

Proposals

A “proposal” is a formal request for a council to take action. It is one way that a United Church member may raise an issue that is important to them and ask for the church to take action on it. The council that is being asked to take action is called the “council of action.”

- A formal request for specific action within the jurisdiction of the council to which it is directed. Ideally a proposal should be able to communicate an action (proposal) with explanation (background) on **no more than two pages**. A Proposal may be accompanied by a longer and more substantive report as required.
- If the council is the “council of Action”, it makes the decision on the proposal.
- Members and councils are responsible for completing the parts of the process assigned to them.
- In determining if something is the proper subject matter for a proposal to General Council, consider whether it pertains to the whole church, whether direction from the General Council is required, and whether it suggests a new policy or direction.
- The council making the decision must have the necessary information for a sound decision. In communicating from one council to another, it is important that the proposal gives an action and provides sufficient background to the emerging question, the consideration undertaken and the rationale for the proposed action.
- A well written proposal guides the decision makers through the process of discernment; from framing the question to a reasoned and wished for response.
- An individual or group who wants its proposal included in the business of the General Council needs to take it to their Session/Board/Council (of which they are member) or Region (if they are members of Regional Council). If the proposal is initiated at Session/Board/Council, that body will transmit it to the Region. Once the Region has received the proposal, or if the proposal is initiated at Regional Council, the Region will make a decision on the agreement and transition.
- The Region may decline to transmit it to General Council, or may transmit it with or without approval. Any council transmitting a proposal to the next council may include its own recommendations along with the Proposal.
- The proposal, in order to be voted on as an action, must be made into a motion. Once a motion is made, it is put to the court. The normal rules of debate and procedure then are applied.

Response by Council of Action

The council of action is responsible for making a decision on the proposal. It has the following options:

- a) taking the action requested in the proposal;
- b) taking the action requested in the proposal with some changes;
- c) taking different action on the same subject matter as the proposal;
- d) referring the proposal;
- e) receiving the proposal but taking no further action; or
- f) taking some other action that the council of action decides is appropriate.

Proposal Template

[PROPOSAL NAME]

Origin: [Regional Council Name]

1. What is the issue? (describe in broad terms)

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- do something about...
- engage the topic of...
- respond to the challenge of...
- etc.

Note: proposals for the General Council are for issues of denominational responsibility that go beyond the bounds of a Regional Council.

2. Why is this issue important?

For example:

- What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?
- What is the history/background of this issue?
- What are the principles informing this issue?
- What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?

3. How might the Council of Action respond to the issue?

Name a possible response that the General Council might consider:

A. Study/Discussion of the issue

B. Action on the issue, which could include:

- General Council directing that a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters
- General Council adopting a policy position/strategy
- General Council encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue

Note to 3.A: The General Council could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

Note to 3.B: Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome.

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Council of Action:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).