

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization.



Dear Grace United,

By March 31, 2024, all Communities of Faith of the United Church of Canada **MUST** vote on **Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization.**

Rev. Takouhi is ready to answer all questions, as able, that you might have. She has set the following dates to discuss this historic vote: **January 24, 2024** (via Zoom at 7 p.m.) and **February 4, 2024** (in person after worship in the sanctuary).

Please advise **Rev. Takouhi** (revtakouhi@terrautopia.ca or 613-777-0880) no later than **January 21** of your interest to take part in either one of these gatherings. Rev. Takouhi wants to ensure, as much as possible, that all questions are answered before the **GUC AGM, where the vote will take place.**

For your convenience, here is the link to the resources of Remit 1: <https://eoorc.ca/resources/remit1/>

There are documents and videos.

To further help us, **Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole** has offered us this summary to navigate through this exciting and uplifting historic moment.

Hello Friends.

The Remit is really about restoring what was lost with the closure of the All Native Circle Conference and creating space for the Indigenous Church to continue to develop in the coming years. Over the past 100 years, the Indigenous United Churches have been fighting for the right to organize themselves in ways that make cultural sense to them. This meant, for example, working in circle groups in the different geographic regions of the country with a National Indigenous Council as the de facto regional Executive. These bodies work on consensus wherever possible. Previous General Councils recognized and approved this work. What makes the Indigenous Church unique from other regions is that it has both regional and national responsibilities and presence. They do most of the work a region does as well as participating in the Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation work in the wider United Church. Right now, most Indigenous Churches are on reserves, however, there has been a population shift and now 50% of Indigenous people live in urban areas. The Indigenous Church is trying to figure out how to serve these

communities as well as those on reserve. Such work requires flexibility and creativity to manage the cultural pathways of multiple nations.

The General Secretary, recognizing that this would require a change in our governance structure, and in listening to the Indigenous Church members, took a bold new step. He created a Remit that would clear the path of governance oversight for the Indigenous Church. In other words, he is attempting to make a space for the Indigenous Church to develop in ways that are cultural appropriate. The reason we need the Remit stems from the United Church of Canada's creation by an Act of Parliament. Part of our Act declares that changes to the Basis of Union, in other words, how we organize ourselves, requires approval from the majority of the regions and pastoral charges in the church.

What the Remit is NOT doing is separating the Indigenous Church from the rest of the United Church. Please note that the Indigenous United Churches are among the oldest churches in our denomination. The Remit is NOT giving permission to the Indigenous Church to change United Church

theology. It is creating space for the Indigenous church to explore what it means to be both Indigenous and Christian. This Remit does NOT come with increased financial burden to the wider church. Indigenous churches are struggling with similar challenges to other United Churches. At the moment, the Indigenous Churches M&S grants, etc. make up about 4% of our national budget. This Remit will give the Indigenous Church more freedom to figure out how best to use those funds – the same freedom as other regions already have.

Finally, it is important for each pastoral charge to vote because simply taking no action is registered as a "No" vote – making the bar to passing very high.

If I can help answer any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Epiphany Blessings,

Teresa

Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole (She,her,elle)

Glebe St. James United Church

Coordinating Minister