

Brief History of the United Church of Canada from the General Council web site

The United Church of Canada is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada. We minister to over 2 million people in about 3,000 congregations. The history of the United Church is closely entwined with the history of Canada itself.

The United Church was inaugurated on June 10, 1925 in Toronto, Ontario, when the Methodist Church, Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada, and 70 per cent of the Presbyterian Church of Canada entered into a union. Also joining was the small General Council of Union Churches, centered largely in Western Canada. It was the first union of churches in the world to cross historical denominational lines and received international acclaim. Each of the founding churches had a long history in Canada prior to 1925. The movement for church union began with the desire to coordinate ministry in the vast Canadian northwest and for collaboration in overseas missions. Congregations in Indigenous communities from each of the original denominations were an important factor in the effort toward church union.

The United Church continues to be a "uniting" church, and has been enriched by several additional unions since 1925. In 1930, the Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda became part of The United Church of Canada's Maritime Conference. The Evangelical United Brethren Church became part of The United Church of Canada in 1968. In addition, various individual congregations from other Christian communions have become part of the United Church over the years.

A New Creed

We are not alone,

we live in God's world.

We believe in God,

who has created and is creating,

who has come in Jesus,

the Word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others

by the spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church,

to celebrate God's presence,

to live with respect in Creation,

to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

The Crest of the United Church of Canada from the General Council web site...



The crest is the official signature of The United Church of Canada, as well as a spiritual and historic reminder.

The crest is the official signature of The United Church of Canada, placed on legal documents, ordination and commissioning certificates, and licenses to perform the sacraments. Designed by the Rev. Dr. Victor T. Mooney (a treasurer of the United Church), it was officially adopted in 1944 by the 11th General Council.

For our church members, this insignia is a spiritual and historic reminder. Its oval shape is derived from the outline of a fish, a symbol of identity by early Christians. The initials of the words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" spell the Greek word for fish.

The crest is designed in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross with an insignia in each of the four corners. The "X" at the centre, the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, is a traditional symbol for Christ. In the four corners of the crest are symbols, three of which are particularly associated with the three communions—Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian—that united to form The United Church of Canada in 1925.

The open Bible represents the Congregational Churches with their emphasis upon God's truth that makes people free. From this communion we have a heritage of liberty in prophesying, love of spiritual freedom, awareness of the creative power of the Holy Spirit, and clear witness for civic justice.

The dove is emblematic of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:10) whose transforming power has been a distinctive mark of Methodism. Here our heritage is one of evangelical zeal, concern for human redemption, warmth of Christian fellowship, the testimony of spiritual experience, and the ministry of sacred song.

The burning bush is the symbol of Presbyterianism. It refers to the bush that burned and was not consumed (Exodus 3:2), and symbolizes the indestructibility of the church. From Presbyterianism we have received a heritage of high regard for the dignity in worship, the education of all people, the authority of scripture, and the church as the Body of Christ.

The symbols alpha and omega in the lower quarter are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They symbolize the eternal living God, in the fullness of creation (Revelation 1:8).

The Latin words *ut omnes unum sint* that surround the symbols on the crest mean "That all may be one" and are taken from John 17:21. They are a reminder that we are both a "united" and "uniting" church.

In 1980, a French translation of The United Church of Canada—*L'Église Unie du Canada*—was authorized by General Council to be added to the crest.

In August of 2012, at the 41st General Council, The United Church of Canada acknowledged the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal peoples in the United Church by revising the church's crest. The crest changes include incorporating the colours often associated with the Aboriginal Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel, which reflects respect for diversity and interdependence, is often represented in the four traditional colours of yellow, red, black, and white, which incorporate important teachings from the four directions, the four stages of life, and the four seasons. The placement of these colours will vary according to the traditions of the nation. The Medicine Wheel teaches us to seek balance in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the circle of life. The crest changes also include the addition of the Mohawk phrase "*Akwē Nia'Tetewá:neren*" [aw gway-- nyah day day waw-- nay renh], which means "All my relations."