



Equipping for the Sent

The Purpose of the Change Leadership Team (February 2026)

This survey is completely anonymous. Your responses will not be linked to your identity and will be kept strictly confidential to protect your privacy.

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In June of 2025, the General Assembly entrusted us with an urgent and humbling task. We were appointed to the “Hope and Possibility” Special Commission to lead change within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The Working Group on Hope and Possibility (that led to our appointment) heard stories of anxious realities across our denomination, in the interconnected areas of Leadership, Resources and Structure:

An acute shortage in Leadership for Ministries

- Many churches cannot afford an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament
- Retirements of ministers are outpacing new ordinations
- Existing ministers are serving as Interim Moderators, at times in multiple congregations, and on a longer-term basis
- Many ministers are now receiving part-time stipends (although they may be working full-time hours)
- Volunteers are fewer and aging, and many have limited Christian formation

The Working Group also heard many stories of innovation and inspiration, and so recommended three related deliverables for our work:

1. *A design of multiple models of ministry*, given that the traditional one minister, one congregation model, is not addressing our realities
2. *A robust lay leadership training program*: to equip more laity to use their gifts in service in the various ministries that define a thriving congregation (e.g. leading worship, pastoral care, administering the sacraments, mission and outreach)
3. *A design for regional teams*: to bring additional leadership and resources to presbyteries and congregations, to support them in their kingdom work.

Administering human resources, information technology, financial management, and legal issues is a significant burden on presbyteries and congregations

- This burden distracts and detracts from the ability to focus on ministries
- Not managing the related risks well can be expensive
- Therefore, we have been charged with:

4. *Designing and establishing denominational/shared resource centres to reduce this administrative burden on congregations and presbyteries.*

Please note that our mandate does not include:

- Closing congregations – this is contrary to existing polity. The decision to close churches remains with our presbyteries
- Burdening congregations with more costs – our motivation is to find ways to better utilize existing resources to fund these deliverables that support congregations and presbyteries in their ministry work

Our denomination faces immense challenges, and we know this is not a new conversation. In too many of our

churches the passion for Christ's mission has been replaced with anxiety about our future. It would be unrealistic to expect our commission to reverse decades of decline within the scope of our two-year appointment.

However, we know you believe that Christ's church will not fail in God's mission to the world. Christ shows up among us, equips us, and sends us out to do the work of bringing good news of reconciliation to a broken world.

The four deliverables above are interventions to support the equipping of congregations and presbyteries. Additionally, long-term recommendations will also be developed.

In the immediate term, we are seeking your input to help us develop the specifics for these four deliverables.

This survey has been sent to the Clerks of each Presbytery. A Clerk is welcome to gather others in their presbytery for input. However, each presbytery should provide only a single response via the survey tool. **All responses are due by March 28th.** We thank you for your prayerful answers. Your candid feedback will be valuable.

We also ask for your continued prayers as we seek to be faithful to the task to which God has called us. Further, we encourage you to visit the CLT website for regular updates on our work: <https://presbyterian.ca/gao/change-leadership-team/>

In Christ,

Change Leadership Team (Special Commission)

SURVEY

The first set of questions focuses on possible recommendations for models of ministry, lay leadership and training and regional staffing.

By "new models of ministry," we are thinking of ministries that are not the traditional "one clergy, one building" and may include ecumenical partnerships, lay-led ministries, multi-staff, shared staff, house congregations, Indigenous or ethnic ministries, or other forms.

QUESTION 1:

How many lay people within your Presbytery would be prepared to undergo training to fulfill select functions generally done by Ministers of Word & Sacrament. For example, plan and lead worship, moderate a session, and preside over a marriage ceremony. Indicate the best estimate of # of people.

QUESTION 2: Is your presbytery willing to utilize lay leaders to administer the sacraments and support their regular engagement in congregations?

Yes

No

QUESTION 3: Are there any churches in your Presbytery that are experimenting with a new model

of ministry, e.g., cluster, satellite, house congregations, digital congregations, lay-led ministry, ecumenical partnerships, others? Please elaborate.

QUESTION 3 a): If so, have any of these new models proven successful?

- Yes
- No

Please elaborate.

QUESTION 4: How many congregations in your Presbytery livestream their worship services?

- All
- Most
- Some
- None
- Don't know

QUESTION 5: What pathways or initiatives do you have in place to develop the next generation of leaders? Check all that apply.

- Camps
- Youth conferences
- Bursaries
- Grants for those wishing to study at seminary or take other ministry course
- Mentorship
- Campus ministry
- Young adult leadership
- Other

QUESTION 5 a): Which pathways/initiatives have been successful in developing leaders within your congregation/presbytery? Please elaborate.

QUESTION 6: Which skills or training would help your current or potential lay leaders in their effective ministry? Please elaborate.

QUESTION 7: How many congregations in your Presbytery have part-time or shared ministers? Please indicate the number.

QUESTION 8: How many congregations in your ministry have amalgamated or entered ecumenical partnerships in the past five years? Please indicate the number.

QUESTION 9: Are there any congregations in your presbytery with more than one called minister? If so, can you please provide more details?

QUESTION 10: When you think about the notion of a regional leader supporting your presbytery, what geographic boundary of the region would make the most sense to you?

Resource Centres Design Input

The Narratives of Hope and Possibility Report recommended introducing four resource centres to support

presbyteries and congregations, reducing time and effort spent on administrative activities and freeing up more time to focus on ministry. Each Resource Centre is expected to include a minimum of services available to presbyteries and/or congregations. The following outlines the possible services and seeks your input.

Human Resources (HR) Centres may provide the following support/resources:

- Pension & Benefit questions are currently supported by national PCC staff, who manage these queries, guiding folks to existing documentation on the website/where available, or, as appropriate, national staff will directly address the questions/issues.

However, additional services may be available, which may be non-routine at the congregational level (e.g., parental leave, other leave of absence, death, etc.)/pulpit vacancy activities (e.g., congregational assessments, 6-month Health & Dental benefit continuation, etc.)

Recruitment Services:

Presbyteries may access expertise role/resources to:

- Recruit non-clergy staff using a standardized approach or other agreed-upon approaches
- Support local staff and clergy involved in the recruitment process with:
 - Criminal/Vulnerable Check Program outcomes/interpretations/guidance
 - Risk/judgement for the congregation for staff roles, and
 - Access same support for recruitment at the presbytery level
- Call a Minister: Recruit/replace clergy using standardized and more innovative approaches
- Support in assessing salary consideration, advertising, and background check process execution

Presbyteries/Congregations may be able to access:

- Standardized onboarding checklist
- Standardized termination checklist
- Resource guide with procedures to fill vacant positions – including steps to arrange:
 - pulpit supply,
 - advertising for the position,
 - exploring whether a different Model of Ministry could provide support

Job Descriptions

Presbyteries/Congregations may be able to access:

- Standardized job descriptions for common roles building from existing resources, including non-traditional ministry roles and congregational workers
- Expertise to help to define/supply standard Job descriptions for new positions

Employment Contract Development/Termination

Presbyteries/Congregations may be able to access:

- Standardized employment contracts for respective provinces with minimum Terms & Conditions for several types of contract arrangements (non-standard ministry roles and congregational workers)
- Standardized termination letter templates for respective provinces and guidance on determining relevant notice or severance payments, including legal releases by province (for congregational workers and ministry roles other than Ministers of Word & Sacrament)

Human Resource (HR) Matters

Presbyteries/congregations may have access to internal expertise role/resources to:

- Participate in leadership capability development sessions three times a year to enhance skills in agreed upon areas
- Use/find mental health support resources on websites, newsletters, benefits site, etc., to assist with suicide assessment & prevention
- Apply the Leading with Care Policy as applicable (beyond existing national resources and contacts)
- Discuss/conduct potential harassment investigations (for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Life & Mission Agency response)
- Support any requested overtures and/or required modifications to existing policies and reporting mechanisms

Interpret privacy laws and their application

- Support remuneration matters related to the national clergy compensation framework; market: stipend analysis, as well as general compensation post eight (8) year stipend approach, etc.
- Provide knowledge about starting stipend (and post 8 years), ongoing support for clergy staff queries, etc.

Outsourced Payroll

Presbyteries and congregations may have access to external expertise/resources to:

- Execute payroll for clergy and congregational workers on a standardized schedule
- Payroll process guide to follow

QUESTION 11: Considering the potential HR Resource Centre services noted above, what other tasks/services (if any) would you love to see lifted from your to-do list to free up more time for ministry? Please elaborate.

Information Technology (IT) Resource Centre

IT Resource Centres may provide the following support/resources:

Presbyteries and congregations may have access to: Basic External Managed Service Provider (MSP)

Services:

- Cybersecurity/security support
- Purchasing new equipment (national purchasing contracts for bulk pricing opportunities)
- National MSP Solution
- Livestreaming support
- Digital presence guidance
- Printer problem resolution
- Updating/changing ink cartridges
- Updating printer drivers, etc./
- Support to automate tasks, e.g., Mail merge, tools usage)
- Computer/projector troubleshooting
- WIFI connectivity issues

Website maintenance

Presbyteries/Congregations may be able to access resources to:

- Support their use of the national "WordPress" basic website functionality.

IT toolkit

Presbyteries/Congregations may be able to access:

- Guide for good IT practices, e.g., fixing broken hyperlinks needing repair/updating, etc.
- Requirements for IT purchases/support (if there is no national contract in place)
- How-to on common IT processes
- File downloading support, e.g., YouTube, converting files to readable content for later use, for example, how to download a service from YouTube, vs. live stream via wifi.
- Digital ministry guidance tips/steps
- Guidance on effective, safe and secure use of artificial intelligence in day-to-day activities

QUESTION 12: Considering the IT Resource Centre services noted above, what other tasks/services (if any) would you love to see lifted from your to-do list to free up more time for ministry? Please elaborate.

Finance Resource Centre

Finance Resource Centres may provide the following support/resources:

Presbyteries and congregations may be able to access external resources to support payroll queries and services:

- Any ministers, national staff, or office administrators on the benefits plan can be on the standardized payroll (i.e., anyone who receives a T4 will be included)
- Bookkeeping guidance
- Financial reporting service (e.g., budget template, financial reports (Current Year to Prior Year) for session meetings (thresholds to adopt to be determined)
- Financial analysis guidance
- CRA reporting (for example, T3010) and issuing of T4s and other required tax forms

Presbyteries and congregations may be able to access resources to support payroll/financial queries and services:

- Insurance payments/guidance
- Support to ministries to understand funding agreements

QUESTION 13: Considering the Finance Resource Centre services noted above, what other tasks/services (if any) would you love to see lifted from your to-do list to free up more time for ministry? Please elaborate.

Legal Resource Centre

Legal Resource Centres may provide the following support/resources:

Presbyteries and congregations may be able to access internal resources to support legal queries, which may be resolved internally and/or triaged to the external legal network under retainer with PCC.

Risk management:

Presbyteries and congregations may be able to access internal resources to support legal queries and services:

- Access to regular webinar sessions to train folks how to identify, assess and mitigate risks, e.g., ethics violations, leading with care issues, late CRA filings, insurance needs, etc.
- Access a checklist to follow when seeking legal advice, including a check-in with national HR if a potential harassment complaint/potential ethics violations
- Access a summary of the most common risks (e.g., cybersecurity threats, data leaks/breaches, audit and control items) to educate leadership, which incorporates “Book of Forms” relevant items
- Access to a checklist of compliance items that must be adhered to and the ability to work with the national PCC contact to resolve any issues accordingly

Employment Law:

Presbyteries and Congregations may be able to access internal resources to support legal queries, which may be resolved internally and/or triaged to the external legal network under retainer with PCC.

- Access to PCC national staff and, as needed, legal support within relevant provinces to support HR matters (contracts, legal releases, litigations, human rights investigations, etc.)
- Access to PCC national staff and external law as needed for assistance on contract development, funding agreement terms, and conditions support, as well as contract termination

QUESTION 14: Considering the Legal Resource Centre services, what other tasks/services (if any) would you love to see lifted from your to-do list to free up more time for ministry? Please elaborate.

QUESTION 15: Would you like to provide any other comments to CLT to inform its thinking as it further develops its recommendations? Please elaborate.

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey about possibilities.

The Change Leadership Team (Special Commission)