Acknowledging the need to limit harm done unintentionally or otherwise by clergy in our Indigenous faith communities;*
- *Knowing ministry in our Indigenous communities often differs from that in non-Indigenous communities;*
- *Supportive of evaluating and dealing with ministerial matters with Indigenous values and processes;*
- *Mindful of the UN Declaration's call for Indigenous self-governance and adequate*

---

<sup>1</sup> The word “urban” lacks the diversity envisioned by the urban Indigenous Caretakers. By “urban”, we mean those who have left their home communities, as well as those who have been born and raised in villages, towns, and cities across Canada, some willingly and some against their will.

*resources to achieve this;*

- *Affirming the Indigenous community's right to determine our own ministry personnel;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. The establishment of an Indigenous office or department within the Office of Vocation so that ministry personnel in our communities have services provided by people who are knowledgeable of Indigenous ways of being and working,**
- B. That this office or department have an advisory group that is engaged in the development Indigenous ministry policy.**

2. Concerning Indigenous Ministry Formation Accompaniment and Oversight: We Remember, We Say

- *Acknowledging the success of supportive and sensitive Indigenous accompaniment and oversight in the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (DJSRC) and the Francis Sandy Theological Centre (FSTC) programs and partnership with All Native Circle Conference, Presbyteries and communities of faith;*
- *Recognizing these student resources have continued in the program of Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, the amalgamation of DJSRC and FSTC;*
- *Recognizing the struggle of Indigenous students in the non-Indigenous United Church system through lack of understanding of Indigenous ways;*
- *Acknowledging the success of the Councils on Learning in overseeing Indigenous students in ministry training;*
- *Recognizing the vast educational requirements to ensure a proper level of support, encouragement and guidance for Indigenous students in non-Indigenous churches, presbyteries, and conferences;*
- *Recognizing the value of Indigenous language and cultural competency in Indigenous ministry training;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of**

**the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. Students accepted for ministry training have community of faith and Elder support;**
  - B. Continued strong Indigenous oversight of Indigenous ministry students in training from the community of faith to regional and national Indigenous groups with appropriate overseers who are suited to the student and their Indigenous ministry context;**
  - C. A clear pathway for students and Indigenous communities of faith to follow in accompanying and overseeing Indigenous ministry formation;**
  - D. Ensuring the accompaniers and overseers are primarily Indigenous people experienced in the work of ministry and have resources adequate to provide sufficient oversight (meeting at least yearly);**
  - E. Ensuring that non-Indigenous accompaniers and overseers have the Indigenous orientation education required of those working in Indigenous communities;**
  - F. Ministry training be provided in Indigenous communities and urban settings, as is feasible;**
  - G. Providing support following Testamur to ensure a good transition into ministry life;**
  - H. Ensuring that a trauma-informed approach be taken in the ministry training program, accompaniment, and aftercare of all students and ministry personnel.**
3. Concerning Indigenous Communities of Faith Approved Ministry Placement: We Remember, We Say
- *Remembering Elder and first Indigenous Moderator of the United Church the Very Reverend Stan McKay Jr. 's words, "Given the trend of the church and cut backs, full-time paid accountable ministry is not going to be our future."*
  - *Remembering the success of previous graduates of DJSRC and FSTC in non-traditional "ministry" placements;*
  - *Recognizing that many Indigenous communities and educational authorities are not really*

*interested in training church leaders;*

- *Acknowledging the call from our Indigenous communities and support of educational authorities for healing arts training for Indigenous students, as in: trauma recovery, intergeneration effect of trauma, counseling, and other therapies and means of wellness that comes from Indigenous ways;*
- *Realizing the ministry call of Jesus was to “heal the broken hearted, recover the sight of the blind, set the captive free and proclaim the time of equity and freedom” and that this call is answered by students in ministry training;*
- *Recognizing the relational Indigenous community ways and the need to expand what “ministry” means as was the successful Presbytery-approved ministry placements outside of the church;*
- *Remembering the great Six Nations educational work done by Nations Uniting in responding to the land claim conflict in Caledonia, Ontario in 2006;*
- *Valuing the great work being done in the Indigenous LGBTQ-2SA+ community;*
- *Affirming our future lies with Indigenous youth and all the great work being done among and by them;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. Indigenous community and region approved ministry placements options outside of the church context;**
- B. Agencies outside of the church to be educated to work cooperatively in assisting the Indigenous ministry formation accompaniers to supervise these placements;**
- C. Programs to be established to provide clinical, helping and healing skills for ministry students, and, community development and networking;**
- D. Reporting to and celebration from the church concerning this work of ministry students in such placements.**

4. Concerning Indigenous Testamur: We Remember, We Say

- *Acknowledging the ill-fit and sometimes even harm from some well-meaning but*

- poorly prepared ministers working in our Indigenous faith communities;*
- *Remembering the 1970's Indian Ministry Training Program;*
  - *Remembering the dreams and hope of our elders Dr. Jessie Saulteaux and Mr. Francis Sandy to have our own Indigenously trained ministry leadership for our communities;*
  - *Remembering the establishment of Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (DJSRC) in 1984;*
  - *Remembering the establishment of Francis Sandy Theological Centre (FSTC) in 1987;*
  - *Remembering the work of the Wabung process that was the foundation for the amalgamation of DJSRC and FSTC into the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre (SSSC) as the National Aboriginal ministry training school of The United Church of Canada in 2011;*
  - *Acknowledging the fundamental linguistic and cultural differences in the Indigenous communities of faith in The UCC;*
  - *Committed to the dignity affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People including the right to self-determination on our own Indigenous terms and in keeping with our own Indigenous spiritual values;*
  - *Convinced by our Elders that a fundamentally differing approach, structure and value system is what Indigenous faith communities are calling for and need for a healthy recovery of community and sustainability;*
  - *Believing that when the United Church of Canada's policy conflicts with Indigenous community values that community values come first;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. The establishment of an Indigenous Testamur (a required completed program indicating that a person is suitably trained for ministry in The Indigenous United Church of Canada) that recognizes unique Indigenous competencies needed to work in our communities;**
- i. That this Indigenous Testamur be determined by the Indigenous faith communities of the United Church with consideration for all the**

**geographic and linguistic differences across Canada;**

- ii. That in this Indigenous Testamur it is recognized that Indigenous communities of faith are free to determine how they respond to all Indigenous issues and that outside authorities will not impose their values on the local community;**
  - iii. That Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre be entrusted with overseeing the completion of this Indigenous Testamur;**
  - iv. That this Indigenous Testamur contain components to ensure competency in non- Indigenous United Church communities;**
  - v. That this Indigenous Testamur provide training for The United Church of Canada's one order of ministry including ordination, commissioning, designated lay ministry or other expressions of Indigenous ministry approved by the Indigenous communities of faith (urban included);**
- B. The currently accepted United Church Testamur to contain components to ensure cultural competency and safety when working in Indigenous and other cross-cultural settings;**
- i. That this curriculum be included in the continuing education requirement for ongoing accreditation for ministers within the United Church;**
  - ii. That all United Church ministers be educated in this curriculum in their continuing education;**
- C. Non-Indigenous ministry personnel working in Indigenous communities to be under probation for at least 5 years or until the Indigenous community of faith decides otherwise;**
- D. For coordinated development of Indigenous theological resources to support the needs of Indigenous communities of faith and education on Indigenous matters for the United Church.**

5. Concerning a National Indigenous Organization for Support and Fellowship: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering The 1980's national Aboriginal ministry consultations that eventually became the current National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering;*

- *Remembering Keewatin Presbytery as the first Indigenous presbytery in The United Church of Canada in 1982;*
- *Remembering the establishment in 1982 of the National Native Ministries Council in The United Church of Canada to oversee the work of the first National Native Ministries Coordinator, Rev. Stan McKay Jr.;*
- *Remembering the local work that led to the formation of All Tribes, Plains, and Great Lakes presbyteries that were the basis of All Native Circle Conference;*
- *Remembering the historic establishment of All Native Circle Conference, the first Indigenous conference and one that crossed colonial boundaries in 1988;*
- *Remembering the establishment of BC Native Ministries, in 1988;*
- *Remembering the establishment of Ontario Quebec Native Ministries in 1989;*
- *Remembering the establishment of the Aboriginal Ministries Council and its staff the Aboriginal Ministries Circle at General Council Office and beyond in 2008;*
- *Remembering all the Ecumenical gatherings over the decades;*
- *Knowing urban Indigenous ministry often differs from that in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities;*
- *Remembering that according to the 2006 Census, more than half of people identifying themselves in some way as indigenous reside in urban areas; and*
- *Believing the time has come to foster and support the creation of more urban Indigenous ministries;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

**A. A National Indigenous Elders Council:**

- i. with equitable representation from across the country;**
- ii. Elders who are lifted-up by communities;**
- iii. with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings.**

**B. A National Indigenous Organization:**

- i. comprising various kinds of members like Elders, youth, strategic thinkers, knowledge keepers, and carriers of the history;**

- ii. **members who are lifted-up by the Indigenous communities of faith; including those in urban settings;**
- iii. **with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings;**
- iv. **with a national Indigenous ministry support staff team:**
  - **ministry facilitating staffing to serve all the Indigenous communities of faith;**
  - **distributed equitably across the nation to serve all Indigenous communities of faith;**
  - **with a minimum number of face-to-face meetings.**
- v. **Continued opportunities for the gathering, working together, and supportive work of all the Indigenous faith communities in the United Church, including a National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering, as well as regional and cluster gatherings. These gatherings will honour the cultural and linguistic regions of the Indigenous communities;**
- vi. **That this office organization support a national network of urban Indigenous Ministries.**
- vii. **When we meet, we will honour the local protocols (as determined by the local communities of faith) and we will honour our Elders.**
- viii. **Strong communications strategy and resources necessary to accomplish the work of a national Indigenous organization.**
- ix. **Strengthened relationships between the Indigenous communities of faith and the rest of the United Church with requested Indigenous representation provided for in all aspects of the United Church;**
- x. **Education of all United Church personnel, programs and groups in Indigenous history, culture and contemporary issues to strengthen relations with Indigenous communities of faith and the United Church and to reignite the spiritual, cultural, holistic and healing renewal of whole church.**

6. Concerning Belonging: We Remember, We Say

- *Remembering that during the formation of the first all Indigenous Keewatin Presbytery in*

*1982 our Elders said we are drawing aside to find ourselves and then we will be back;*

- *Affirming that the Indigenous communities of faith desire to remain a part of The United Church of Canada;*
- *Appreciating our long history of Indigenous ministry that pre-dates the formation of The UCC;*
- *Desiring to live into right relations with The UCC and to find out what the apologies of 1986 and 1998 mean;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. For the right of Indigenous church communities to choose their relationships within a three-court structure;**
  - i. The right to dual belonging;**
  - ii. To fully belong to a regional body, and;**
- B. To fully belong to a national Indigenous body;**
- C. That urban Indigenous ministries be recognized as communities of faith with the same rights and responsibilities.**

7. Concerning Indigenous Community Leadership and Consensus Building; We Remember, We Say

- *Thankful for our predecessors who embarked upon a path that was radical, inclusive, progressive, and courageous for its time. And, that like every generation who's understanding of what it means to be inclusive is ever evolving we realize that our predecessors had a limited and flawed understanding of what it means to be inclusive And, that by recognizing this past we seek to heal relationships that have been broken and to forge new relationships in the future.*
- *Remembering the legacy of the Indian Methodist heritage work prior to the start of the UCC with the first Methodist church at Six Nations in 1822;*
- *Remembering that not all Indian Methodist churches joined the United Church in 1925;*
- *Remembering the legacy of Indian Presbyterian heritage work prior to the start of the*

*UCC;*

- *Remembering all the elders, men and women, youth, and children of our Indigenous communities of faith who began, nurtured and supported the work of the church in their communities;*
- *Recognizing the omission of Indigenous faith communities in the establishment of The United Church of Canada in 1925 and the corrective measures taken in Ottawa in 2012 at General Council 41 to amend the Basis of Union to include this history and legacy;*
- *Acknowledging the redesign of The United Church of Canada's crest to include the four colors of many Indigenous communities and the Mohawk phrase "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren" meaning "All My Relations" at General Council 41 in Ottawa in 2012;*
- *Wanting to live in right relations with The United Church of Canada on our own Indigenous terms;*
- *Honouring our Elders who have long stood up for our people in The United Church of Canada from the very beginning;*
- *Remembering the Indigenous community consultations in gatherings and Indigenous communities of faith;*
- *Recognizing the need to honour each Indigenous cultural territory and community of faith in their own decision making processes;*
- *Wanting to ensure a grassroots leadership in making change in the Indigenous communities of faith;*
- *Remembering that Indigenous consensus is not a simple ideal where every single person must agree before the community moves ahead but that individuals also consent to the overwhelming support of decisions and chose to be gracious and not undermine them, even though they may not fully agree with the larger community;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. Consensus decision-making in the Indigenous faith community be honoured by ensuring enough time (as determined by the Indigenous community) is afforded for**

**community discussion before major issues are decided upon;**

**B. Resources to help the communications necessary for Indigenous communities of faith to arrive at consensus regionally and nationally;**

**C. The national church to incorporate Indigenous community of faith input into all its programs, departments, divisions and works.**

8. Concerning Sustainable Support: We Remember, We Say

- *Realizing the Doctrine of Discovery rests on the illegitimate claims of Christian superiority in the Papal Bulls of 1453, 1454 and 1493;*
- *Understanding that the 1763 Royal Proclamation rests on the Doctrine of Discovery and is the basis of colonial claims to underlying radical title to Indigenous lands;*
- *Remembering that the United Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery;*
- *Realizing that the sale United Church properties involves Indigenous claims to the land.*
- *Realizing that the UN Declaration is a framework for reconciliation that includes these principles: Indigenous peoples right to participate in decision-making; right to land and resources; and right to self-determination.*
- *Recognizing that a significant number of Indigenous Peoples now dwell in urban communities;*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

**A. Equitable distribution of Mission and Service Funds keeping in mind the whole Indigenous community across the country;**

**B. A policy be developed to that would ensure there is a percentage of the proceeds of property liquidation allocated to Indigenous ministry and justice work**

**C. Any properties turned over to Indigenous communities be brought up-to-code before they are transferred;**

**D. Financial decisions that affect Indigenous communities of faith be determined by the Indigenous communities;**

**E. Relational connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of**

- faith and Regions be encouraged to continue. Local engagement and support of Indigenous work is valuable and needs to increase;**
- F. Adequate resources (i.e. financial support, staff, and space, etc.) be included to address the needs of urban Indigenous ministries.**

**9. Concerning sexual orientation and diversity: We Remember, We Say**

- *Remembering that gender diversity is a revered part of our heritage before colonization;*
- *Realizing that the role of 2-Spirit people in ceremonies and spiritual practices remains relevant to the overall well-being of all our communities;*
- *Recognizing that many LGBTQ2A+<sup>2</sup> Indigenous people leave their home communities because of intolerance introduced by the colonizers;*
- *Realizing that many LGBTQ2A+ young people are at high risk for suicide;*
- *Remembering the policy that was passed at General Council 40 which: “affirms the participation and ministry of trans people, and encourages all congregations to welcome trans people into membership, ministry, and full participation;”*

**We, the Indigenous faith communities of The United Church of Canada, as an expression of the United Church’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, call for:**

- A. Educational resources that will invite and assist Indigenous communities of faith to support LGBTQ2A+ members and youth;**
- B. That the United Church of Canada through its health benefit coverage plan continue to support employees and their families who are transitioning gender.**

---

<sup>2</sup> LGBTQ2A+ is a place-holder that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual, queer, asexual, 2-Spirit and everyone else! The understanding behind the acronym is that sexuality and gender are fluid and not limited to male and female.