

TITLE: NEW 1 – GC Centres Proposals

Originating Body: Paul Browning and Catherine Stewart-Savage

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The 42nd General Council (2015) direct:

The Executive of the General Council in its discernment of priorities for the Church, explore the future of the Education Centres for the formation of leaders and ministry of the Church, and consult with the Boards of the Centres and report to GCE by Spring 2016.

Background:

In 2014 Calling Lakes in Saskatchewan closed. In January 2015 Naramata in British Columbia ceased operations. In July 2015 all staff at the Tatamagouche Centre in Nova Scotia received layoff notices. Five Oaks in Ontario faces financial and infrastructure crises at this time. Significant time, effort and energy has been invested by staff and volunteers to work at various sustainable plans. However, it is not clear if the Centres have a clear value to the church going forward.

Over the past half-century, the United Church of Canada's Centres have been vital for the faith formation of many members. Their innovative, challenging programs have deepened and broadened our understanding of ourselves, our Christian tradition and of our role of Church as a Church. Their natural beauty has offered spiritual retreat, nurture and renewal. Through creative programs and partnering, the Centres have been an Outreach Ministry. They have become a "greenhouse" through which visions of a new "post-Christendom" Church can be seen emerging.