

# Covenant

General Secretary, *La Table des ministères en français* and the *Conseil régional Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council*

This tri-partite covenant is intended to assist the parties in working together to strengthen ministries in French and to seize the opportunity to grow our presence amongst Francophones across the territory of the region.

We collectively understand the importance of Francophone identity in cultural and linguistic terms, particularly within this region where this reality is a prominent one.

The current restructuring of the United Church of Canada is a key moment for us to avoid doing things the way we've always done, but it is also important to ensure that we do not undervalue the importance of the Francophone voice within the church along with its cultural understanding of its context. It is also key that none of this work happens in isolation.

This covenant intends to help the church honour these approaches for existing ministries and those that are being developed in the future.

The involvement of the General Secretary, through staff in the Ministries in French cluster and the Office of Vocation will provide support to ensure that we meet our common goals in this work. La Table and its nation-wide network of Francophone ministry personnel and laity will engage as the voice and actions of this work. The Regional Council will provide structure and local context in a manner consistent with the rest of its ministry in the region.

## **Existing Ministries**

When it comes to recognizing existing ministries in French, recognition will be done by both the Regional Council and La Table.

The following communities of faith within the region have been formally recognized by La Table as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019:

L'Église Unie Saint-Marc (Ottawa)  
L'Église Unie de Namur

When a change in pastoral relations is anticipated, La Table will work with the Office of Vocation to create a suitable support committee to prepare for that transition. La Table's nominees to the Candidacy Board will be used or a suitable combination thereof on a case-appropriate basis.

If a community of faith who identifies as francophone is undergoing a formal evaluation/review according to the Regional Council's established process, the Regional Council will seek to populate the committee with half of its membership from La Table in the region where the process is taking place. This is intended to ensure both the ability to communicate with the community and a cultural sensitivity to handle issues that arise within that context. La Table may waive this requirement should circumstances make this composition impractical.

The decision to end (“disband”) an established ministry in French will require approval by both La Table and the Regional Council. If they are unable to agree after a 90-day period of reflection between them, they shall refer their difference(s) to the binding arbitration by a person or persons (familiar with Québec issues and fluent in both English and French) designated by the General Secretary of General Council. In the interests of those who have contributed to ministries in French over the years, when issues of property or finances related to a ministry in French arise, La Table will make final decisions about the disposition of such property, in consultation with the Regional Council. Normal decisions about other property matters continue to be in the purview of the Regional Council.

### **New Ministries**

The General Council, Regional Council and La Table will work actively and collaboratively to create new ministries, develop communities of faith, and build innovative ministries together. All will contribute financial and human resources towards this objective. A Working Group on new ministries in French will be struck by La Table, developing an annual plan and budget to achieve this goal. La Table will invite the Regional Council to nominate people to serve on this committee in the interests of the significant potential for new francophone ministries in the region. Neither party will establish such a plan without the participation of the other unless there is an agreement between all three parties on an alternative way to proceed.

When a new community of faith that is predominantly francophone is ready for recognition as a going concern, recognition of this ministry will be done by approval of both La Table and the Regional Council in a dual recognition process. Should either body be unwilling to recognize the new ministry, it will remain an unrecognized community of faith until such time as both parties are prepared to proceed to recognition, but either party may apply to the General Secretary for binding arbitration as above and such arbitration may result in such recognition in whole or in part. Reasons for any unwillingness to grant such a request for recognition by a community of faith must be made clear to that community and to all the parties of this covenant so that suitable measures may be taken to address the outstanding issues. Both parties recognize that the optimal solution is dual recognition but acknowledge an openness to other solutions as negotiated or arbitrated.

### **Candidacy**

When a self-declared Francophone has felt a call to ordered ministry and wishes to engage in the candidacy process in French, the Office of Vocation, La Table and the Regional Council will work together to establish the composition of the candidate’s accompaniment. Should the candidacy originate from a region other than *Eastern Ontario/Ontario* or *Nakonha:ka*, the Candidate may choose to process their candidacy through one of these two regions where the accompaniment resources will be available in French. A Francophone candidacy that originates in *Eastern Ontario/Ontario* or *Nakonha:ka* regions will be processed within their own Region.

### **Proposals to General Council**

The Regional Council will ensure the transmission of proposals from La Table to General Council. It is understood that such proposals will not require transmission with concurrence by the Regional Council. Providing La Table with an opportunity to raise issues that relate to Francophone ministries and their broader cultural lens is understood as valuable.

### **Nominations**

At any time, should the Regional Council seek Francophones or suitably bilingual participants for committee or governance positions, La Table will make every effort to call upon members of its network with appropriate expertise to be nominated for such positions when requested by the Regional Council.

#### **Other issues**

As other issues arise that may not be covered by this covenant, the parties will be sensitive to the interests of other parties in their daily operations with the goal of ensuring a 'no surprises' relationship, mutual respect and understanding.

#### **Evolving Relationship**

La Table and the Regional Council recognize that as they develop ministries in French appropriate changes may become necessary or useful in their relationship and they shall discuss any such changes with assistance as necessary from the General Council Office.

This Covenant may be modified with the agreement of all three parties at any time. If a party intends to withdraw from this covenant, they will provide 90 days' advance notice to the other parties. During the 90-day period, the General Secretary or designate will lead efforts to resolve any outstanding issues among the parties that might assist in the covenant being continued. Each of the parties agrees to participate in good faith in these efforts.

Agreed to, this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

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Nora Sanders, General Secretary

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Chair and Secretary of *Conseil Régional Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council*

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Representative(s) of *La Table des ministères en français*