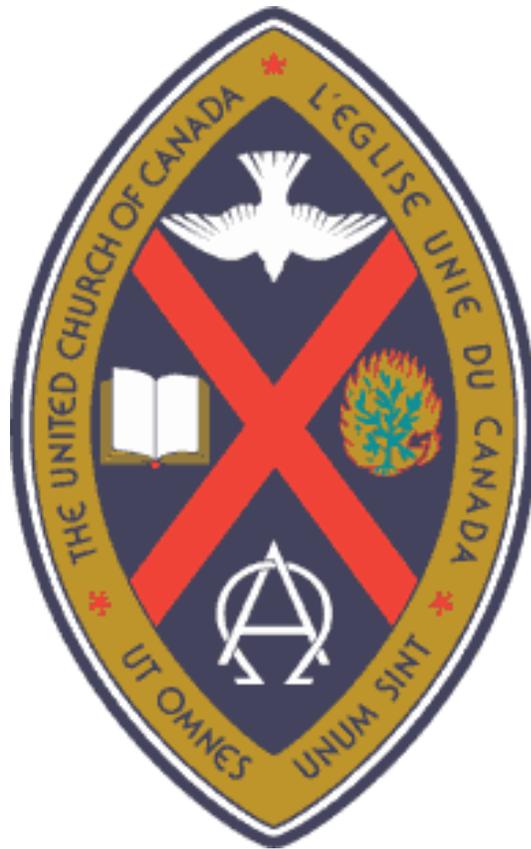


Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada Visioning/Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit



It is the prayer of Elgin Presbytery that this 'tool kit' might be used by your church to help you look at your congregational life, embrace the changes that are happening in both the church and society and move forward with God's leading into the future, wherever that future might take them.

The congregational self-assessment toolkit could be used by a local congregation using leadership from within that congregation or if desired, with leadership from a presbytery representative. Today we ask you to help fine tune/ this toolkit, so that it truly reflects the life, concerns and struggles of our churches.

March 31st. 2012

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Mission/Purpose

1. Does our congregation have either a mission or vision statement?
2. If yes....
 - a. How is that statement lived out in the life of our church?
 - b. How many people in our church would either be able to state the mission/vision statement or know that such a statement exists?
 - c. If our church building disappeared tomorrow, could/would our mission statement continue?
 - d. Why do we do what we do?
 - e. What are some significant/key events from our congregation's past?
 - f. What is the reason our congregation exists?
 - g. What higher good does our congregation seek to accomplish?
 - h. Whom are we called to serve?
3. If no...
 - a. Why doesn't our church have such a statement?
 - b. What would need to happen for our church to understand what its mission and/or vision is?
 - c. Why do we do what we do?
 - d. What are some significant/key events from our congregation's past?
 - e. What is the reason our congregation exists?
 - f. What higher good does our congregation seek to accomplish?
 - g. Whom are we called to serve?
4. If someone asked you why they should become a part of our church family, what would your answer be?

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

5. If our church disappeared tomorrow, how would our community be impacted? Other than the physical presence of our building disappearing, would those outside of our faith community know that the church was gone?
6. If our church was destroyed by fire (or as in Goderich by tornado) would we rebuild?
7. If yes, why? What type of building would we rebuild?
8. If no, why not? Would the church continue in some form?
9. Why does our church wish it had more people?
10. When was the last time you worshipped in a church where you knew no one?
 - a. How did that feel?
 - b. Or, how might it feel?
 - c. What would a 'newcomer' to our church experience when they arrived?
 - i. During worship?
 - ii. After worship?
 - iii. When they went to leave?
11. Does our congregation spend as much time on spiritual nurture as in meetings?
12. Is spiritual nurture and growth central to our congregation's life?

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Congregational Life

1. Create a chart showing the ages by decades of the average number of people who attend on a Sunday morning? For example – how many people between 0 – 10, 11 – 20, 21- 30, etc.?
2. Given that the average life expectancy of Canadians is between 77 and 82 years of age, what would our current congregation look like in 10, 20, 30 years, if there is no growth?
3. When was the last time our church celebrated the reception of new members either by confirmation of baptismal vows or by transfer? On average, in a year, how many new members are received?
4. When was the last baptism in our church? On average, in a year, how many baptisms are celebrated in our church?
5. On average, in a year, how many funerals take place of someone from our church family?
6. What is the average weekly attendance at worship?
7. What is our average weekly attendance at Sunday School?
8. How many Sunday School teachers or helpers do we have?
9. What groups/activities/events are held by our church?
10. What are people excited about in the life of our congregation?
11. What is God calling us to do and be?
12. Do people sit on several committees of our church, because of a lack of volunteers?
13. Does our church have a handbook that lists the various positions within the church board/council, outlining the responsibilities/tasks/term of office/etc. for those positions?

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

14. Do we have a nominating committee? Have we elected any new people to our board/committees in the past three years?
15. Is our church able to fill all of the committee/board positions?
16. Have we reduced the number of positions on our church committee/board because there are not enough people to fill those positions?
17. Is burnout of committee or board members a growing concern?
18. How are decisions normally made?

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Church Building

1. What improvements have been made to our church in the past three years?
2. Has there been a recent building inspection by someone outside of our congregation in order to determine both needed maintenance and safety concerns?
3. Even without an inspection are there maintenance and/or safety items that are not being attended to?
4. Will our church meet future anticipated accessibility standards? Can someone in a wheelchair or scooter, enter our church and access all areas, without leaving their wheelchair or scooter?
5. What would be needed to make our church accessible?
6. What would be the costs to make our church accessible?
7. What approaches toward energy use and conservation have we initiated or are planning?
8. How much of our budget goes to ‘keeping the door open’ with things such as maintenance, repairs, utilities, upkeep, insurance, etc.?
9. Has our church completed ‘*Welcoming Communities – Developing Your Own Policy Statement – Accessibility Standards For Customer Service*’ as mandated by the Ontario Government?

Websites - <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/index.aspx> -
and - <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/customerService/>

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Finances

1. How much of our budget goes to ‘keeping the door open’ with things such as maintenance, repairs, utilities, upkeep, insurance, etc.?
2. How much of our budget goes to either the Mission and Service fund or to other mission projects?
3. How much of our budget goes to ministry with youth and/or children?
4. Would our operating budget sustain a major building repair such as a new furnace or roof?
5. Who would, and how would we, finance such a major repair?
6. In the past 5 years have our givings kept up with our expenses? Based on that information, what is our financial forecast for the next 5 years?
7. Prepare a chart of the number of financial donors within certain donation amounts. For example – how many people annually give between 0 – 100.00, 100.01 – 500.00, 500.01 – 999.99, 1000.00 – 2,000.00, 2,000.01 and over. To ensure anonymity when preparing this chart – if we have just one donor of a large amount; please ensure that they are not listed in an amount category by themselves.
8. Is a large portion of our donations received from a small number of donors? What would happen to our financial stability if one of those donors no longer donated?
9. What would our budget look like if we patterned it after the budget example found at the following link:

http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Budget_Basics_LeaderLife.pdf

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Community Profile

1. How many other churches are there within a 20 mile radius of our church? How many United churches are there within a 20 mile radius of our church?
2. How many other churches are there within a 20 minute drive of our church? How many United churches are there within a 20 minute drive of our church?
3. What events/groups does our church host/hold that are also hosted or held by neighbouring churches?
4. What events/worship services do we hold jointly with other churches in our community or neighbouring areas?
5. Would neighbouring churches be open to combined events/worship services or to more combined events/worship if those are already taking place?
6. Are churches in our community/neighbouring area, experiencing similar challenges to our church?
7. Have any churches in our community/neighbouring area, discussed their future and future plans with other churches?
 - If yes – what was discussed? What was the outcome?
 - If no - how might the discussion mentioned in question 9 happen? Could our church take the initiative to invite other churches to meet to discuss future possibilities/options?
 - How might fear keep us from taking the initiative of talking to other local churches?

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

Conclusions → Action Plan

1. What conclusions can we make about our church based on the answers to the preceding questions?
2. What action should/could our church take to address those conclusions?
3. Who would undertake those actions?
4. What might it take to implement those actions?
5. How long will it take to implement those actions?
6. What would be the cost of such actions?
7. What might be the outcome of such actions?

Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012

AVAILABLE RESOURCES (as of March, 2012)

The Manual

Please ensure that you are using the current United Church Manual. The 2010 Manual is available online at: [www. http://www.united-church.ca/files/manual/2010_manual.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/files/manual/2010_manual.pdf). The first edition of *The Manual* was issued in 1928, under the authority of the Second General Council (1926). Since then, *The Manual* has been an important and valuable resource for members and organized bodies of The United Church of Canada.

The legislation of the General Council of The United Church of Canada with respect to the organization of pastoral charges and congregations and the management of their affairs—a part of what is called the “polity” of the United Church—is found in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada. *The Manual* contains both the Basis of Union and the By-Laws.

The basic law of the United Church is contained in the Basis of Union, which came into force by virtue of *The United Church of Canada Act*. The Basis of Union can be changed by the General Council only with the consent of the presbyteries. The By-Laws can be changed without notice by any General Council or by the General Council Executive pursuant to a change of policy made by the General Council.

Trustee Handbook

Please ensure that you are using the current issue, available online at: [http:// www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/trustees2004.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/trustees2004.pdf).

This handbook attempts to set out in a helpful way, and to explain, the provisions in the By-Laws. It is a resource to be consulted in answering those questions that frequently arise for congregational Trustees. But these contents do not have the same force of law as do the By-Laws. Therefore, it is the By-Laws that are to be used in interpreting the contents of this handbook, and not the other way around.

Congregation Organization Handbook

This handbook addresses the many issues that are related to efficient and excellent organization in a local congregation. Whether you are ministry personnel, volunteer or paid staff, a newly elected member of a Board, committee, or group in your local church, or a seasoned veteran of church administration, this book has been written to help you understand your

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

specific responsibilities regarding organization, and how they relate to the life and effective mission of your congregation.

This handbook is available at: <http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/congregationorg.pdf>.

Financial Handbook for Congregations

Please ensure that you have the most recent copy of this handbook found at <http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/financial.pdf>. The handbook provides information about such matters as: Financial Management for Charities; Paying Staff; Good Management Practices; Maintaining Charitable Status.

Lifeway Budget

The website:

http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Budget_Basics_LeaderLife.pdf shows how a church budget might be written to reflect the ministry, life, work and mission of a church.

United Church of Canada Yearbook

This two book set contains statistics for each year as reported by United Church pastoral charges for including number of members; number of baptisms, marriages, and funerals; and financial data such as property values, salaries paid, contributions made to the church's Mission and Service Fund, annual reports, pastoral charges, and preaching places plus mailing addresses.

The Yearbook is available only through the United Church Resource Distribution. Info about order is available at:

<http://www.ucrdstore.ca/catalogues>.

United Church Resource Distribution (UCRD)

The United Church Resource Distribution (UCRD) is a one-stop service providing a wide selection of faith-based products, including: program resources, books, church supplies, certificates, curricula, audiovisual materials, magazines, gift items. Many of the products distributed by UCRD are developed by The United Church of Canada to meet the specific needs of the denomination. These products are complemented by carefully selected books, resources, program materials, and supplies from other sources. Their

**Elgin Presbytery – United Church of Canada
Visioning – Congregational Self-Assessment Toolkit
March 31, 2012**

websites is: <http://www.ucrdstore.ca/> or they can be contacted toll-free at 1-800-288-7365.

Middlesex Resource Centre

Some of the resources that are available online can also be ordered in hardcopy through the Middlesex Resource Centre, located in Hyatt Avenue United Church, 282 Hamilton Rd., London, ON. - 519-434-6427 – hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Elgin Presbytery

Elgin Presbytery which is one of 90 presbyteries within the United Church of Canada is an administrative grouping of pastoral charges within Elgin County. Lay and ministerial delegates from the charges meet regularly to oversee the work of the charges. The website is <http://www.elginucc.org/urch>. **Status of Pastoral Charges** - This list is available from Elgin Presbytery and outlines the current status of the pastoral charges.

Finance and Administration Committee of Elgin Presbytery

This committee has responsibility for oversight of processes such as church amalgamations, closings, sales of building, etc. Presbytery approval is required at various stages of these processes and congregations need to also be aware of the timelines involved in taking the process to its completion. Presbytery must be notified/consulted before these processes begin.

London Conference Office

The London Conference office is a regional office -or Conference- of The United Church of Canada. London Conference has eight Presbytery offices that span from Windsor to Woodstock, St. Thomas to Goderich and the Algoma area as far north as Manitouwadge!

Conference staff include: Cheryl-Ann Stadlbauer-Sampa: Executive Secretary, Peter Kingsbury: Personnel Minister, Betsy Exley: Faith Formation, Youth and Young Adults Minister, Judith Gilliland: Congregational Futures Minister, Matthew Stevens: Stewardship Education and Justice Minister. The staff are resource people for local congregations and can be reached through the website - <http://www.londonconference.ca> or at 519-672-1930.