



An External Governance Review of
PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL,
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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Our Partnership

Convergence partnered with the Pacific Mountain Regional Council of the United Church of Christ in 2024 to undertake a 360 Governance and Leadership Audit of the Executive Council and Administration that would carefully and critically assess its governance structure and the support provided to the Region to effect its work. This report is our review of the mission, structure, governance, and effectiveness of the PMRC Executive and its work.

About Convergence

Convergence understands that institutional religion is changing. We serve at the forefront of this transformation, generating present and future possibilities within an organization's intended areas of influence. In short, we are a not-for-profit organization partnering with individuals, congregations and denominations to reimagine faith and ministry in service to a more just and generous world.

In our 15+ years, we have worked with hundreds of congregations, judicatories, denominations, non-profit organizations, foundations, and thousands of faith leaders.

For over a decade, we have provided strategic consultation, assessments, in-person & virtual leadership training events and coaching to support our consulting work. We facilitate conflict mediation, Futures Labs, and national thought leadership summits. We work primarily in the United States, Canada, and the UK.

Scope of Work

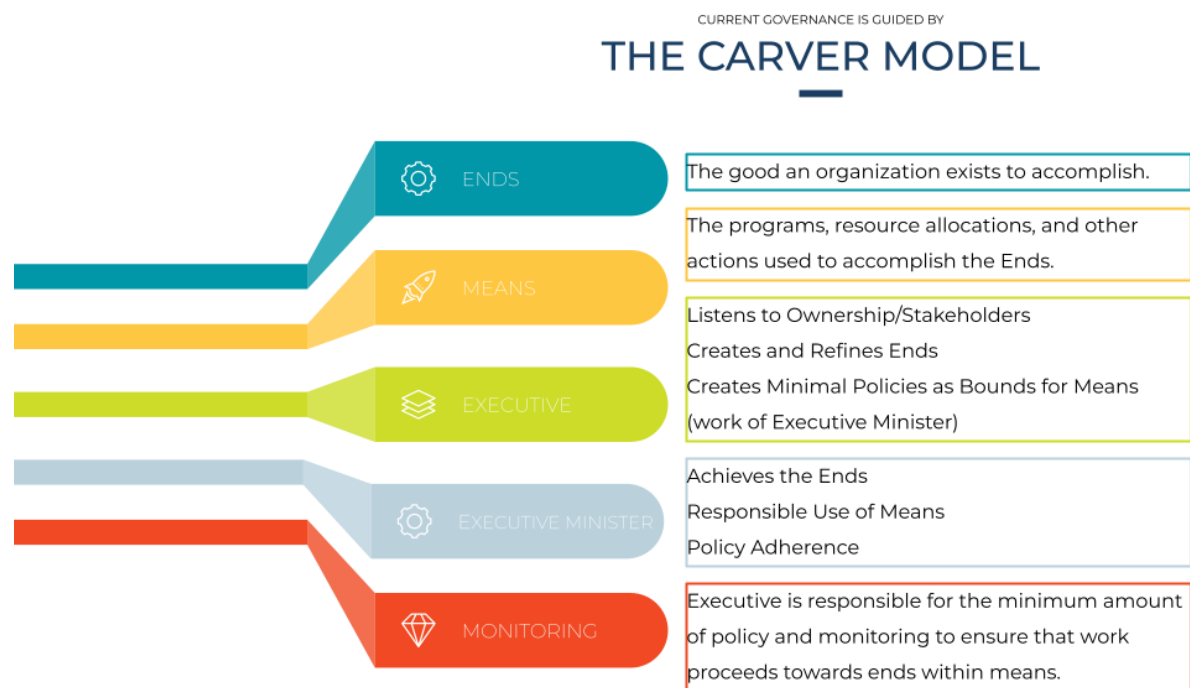
To do this work, Convergence:

- Reviewed applicable regional policies, minutes of the Executive Committee meetings covering the five-year audit period (2018-2023), and Executive Minister's Reports and other related reports covering the audit period.
- Reviewed the previous External Organizational Audit Review Report.
- Interviewed/surveyed selected members of the regional staff.
- Interviewed the Region's President and Past President and members of the Executive.

- Surveyed a representative sample of stakeholders, including communities of faith.
- Interviewed selected officers (to be determined as part of the design process) of the Executive.

Current Governance Model

The current governance structure of the Pacific Mountain Region is guided by the Carver Model. This model emphasizes board responsibility for setting ends and limitations on the means necessary to achieve those ends. All other decision-making within those limitations falls to the Executive Minister.



Current Mission (October 2022)

- Support the health of United Church communities of faith and ministries in our region.
- Nurture effective leadership.
- Grow faithful public witness as United Church people.

Current Ends (October 2022)

- The region will uplift and value human diversity.
- Communities of faith will be effective in fulfilling their call and mission (this includes providing access to leadership, the congregational self-assessments every 3 years, using assets for ministry and mission, support of clusters, and networks, providing oversight, information).
- Leaders will be supported, connected, and engaged.
- Other covenantal/recognized/regional/justice/ecumenical ministries will receive oversight and support.
- Eliminating barriers to full participation.
- The cost will not exceed the resources of the region.
- Property will be utilized equitably and in alignment with region priorities - including developing a property strategy.

Our Data Sources

Surveys

We conducted a survey of PMRC stakeholders from June 6 through July 8, 2024, and received 165 responses.

Interviews

We conducted interviews with the following stakeholders:

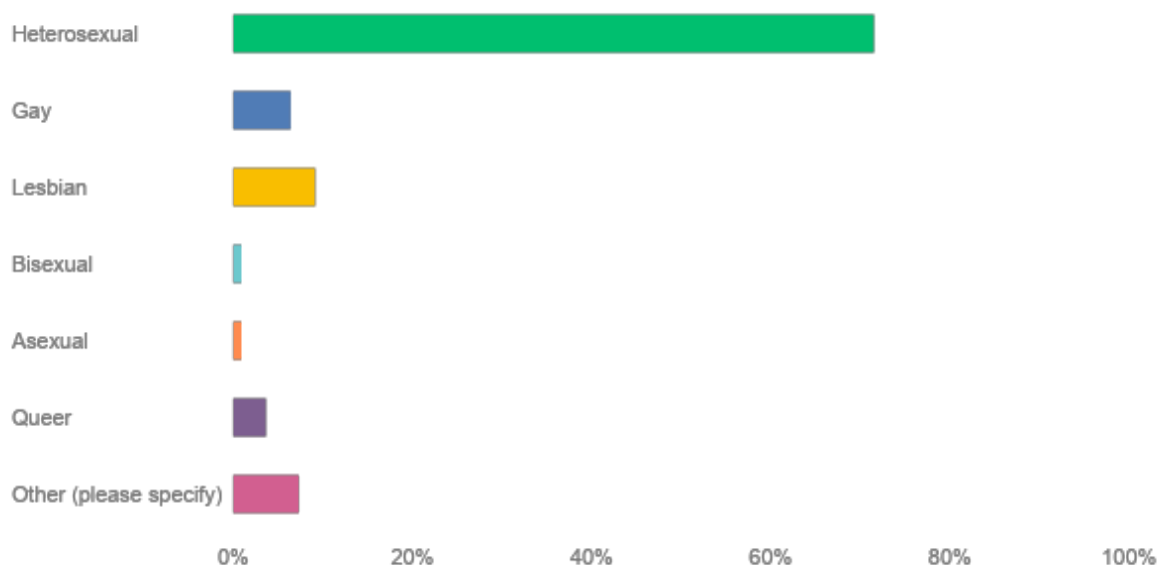
Houston Mo, Director of Finance and Property	Rob Shearer, Regional Minister: Church Planting Project / New Ministries Initiatives
Pamela Evans, Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain First Third Ministry Team Lead	Ken Fanning, Chair, Finance Advisory Council, Pacific Mountain Region
Deborah Richards and Simon LeSieur, Current and Past Presidents	Teri Meyer, Acting Indigenous Minister
Victoria Andrews, Regional Minister:	Janice Young, Chair of the

Pastoral Relations & Community of Faith Support	Communities of Faith/Pastoral Relations Council of PMR
Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Senior Governance Support Lead	Bob Fillier, PMRC Executive
Michael Blair, General Secretary of the United Church of Canada	Don Evans, Director: Community Renewal Society and Three Point Housing Society
Regional Ministers as a Group	Treena Duncan, Executive Minister
Executive Council as a Group	

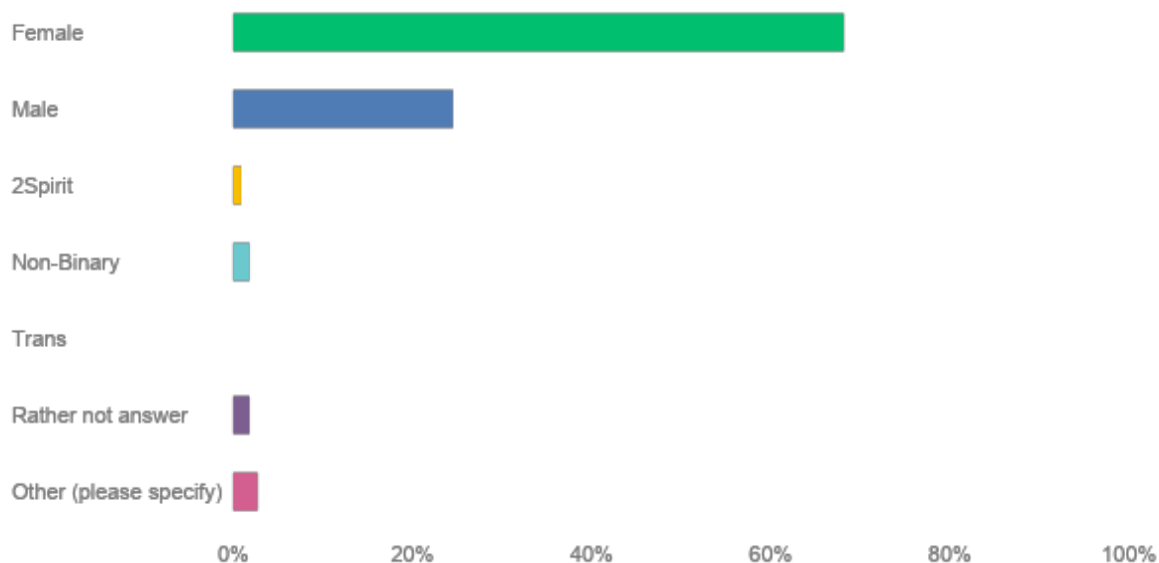
Documents

We reviewed 64 documents, including Executive Council and Executive Minister reports from 2018-2023, stakeholder feedback and listening sessions, the external audit report from 2016, and a news article evaluating the governance change in 2021.

72% identified as heterosexual, 21% as gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, queer, and 7% indicated some other identification.

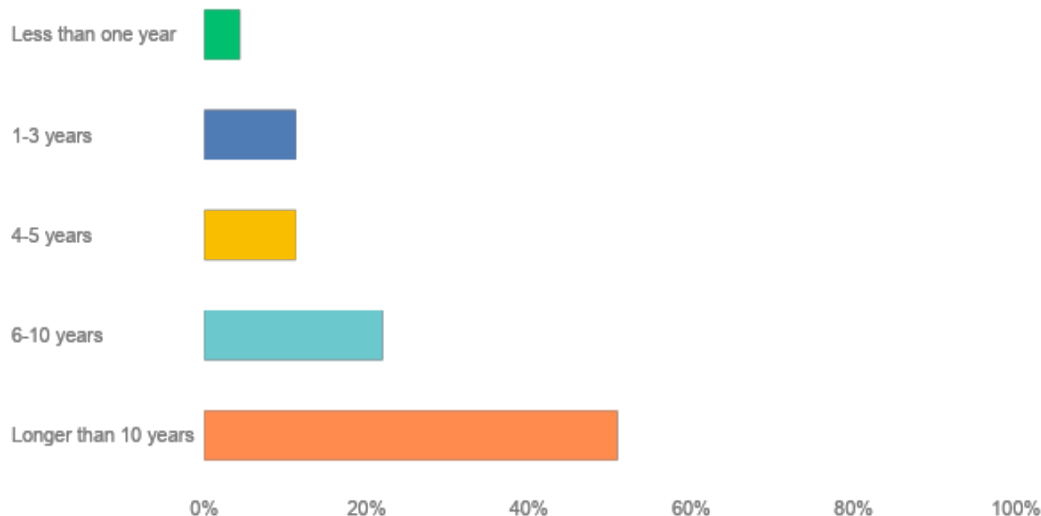


68% identified as female, 25% as male, 1% as 2Spirit, 2% as Non-Binary, and 3% in some other identification.

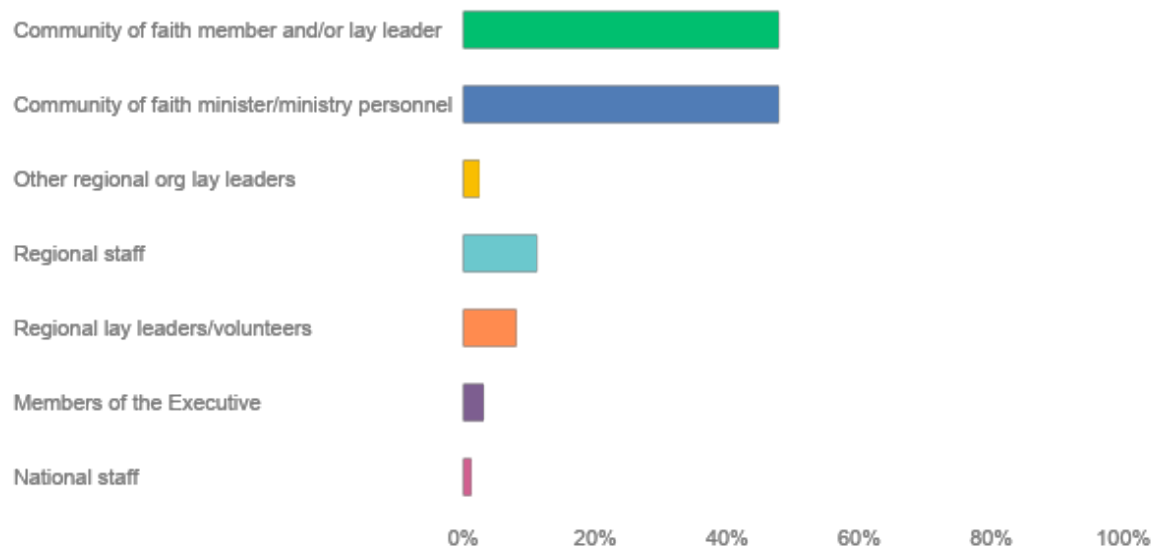


Involvement and Role

When we asked, “How long have you been involved with the Pacific Mountain Region?” 51% have been involved longer than 10 years. 22% for 6-10 years, 11% 4-5 years, 11% 1-3 years, and 4% for less than one year.

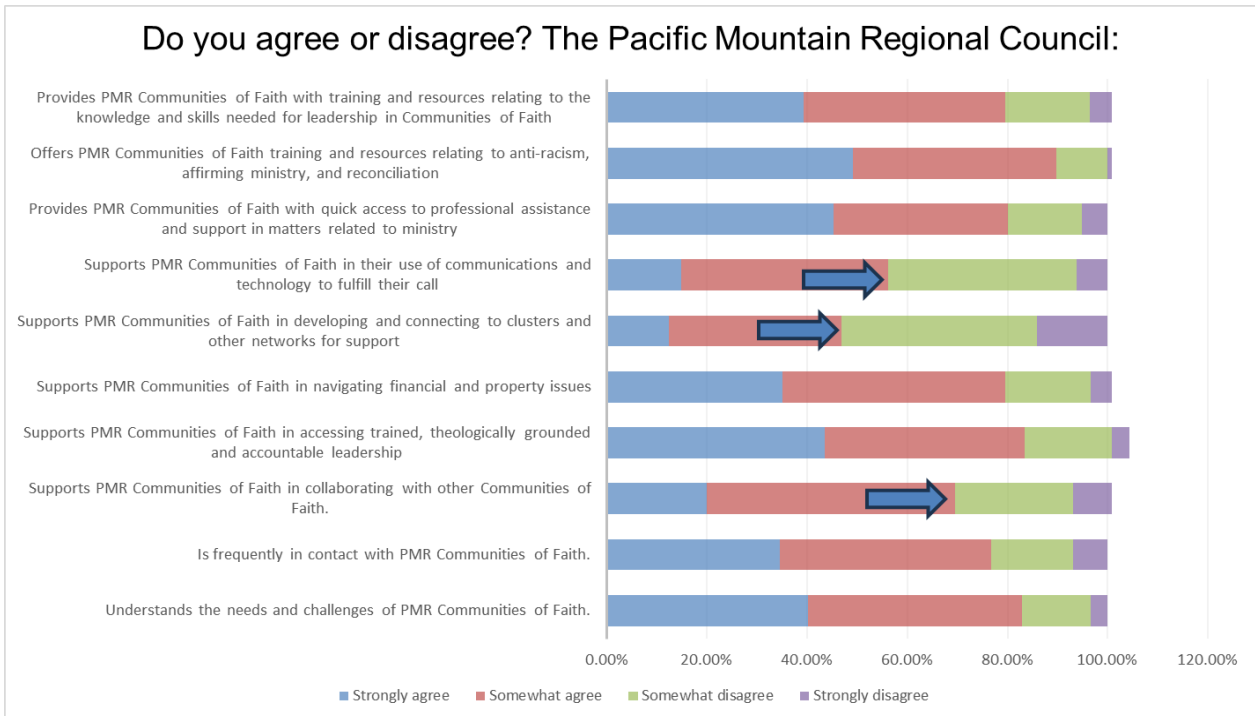


When we asked, “How would you define your relationship with the Pacific Mountain Region?” 48% identified as a CoF member and/or lay leader, 48% as CoF minister/ministry personnel, 11% regional staff, 8% regional lay leaders/volunteers, 3% members of the Executive, 2% other regional organization lay leaders, and 1% as national staff.



Perceptions

When we asked, “Do you agree or disagree? The Pacific Mountain Regional Council:”



Respondents indicated the following as areas of strength:

- Offers PMRC Communities of Faith training and resources relating to anti-racism, affirming ministry, and reconciliation
- Supports PMRC Communities of Faith in accessing trained, theologically grounded and accountable leadership
- Understands the needs and challenges of PMRC Communities of Faith.

Respondents indicated the following as areas in need of improvement:

- Supports PMRC Communities of Faith in developing and connecting to clusters and other networks for support
- Supports PMRC Communities of Faith in their use of communications and technology to fulfill their call
- Supports PMRC Communities of Faith in collaborating with other Communities of Faith.

When we asked, “In what areas do you need the most assistance from the Pacific Mountain Regional Council?” respondents identified the following as areas needing the most assistance:

- Clusters/Networks/Collaboration
- Community Engagement/Outreach
- Financial Processes/Decisions

The other category included comments about:

- Human Resources
- Older Adults/Intergenerational
- Resources for Small and Rural CoF
- Clergy Care
- Administrative Assistance

When we asked, “How would you describe the relationship between the Pacific Mountain Regional Council and its Communities of Faith?” respondents were largely positive. Themes noticed in the comments included:

- Good (25)
- Distant (23)
- Providing Help/Support (22)
- Exclusive/Helps some congregations but not others (8)
- Known primarily through emails (7)
- Under-staffed/ resourced/Strained (5)



When we asked, “What improvement in the way the region works with Communities of Faith would most impact your work?” themes noticed in the comments included:

- Availability
- Visiting CoF
- Communications/Personal contact
- Funding Ministers for Justice
- First Third Ministry
- Financial support/resources



- Check-ins, especially CoF without clergy
- Strategic thinking
- Fair/equitable access to resources
- Connect CoFs to each other - no middleman needed - to facilitate collaboration b/w CoF
- Governance
- Additional staff at the region
- Responsiveness within a short period of time
- Manuals/pamphlets/playbooks for common CoF situations with property/personnel or other issues
- Access to technology
- Resources for worship

When we asked, “What do you most wish PMRC Communities of Faith could collaborate on and/or do together?” themes noticed in the comments included:

- Administrative support
- Attendance and Giving
- Camps
- Children/youth ministries
- Issue networksConnections/retreats
- Coping with demographic change
- Environmental education
- Facilities
- Fellowship
- Financial support
- Joining/Merging/Consolidation strategy
- Local clergy/lay gatherings
- New ministries
- Non-geographic cluster
- Poverty Reduction
- Publicize theology/ethos
- Reconciliation/Justice
- Redistribute wealth, power, authority
- Rural help/Ministerial support for rural/isolated
- Share good news
- Share ideas/best practices/problem solving/resources
- Share programming
- Sharing buildings
- Strategic planning
- Subsidizing meeting attendance



- Clergy care/support/Regional support groups/ minister gatherings
- Communication
- Community outreach/Local engagement
- Training of lay leaders/Connecting lay leaders

- with others in similar roles, learning from them
- Connecting clusters/Helping clusters work together/Mutual support
- Congregational fitness/How to be a healthy congregation

When we asked, “What would you love to see the UCCanada Pacific Mountain Regional Council achieve in the next 2-3 years?” themes noticed in the comments included:

- Partnering/collaborating to combine efforts
- Serving surrounding community needs
- Support

clusters/networks/connecting
with other CoF

- Help troubled CoF and CoF struggling to make Sundays happen
- Visit CoF and be with them where they are
- Assist CoF with having clergy
- Expand Campus United
- Amplifying UCC theology
- Two-way exchange of wisdom
- Creativity about property
- Caring for clergy
- Help with aging buildings
- Help with closing CoF where needed

[illegible]

- Supporting energy audits/property assessments
- New and non-traditional ministries
- Strategic about where CoF are needed
- More communication/check-ins
- Results-focused/Invest toward thriving vs. just surviving
- Empowering congregations to make decisions
- Rural ministry
- Prayer/faith/discipleship
- HR clusters
- Intercultural ministry
- Support CoF and leaders

- Prison/street ministry
- Streamlining services
- Support justice/reconciliation/
- decolonization
- Youth and family program support

When we asked, “Thinking further ahead, what would you love to see the UCCanada Pacific Mountain Regional Council achieve by 2035?” themes noticed in the comments included:

- Emotionally healthy, smaller CoF
- Strong cluster sharing of resources, clergy, facilities
- Forefront of change
- Properties serving their surrounding communities
- Partnership with other denominations
- Flourishing outside lower mainland
- Serving youth/young adults/families
- Shared ministries across Canada
- Spiritual and focused on faith



Differences between Stakeholder Groups

There were some differences in Perceptions between various stakeholder groups.

Community of faith members and ministry personnel were least likely to agree that PMRC:

- Understands the needs and challenges of PMRC Communities of Faith.
- Is frequently in contact with PMRC Communities of Faith.
- Provides PMRC Communities of Faith with training and resources relating to

the knowledge and skills needed for leadership in Communities of Faith

Regional Staff/Volunteers/Members of the Executive were least likely to agree that PMRC:

- Supports PMRC Communities of Faith in their use of communications and technology to fulfill their call

Community of faith members and/or lay leaders were more likely than most other groups to need PMRC assistance in:

- Accessing ministerial leadership
- Communications
- Financial Processes/Decisions

Regional staff/lay leaders/volunteers were more likely to say that they need PMRC assistance in:

- Ministries to Children and Youth

Community of faith members were more likely than other stakeholder groups to describe the relationship as distant.

Data From Interviews And Documents

In our interviews with stakeholders and review of documents, we identified the following strengths and successes:

- Listening to Owners - Completed self-assessment
- Affirming Regional Leadership
- First Third Ministries
- Church Planting
- Creating new funding instruments - Indigenous Ministries/ProVision

We also heard about some challenges facing the PMRC and its governance:

- A desire to spend more time on strategy and the big picture.
- External threats of decline.
- Deepening the executive leadership bench for succession.
- Decision and communication bottle-neck in Executive Minister position.
- Role clarity around property strategy.

- Loss of connectedness among COF.
- Clarity of priorities for Executive Minister and Regional Executive Meetings.
- Do ends need updating?
- A need to review and update policies.

There are some initiatives to address challenges that are still in progress. These include:

- Rebuilding Indigenous Ministry connections.
- Restructured CoF/PR Committee.
- Leadershift - is it making the impact it desires?
- Pilot projects for small CoF - shared staffing, etc.

We came away from our interviews and document review with the following questions:

- How does the Executive Council self-assess its time management?
- Has the shift from Presbyteries added more than it cost?
- How will success of in-progress initiatives towards ends be evaluated?
- If self-initiated connectedness is not working for current CoF, what then?

Conclusions

Strengths

In spite of the external challenges of pandemic and property issues as well as significant periods where key staff were on leave, the PMRC has achieved several important goals. They have become an affirming Region, built strong First Third Ministries, and completed a self-assessment with their communities of faith.

The Executive Council of the PMRC has been able to engage deep questions and collect feedback on them at meetings and gatherings, including:

- What constitutes a healthy faith community?
- What does an antiracist Region look like?
- What is the regional role in property strategy/ issues?

The PMRC has worked hard to rebuild programs and connections after a time of great change, although this work is still ongoing and much has not yet shown fruition. Connecting people during the pandemic and afterward had seen some successes in Town Hall Meetings and Annual Regional Meetings. However, the loss of presbyteries/clusters as a point of connection, particularly for rural churches, remains a pain-point for many in Communities of Faith. Support for rebuilding Indigenous ministries is ongoing, although this work has been interrupted at times due to illness and leaves of Indigenous Ministries staff.

Several points of Innovation can be seen, especially in pilot projects for small/under-resourced communities of faith, new funding mechanisms for grants to communities of faith and for Indigenous ministries, and church planting initiatives.

The Region's investment in diversity is evident in attention to becoming an Affirming region and to rebuilding Indigenous ministries.

The Executive avoids micromanaging the staff and remaining open to new approaches to achieving ends.

Weaknesses/Challenges

Several areas of weakness or challenge were evident in the data.

- Communities of Faith and their leaders are feeling a loss of connectedness to each other and to the Region.
- Property complications use up an oversized amount of Executive Council and staff energy, attention, and resources.
- The Executive Council can be pulled into the weeds in meetings rather than helping to shape the strategic vision, especially when addressing property issues.
- Executive Council members do not have a shared working understanding of the Carver model.
- There is not enough focus at the Executive Council level on discerning strategy and ends to align fully with the Carver model.
- As in most Western Christian institutions, PMRC faces declining membership and participation in communities of faith and regional volunteering.
- There is a risk of staff and community of faith leader burnout due to growing workloads with less hands to do the work.
- A sense of scarcity pervades resource discussions, a scarcity that is not evident in the Region's current resources.

Opportunities

In the years ahead, the Executive Council would be wise to prioritize:

- Rebuilding connections, especially among rural communities of faith and indigenous ministries.
- Clarifying who has responsibility for property strategy and having them create a unified and strategic Ends, Mission, and Means limitations statement for their work.
- Completing Executive Council oversight of necessary areas without using excess time/energy.
- Retraining annually on the Carver model, especially the guidance around meetings, and ensuring new Executive Council members receive extra training where needed for full understanding.

Recommendations

Convergence recommends that the Executive Council of the Pacific Mountain Region work on the following:

- Clarify Strategic Priorities
- Build Trust and Strengthen Governance
- Rebuild Connections and Community
- Change The Narratives
- Clarify Roles and Responsibilities
- Strengthen Focus and Energy Management

Clarify Strategic Priorities

In today's rapidly changing world, clarity is more important than ever. The Pacific Mountain Region Council (PMRC) is called to navigate a shifting faith landscape, respond to new challenges, and seize emerging opportunities. To do this effectively, it must be clear about where it's headed and how it will get there.

One of the first steps is to **regularly revisit and update the Region's strategic ends and policies**. We have the sense that you regularly review ends but rarely review policies. Greater awareness of policies would allow for greater delegation of decision-making by the Executive Council and the Executive Minister. The needs of faith communities are evolving quickly, and the Region's priorities/practices must evolve too. Instead of viewing strategic conversations as a one-time task, it should be treated as an ongoing process—a rhythm of listening, reflecting, and adapting to stay responsive to the realities communities of faith are facing. The Executive Council cannot afford to ignore the visionary and strategic work needed by the Region now and in the future.

To support this, PMRC could adopt a **scenario-planning approach**. By imagining different possible futures—whether it's growth, contraction, or transformation—the Executive Council can test strategies, anticipate challenges, and identify opportunities before they arise. This forward-thinking mindset would help the Region stay prepared, no matter what comes next.

At the same time, **metrics for measuring** impact should be developed to assess whether the Region's efforts are truly making a difference. For example, how is

PMRC supporting leaders? Are clusters being revitalized? Is equity work deepening relationships with Indigenous ministries? Clear, measurable goals will ensure progress can be tracked—and celebrated—while also identifying areas that may need more attention.

Now, one word of caution: We have watched too many organizations become obsessed with measurement over ministry. While we are recommending that you explore metrics for measuring impact, we are not suggesting that you dedicate time to this at the sacrifice of your work with congregations. Keep the main thing, the main thing.

In that spirit, **flexibility and focus** should guide decision-making. While the Region must remain responsive to urgent needs, it's equally important to avoid getting lost in reactive decision-making. Instead, PMRC should focus its energy on big-picture priorities—like regional leadership development, supporting congregations, and setting vision—while delegating operational tasks to committees or staff.

Finally, clarifying priorities is not just about governance—it's about **storytelling**. The PMRC should communicate its priorities clearly and consistently, helping communities of faith understand the vision and how they fit into it. When people see where the Region is going and why, they are more likely to invest their time, resources, and trust in the journey.

Build Trust and Strengthening Governance

Trust is the foundation of effective leadership, and PMRC has an opportunity to deepen that trust by strengthening its governance practices and investing in team relationships. Good governance isn't just about rules and policies—it's about building a culture where people feel heard, supported, and equipped to lead confidently.

One important step is to prioritize **annual governance retreats** for the Executive Council. These retreats can serve as a time to step back from day-to-day tasks, reconnect as a team, and re-center on shared values and priorities. They also create space for learning—whether it's refreshing knowledge of the Carver governance model, reflecting on lessons learned, or envisioning what's next. These gatherings should be designed not just as meetings but as collaborative learning spaces where council members can share ideas, address challenges, and build stronger bonds.

To ensure everyone is equipped to lead effectively, PMRC should also develop an **onboarding and mentorship program** for new Executive Council members. Governance can feel complex and overwhelming at first, so pairing new members with experienced mentors can help ease the transition, provide guidance, and build confidence. This is especially important for integrating diverse perspectives and voices, ensuring everyone has the tools they need to contribute meaningfully.

Additionally, PMRC should continue investing in anti-racism, equity, and reconciliation training to ensure its governance practices reflect its values as an affirming and inclusive Region. These trainings should be woven into the rhythm of governance work, reinforcing PMRC's commitment to justice and inclusion.

Finally, building trust also means celebrating wins along the way. Whether it's a successful program launch, a well-handled property challenge, or a meaningful community partnership, taking time to acknowledge and honor achievements can strengthen morale and build momentum.

Rebuild Connections and Community

Faith is not meant to be lived in isolation. It thrives in connection—with one another, with shared purpose, and with the wider community. Yet one of the clearest challenges facing the PMRC (and most denominations, for that matter) is a loss of a sense of connectedness—especially among rural communities of faith and leaders who feel isolated. Rebuilding these connections is not just about logistics; it's about rekindling relationships, trust, and shared purpose.

We will say more about the sense of lost connection in the next recommendation. That said, we do recommend that the PMRC **make connection a strategic priority** by investing in awareness of the opportunities for congregations and leaders to gather, share ideas, and collaborate. Restoring and revitalizing clusters and networks—especially in rural areas—can create lifelines of support and encouragement. These clusters can provide safe spaces for leaders to troubleshoot challenges, share best practices, and dream together about what's possible.

At the same time, PMRC should focus on **mentorship programs** that connect experienced leaders with newer or struggling congregations. These relationships can provide guidance, encouragement, and practical advice, helping to reduce

burnout and equip leaders for long-term success. This also allows you to multiply regional relationships without overwhelming your Regional Ministers.

Connection also happens in small, intentional ways. Visits to communities of faith by PMRC staff and leaders can make a significant difference. You are already doing such a good job in this area. These visits aren't just about sharing information—they're about listening and bearing witness to the struggles and successes of local ministries. Being present communicates care, builds trust, and reminds congregations that they are not alone.

Change the Narrative

You have two strong storylines that define and perhaps limit your understanding of the present and your imagination for the future. We wonder if they are serving you well.

The First Story we will call “The Golden Age of Presbytery.” This story says that with the ending of Presbyteries, you lost your sense of connection and contribution. Most of the people in the survey and in interviews held positions of influence and leadership in the Presbytery. The Presbyteries gave a context for contribution. But of course, they also were the bane of your existence. As people grew busier and/or older, attending Presbytery meetings and doing the work became harder. Today, looking back, you have a love/hate relationship with them and recognize that they were ultimately not sustainable.

That said, you are now in a new structure, and because it functions differently, it feels unfamiliar. For some, this has created a sense of disorientation. With all of the other changes happening in the world, this change is just one more source of disconnection. Of course, COVID also hit at the beginning of this transition which likely added to the sense of isolation.

YET, when we asked about opportunities for gathering and connection after the Presbytery system was restructured, you named a number of examples - Town Halls, clusters, annual meetings, zoom calls with Regional Staff, just to name a few. It became apparent that you are not lacking opportunities for connection. You are lacking the comfort of connecting in the same way as you have in the past. You are also lacking a sense that your presence is needed as a contributor to the whole.

Here is your opportunity: Change the story from one of “we aren’t connected anymore” to “we connect differently, and our connection is sacred to the covenant we hold as the Church.”

The Second Story is one we will call “Depression of Decline.” Of course, when we look at the statistics of church attendance and project them into the future, it’s not an encouraging picture. So, the decline is real. That said, as a region, you all are incredibly well-resourced and will likely navigate this decline with enormous capacity for future innovation. The United Church of Canada will likely bottom out at 1,800 congregations as a denomination. Your region will hold a significant number of those congregations. While you will lose churches in the near future, you will also be the inheritors of strong congregations to lead the future forward. These will be congregations of all sizes and locations.

Rather than be deterred by the reality of decline, you could rescript your narrative to one of future possibilities. Congregations are changing and the structures to support them are undergoing transformative and evolutionary changes. Your investment is ensuring that the future of public theology, spiritual development and community connection are based in the life-giving values of the United Church. You have the opportunity to innovate in hundreds of ways today and going forward. Sure, the “organized” Church is declining, but you can be the “organizing” Church for the sake of a more just and generous world!

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are the backbone of effective governance. When everyone knows who is accountable for what—and has the tools and authority to carry it out—it creates focus, efficiency, and confidence. For the Pacific Mountain Regional Council (PMRC), this is especially important when it comes to property strategy, which has emerged as one of the most time-consuming and complex areas of governance.

Currently, **property-related decisions** can pull the Executive Council into operational details rather than allowing it to focus on strategic oversight. To address this, PMRC should delegate property strategy development and management to a dedicated task force or committee with expertise in this area. This group could be tasked with:

- Developing a clear and unified property strategy aligned with PMRC's mission and values.
- Providing regular updates and reports to the Executive Council to ensure accountability without requiring constant involvement in details.
- Identifying creative ways to use property assets, whether through partnerships, community programs, or revenue-generating opportunities.
- Simplifying decision-making processes so property matters can be handled efficiently without derailing broader governance priorities.

At the same time, the Executive Council would maintain oversight and approval authority, ensuring that all decisions align with PMRC's strategic ends and values. This balance of delegation and accountability would free the Executive Council to focus on the bigger picture—mission, strategy, and innovation—while empowering the property task force to address practical challenges effectively.

To support this shift, PMRC should also provide clear resources and tools for communities of faith navigating property-related decisions. Playbooks, templates, and best-practice guides could help congregations address common issues—like building maintenance, property sales, and partnerships—without always needing to escalate questions to the Region.

This recommendation is not just about efficiency; it's about alignment. By clarifying roles and responsibilities, PMRC ensures that property decisions serve the mission—rather than becoming distractions from it. It also builds trust and accountability by empowering the right people to make the right decisions at the right level.

In the long run, this approach positions PMRC to treat its properties as tools for ministry—resources that can fuel growth, sustainability, and community impact. With clearer roles and stronger systems, the Region can set a model for the rest of the United Church.

Strengthen Focus and Energy Management

Time and energy are two of the most valuable resources a governing body has—and how they are used speaks volumes about its priorities. Ensuring that the Executive Council stays focused on strategy rather than getting bogged down in operational details is critical to advancing its mission.

One of the first steps is to rethink how meetings are structured. Too often, governing bodies can find themselves spending valuable time reacting to immediate issues rather than proactively planning for the future. To avoid this, PMRC should develop a meeting framework that prioritizes strategic discussions over day-to-day decision-making. Tools like consent agendas—where routine items are approved without lengthy debate—can help free up time for more meaningful conversations.

In addition, the Executive Council could benefit from pre-meeting self-assessments. Before any agenda is finalized, members should ask:

- Does this topic require strategic oversight or operational input?
- Are we spending time on high-level goals or getting lost in the weeds?
- Will this discussion move us closer to our mission and values?

By asking these questions upfront, the PMRC can streamline its focus and ensure meetings are purpose-driven rather than reactive.

Another strategy is to schedule dedicated work sessions for complex, high-priority topics. For example, instead of squeezing property strategy discussions into standard meetings, the Executive Council could plan focused sessions that allow for deeper exploration without disrupting other governance work. This creates space for thoughtful discernment rather than rushed decisions.

Regular self-assessments should also be built into PMRC's governance culture. Quarterly reviews of how time is spent—and whether priorities are being met—can help identify areas where adjustments are needed. Simple tools like time audits or feedback forms can reveal patterns and guide improvements.

Energy Management of the Staff

The staff of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council (PMRC) are deeply committed to their ministries, often going above and beyond to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Their dedication is evident in the long hours they work and their willingness to step into multiple roles to ensure the Region's mission continues to move forward.

However, this level of over-functioning—though admirable—comes with significant risks. Prolonged overwork can lead to burnout, diminished creativity, and even disengagement, all of which threaten not only individual well-being but also the

sustainability of the Region's ministries. Addressing this pattern is essential for building a healthy and resilient organization.

You already know this. We also acknowledge that a number of staff are currently on leave for various reasons. Their absence adds significantly to the workload of those remaining. This may be episodic...or it might be a symptom of the demands of the system. Likely, it's a combination of both.

While we applaud the attention you already give to creating a healthy staff culture, the Executive Minister and Council should consider reinforcing a culture of rest and renewal by modeling sustainable practices. Encouraging staff to use their vacation time, implementing flexible scheduling options, and building in regular sabbatical opportunities can help protect staff from exhaustion while demonstrating that self-care is a vital part of leadership. Hosting quarterly staff retreats focused on reflection, team-building, and spiritual renewal could also provide space for rest and re-centering. By investing in the well-being of its team, PMRC will not only safeguard its staff from burnout but also empower them to lead with energy, creativity, and joy in the years ahead.

Closing

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council (PMRC) of the United Church of Canada stands at a pivotal moment in its journey. This governance review highlights both the strengths that have shaped the Region's identity and the challenges that must be addressed to sustain its mission. PMRC has demonstrated remarkable resilience, adaptability, and commitment to its values, particularly through its affirming ministries, investments in reconciliation, and innovative approaches to small and rural communities of faith. Yet, like many faith organizations navigating rapid cultural and demographic shifts, PMRC faces mounting pressures—strained connections, governance complexities, and overextended staff—that threaten to impede its growth and impact.

This report offers a path forward, grounded in the strengths of PMRC's leadership and the trust it has built with its communities of faith. It recommends clarifying strategic priorities, rebuilding networks of connection, empowering staff and volunteers, and strengthening governance systems to create clearer boundaries and more sustainable practices. By addressing these areas with intentionality, PMRC can better align its resources and energy to serve its mission effectively. The

focus on role clarity, energy management, and community-building not only reflects the immediate needs identified in this review but also lays the groundwork for long-term transformation and growth.

Ultimately, the Region's future depends on its ability to balance tradition and innovation—to honor the values that have defined its identity while embracing new ways of being church in a changing world. By investing in leadership development, strengthening collaborative networks, and prioritizing care for its staff and volunteers, PMRC can position itself as a model of adaptive and faithful governance.