

GC44 Business Process

Key concepts

Following on the success of the business model of the last meeting, the 44th General Council will use a similar model with the following key concepts:

- **Pre-GC conversations:** Conversations are encouraged across the church featuring topics that may be of interest to the whole. These conversations may lead to proposals to regional councils, or they may serve as an important end in themselves as conversations the church wishes to hold. Conversations that end in proposals to regional councils are encouraged to be submitted to the regions in 2020 so listening/learning can begin on proposals to GC44 early in 2021.
- **Proposal format:** There is a template for proposals to encourage naming an issue rather than a specific outcome. “Conversation proposals” are also encouraged—that is, a proposal may also request a conversation on a particular issue as an end in itself.
- **Agenda limited to priorities set by GC44 Commissioners:** Commissioners will review proposals and name the issues in which they have the highest level of interest. Proposals on these issues will serve as the priority agenda for the GC meeting. Other proposals will be referred to GCE or dealt with in other ways, as decided by Commissioners.
- **Three-phase decision-making:** Commissioners will engage in a three-phase process for all General Council business:
 1. **Listening and receiving information:** presentation of the proposal, questions, and answers to clarify issues and implications (online, before the in-person meeting)
 2. **Discussion and deliberation:** exchange of ideas, thoughts, arguments, pros, and cons; emergence of suggestions for refinement of proposal, affirmations, naming of principles/parameters
 3. **Discernment and decision:** final debate and refinements of proposal in plenary; working towards consensus, voting

Three-Phase Process		
Listening	Discussion	Decision
Learn	Thoughts	Debate
Clarify	Insights	Final refinements
Understand	Refinements	Toward consensus
	Affirmations	Vote

Business process before General Council

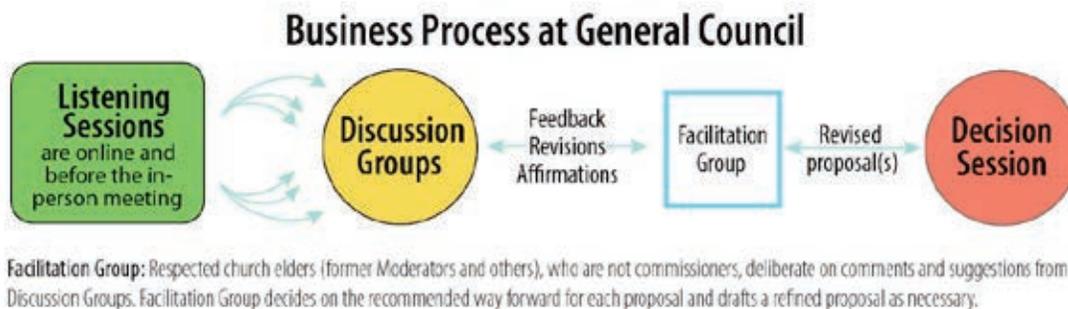
To maximize discussion time for the proposals before the General Council, **the vast majority of listening sessions will take place in advance of the in-person meeting** of Council.

Commissioners are encouraged to treat these listening sessions like they would any other session of Council. If you are unable to attend live, recordings of the sessions will be available shortly after their completion.

Proposals will be added to the online workbook provided to Commissioners as they become available. After reading the proposals in the workbook and participating in or viewing the online listening sessions, Commissioners will decide on the issues in which they have the highest level of interest. They will then complete an online response form to the General Council to indicate their priorities. The Proposal Group will review the responses and identify the issues (likely made up of multiple proposals) of greatest interest to Commissioners. These issues will form the focus of the agenda for the General Council meeting (with the agenda being subject to the approval of the General Council).

Business process at General Council

While a consent motion will be used for some items, the majority of business (identified themes/issues) the General Council discusses will follow the three-phase decision making process.



1. **Listening phase:** As mentioned, the majority of listening sessions will take place before the in-person meeting of the General Council and are to be considered as part of the life of the 44th General Council.
2. **Discussion phase:** Commissioners will meet in discussion groups of approximately 30 people with a pre-named chair/host and a note-taker.

Discussion groups will start by ensuring everyone has an understanding of the items under discussion. A way of seeking clarification will be provided for each group.

Discussion groups will deliberate on all the themes and proposals before the Council. They will decide on comments, affirmations, or suggestions for refinement. The note-takers will record these comments, affirmations, and suggestions. After discussing a theme, the

discussion group will confirm the information to be recorded and shared. The reports from all groups will be available for viewing by all Commissioners as well as the Facilitation Group.*

*A Facilitation Group, made up of respected church elders (former Moderators and others) and *not* Commissioners, will meet to deliberate on the comments and suggestions from Discussion Groups. The Facilitation Group will decide on its recommended way forward for each proposal and draft a refined proposal to reflect that recommendation as necessary.

- 3. Decision-making phase:** The Facilitation Group's (refined) proposals will be made available electronically to Commissioners in advance of the decision session for which they will be considered.

There will be final debate and refinement of the proposal in plenary, with the Facilitation Group returning to do more refinement as necessary. The process will conclude with a motion in response to the proposal and a vote on the motion.