



Report from the Responsable for French Ministries

*Presented to the Annual General Assembly of the Table des ministères en français in
Montréal, February 29th, 2020*

Constructing « La Table des ministères en français »

La Table, launched in 2019, established its committees in 2019 to do the work of the church in French. The Governing Council met twice after the establishment of La Table (June 1st and October 3rd, 2019) and the Executive met monthly from July to December to deal with emerging issues.

The Nominations Committee helped populate the following committees: Communications, Training and Resources, New Ministry Development and Pastoral Relations. Si vous êtes intéressé à l'un des comités, communiquez votre intérêt au comité des nominations. There is also a social justice sub-committee of the Communications Committee.

We plan to hold three meetings of the Governing Council in 2020 and continue having the Executive meet monthly to keep things on track.

La Table currently has covenants with six Regional Councils and is working to establish more across the country.

Support to ministries and ministers

Wednesday mornings at 8am, ministry personnel are invited to join an online meeting to discuss the lectionary readings for that week and share their thoughts on where they are going with their reflections. It's a time of sharing that has been a great way to connect people across the distances and help them feel less isolated. And it's



always been a rich time of sharing. We call it **Prépdication** (préparation + prédication).

A **leadership retreat** was held in Sutton, Québec in early November and brought together Francophones from across the church. The Moderator was also able to stop in for the event. We explored faith through the lens of intercultural expression, art and rest.

We are working closely with the community of **Saint-Marc in Ottawa** facing some important renovation and construction in their church building. Barbara Reynolds is also the Pastoral Charge Supervisor while their new minister goes through the process of admission to the United Church of Canada from Togo.

In early 2019, Tyson Gofton worked with the recently-established **Toronto-based Francophone ministry** to do some strategic planning and have assisted in the relocation of the ministry to their current location at Downsview United Church.

We worked with the community of **Belle-Rivière** to help sort out their funding for their cemeteries. We've translated a number of different descriptions of funds offered by the United Church of Canada Foundation and the Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council's available funding for Francophone ministry.

We piloted a **survey of Francophone members within the United Church** in the Eastern Ontario/Outaouais region to better understand their needs and to help in the goal of networking – particularly for those who are regular worshippers in an Anglophone congregation. Many didn't realize that there were resources, prayers and content in French that was available on the website and social media.

We helped to launch the [*Programme privilèges*](#) with Staples/Bureau en gros amongst the Francophones of the church. The service is offered in both languages and provides a discount to those within the United Church.

New Ministries

Apart from our **new ministries** that have been established in the last couple of years (Toronto French Protestant Ministry, Sainte-Adèle congregation in the Laurentians, bilingual ministries in various locations), we have been exploring and testing new forms of ministry along with some more traditional ones.

Through Advent, a new project called **Pèlerins d'espérance** (Pilgrims of Hope) began gathering at the United Theological College on Sunday evenings over supper. The project focuses on prayer, meditation and discussion. They are continuing the project through Lent in 2020 and are discussing how it will proceed into the future.



In 2019, Église Unie de la Grâce United Church, in Wakefield Québec, took the *Camp Awesome* model and developed a **bilingual summer camp** for young people. We are working on developing a French language camp in 2020 in a variety of locations in Quebec and Ontario.

A new project is currently under consideration for the **region of Gatineau**. It would involve a Sunday evening gathering over dinner in the cooking classes of a grocery store. It would include dinner, discussion, readings and prayers. The model will adapt to the needs and interests of the early participants.

L'accueil in Winnipeg continues to provide a Saturday evening worship service, liturgy and communion with a short, recorded reflection that is projected, live music, once every month. This project started a little over a year ago and continues to reach out to Francophones in the Winnipeg region.

The Winnipeg model is starting to see an interest in a number of other cities. We are preparing **"Ready to Deliver" worship services** that include a recorded reflection, prayers and readings that can be customized for a traditional worship service or for a small group discussion model. Interest has been shown in Moncton, Sudbury and Whitehorse. Several Francophone ministry personnel have begun recording sermons for this project. It will launch in the Easter season.

A Francophone minister who was recently settled in **Kingston, Nova Scotia** is exploring a project that would provide worship in that region for Acadians and Francophones from the Canadian Forces Base in Greenwood, NS.

This summer, a **ministry of presence at a Québec City cemetery** (Mount Hermon) is being organised to help greet those who are visiting loved ones who have passed. This is being done in conjunction with an Anglican congregation in the region. Our ordained minister at Église Unie Saint-Pierre will be working on this project.

A **Sunday afternoon worship service in an intercultural community** has recently been launched at Mount Royal United Church. The service is African-inspired and has begun to attract a wide array of people.

The United Church as a whole

We are building links with the [Église Protestante Unie de la France](#) in several ways. We have established a partnership in sharing learning resources and content through their online portal Théovie. We are working with a retired minister from that denomination, Didier Fievet and his partner Martine Gastinel, who are in Canada for nine months to work with us as partners in the work of French ministry. We are also exploring other bridges that can be built in the coming years.



In the fall of 2019, we worked with the General Council team to produce support materials for the 2019 Federal Election, Advent Unwrapped, prayers, activities and other **public resources**. We actively worked to promote volunteer opportunities within the church through our Nominations Committee and helped to spread the word about events and seasons within the church.

We carried out a survey with Léger Marketing of 2000 Francophones in Québec to determine their attitudes towards religion and spirituality. The goal was to better understand our context and to try and figure out how to respond to the needs expressed. We have been using the results of this survey in our communications strategy, our new ministry initiatives and sharing it with the wider church.

We now have a URCD page for [printed resources in French](#) (books, booklets, guides) on egliseunie.ca. UCRD provides the purchase and delivery services, as well as customer service in French.

The Moderator's seasonal videos are now regularly available in both languages. We have worked with him to produce these videos for Lent, Easter, start of the school year, Advent, Christmas, PIE Day. We have also provided a French adaptation of his guide to becoming a disciple of Christ: *C.H.E.M.I.N.*

A French-language **Come and See Tour of Palestine and Israel** is in the works. We are working closely with the team that has done these for the church previously.

We have done **translation of systems, guides and forms** for the United Church, including ChurchHub (CarrefourÉglise), pastoral relations documents, candidacy documents, admissions documents and the Manuel, all in response to the new church structures. We continue to provide translation for day-to-day declarations and statements, press releases and other communications products as needed.

Training/Formation

The **Lay Worship Leader's programme** in French is in its final semester in Spring 2020. It has been offered in modules which allowed people who were interested in particular topics to pop in even if they were not intending to be certified.

French language training has been offered, online and in person, for Anglophones who wish to improve their French. Nous offrons de la **formation linguistique** pour les anglophones qui veulent perfectionner leur français, en ligne et en personne.

Since half of all the Francophone ministries and leadership within the United Church are **intercultural**, this has been a key aspect of our work and exploration in recent



years. We have offered retreats, training sessions and a program with the *Forum for intercultural leadership and learning* in 2019.

In September a **training session for congregational treasurers** was offered online in French, particularly in light of the many structural changes. Many of the local leaders in Francophone congregations are unable to speak English.

A **training session was offered on ChurchHub** in French in November at the offices of the Regional Council in Montréal. Another session is anticipated in 2020.

A series of « how-to » guides on [starting and facilitating a small discussion group](#) around spiritual, biblical and religious topics was prepared and is now freely available online.

Communications

Each week the team meets to hold its « **Media Room** » to look at what is happening in the media, assess whether there is something that we need to respond to, all in the hopes of aligning our work with that of the news cycle and public discourse. This helps unify the work that is happening on our website, Facebook, Twitter and in our online magazine [Aujourd'hui Credo](#).

Our website, [egliseunie.ca](#), currently hosts significant resources for the administration of congregations, liturgical resources, prayers, etc. It is maintained separately from [united-church.ca](#) since it is not a full translation of the English site, and there is content that is uniquely available in French.

Our online news magazine [Aujourd'hui Credo](#) ([egliseunie.ca/credo](#)) is offered on a parallel platform to our website. Its content is accessible to a wider public, in line with the news cycle, of global interest, all anchored in the United Church's worldview, but not uniquely from within it. Here is a sample of the content in *Aujourd'hui Credo* this last year:

- **Interviews** – video interviews with people regarding their faith journey, their engagement in justice issues, their personal story. This includes well known people in Québec.
- **The Bible speaks to us about...** – a series of short reflections on a biblical text around a particular theme. In 2019, we ran a series of 6 videos around the issue of immigration and migration. In 2020 we plan to run a series on inclusion.
- **Newsy articles** – in 2019 we began a series of articles called *Ruptures et filiations* (Taking apart and reassembling) on issues around faith and secularism. We've begun a series on end of life issues, including medical assistance in dying that will continue in 2020.



- **Reporters** – we run a series of articles from writers who reflect on subjects
 - Lisa Byer-de Wever (Mission possible!) – Working in a community mission-setting
 - Nelly Étouké (Le cheval et le papillon) – Spiritual practices
 - Paula Kline (La mission SAGE) – Reaching out to the broader community beyond the church
 - Bertrand Laverdure (Arts et culture) – Arts and culture
 - Joëlle Leduc (Journal d'une pasteure des Laurentides) – Reflections of a minister in the Laurentians
 - Patricia Lisson (L'âme de nos communautés) – The spirit of community life
 - Jean Loignon (Circuit des fêtes païennes, religieuses et laïques) – Holidays and Holy Days, history and context of the days we celebrate

We continue to support and participate in the Québec-wide radio program [Chemins Protestants](#) through the station **Radio VM** – including a 30 second radio ad that plays year-round.

We are members of the [Association des médias catholiques et œcuméniques](#) for the last number of years as well, which allows us to be connected to the wider ecumenical media.

We managed to appear in more than **15 French-language media articles** in 2019, particularly around the Moderator's visit to Québec, Bill 21 (secularism law), and the Léger Marketing poll.

Social Media: Facebook followers have grown from 1340 to 1512 in 2019. Twitter was recently established and currently has 54 followers. Our e-newsletter has grown from 221 to 316 in 2019.