

RICHMOND HILL UNITED CHURCH CONSTITUTION - draft

PREAMBLE

Richmond Hill United Church is a local ministry unit of the United Church of Canada, and shall operate in accord with the polity and procedures of the United Church of Canada.

SECTION I COUNCIL

1. Responsibility

The Council will be responsible for establishing priorities and defining policy in keeping with the plans approved by the congregation and in accord with the Manual of the United Church of Canada. In particular the Council will:

- a) make decisions on all matters that are not assigned to any Standing Committee or that go beyond the jurisdiction of any single Standing Committee and that do not require congregational approval, and coordinate Committee actions,
- b) make decisions on matters that exceed the budget approved by congregation of any Standing Committee,
- c) receive written reports from Standing Committees,
- d) see that the congregation is adequately informed of proceedings of the Council and Standing Committees, and the work of the whole church,
- e) appoint and supervise the work of ad hoc committees for special purposes not within the jurisdiction of any single Standing Committee,
- f) consolidate an Annual Report and Plan to be submitted to the congregation for approval, and ensure that long range planning takes place on a continuing basis,
- g) appoint members to the Ministry and Personnel Committee,
- h) appoint representatives to the Presbytery and delegates to duties outside the congregation as required,
- i) approve the removal of names from the membership roll, and have oversight of church records,
- j) direct the preparation of an annual report and budget to be presented to the congregation for approval,
- k) call meetings of the congregation, and prepare agendas,
- l) review the constitution from time to time, and when advisable prepare recommendations for necessary amendments for submission to the congregation (see section VII), and
- m) represent the congregation at official functions inside and outside the church.

2. Operation

- a) The Council will have regular monthly meetings from September to June on a schedule to be determined by the Council, and otherwise as required,
- b) Meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson (or in his or her absence the Vice-chairperson), or by the minister(s), or by any two other members of the Council,
- c) Standing Committee chairpersons will ensure that in their absence an alternate from their Committee attends each meeting of the Council.

3. Composition

The Council will be composed of a Chairperson, a Vice-chairperson, a Secretary, the Treasurer, the chairpersons of the ten Standing Committees, up to four members at large, the minister(s), the representative(s) to Presbytery ex officio, the President of the United Church Women ex-officio, and Immediate Past Chair of Council ex-officio. At least one of the members of the Council must also be a member of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive of Council will be composed of the Chairperson, the Vice-chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the minister(s), with others as needed.

4. Duties of Council Members

Chairperson

- i. chair meetings of the Council and congregational meetings,
- ii. prepare agendas for Council meetings, and
- iii. review and oversee the operation of the Council.

Vice-chairperson

- i. assist the chairperson in the performance of his or her duties,
- ii. act as the chairperson in his or her absence, and
- iii. chair the Nominating Committee..

Past Chairperson

- i. have oversight of rentals of facilities and property, in collaboration with the Finance and Property Committees

Secretary

- i. record the proceedings of the Council and congregational meetings, and
- ii. receive correspondence pertaining to church matters and redirect as necessary, and attend to the correspondence of the Council.

Treasurer

- i. perform the functions of the Treasurer as outlined in the Manual,

Members At Large

- i. participate as full members of the Council without chairing a Standing Committee.

Chairpersons of Standing Committees

- i. prepare agendas for and chair all meetings of their Standing Committee,
- ii. oversee implementation of Committee decisions,
- iii. participate in meetings and activities of the Council,
- iv. present written reports to the Council, and to report to their Committees the deliberations of the Council, and
- v. co-opt members to the Standing Committee, in addition to those elected by the congregation.

If a Standing Committee has Co-chairs, both may attend and participate in Council meetings, but only one vote may be cast.

SECTION II STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees will be empowered to decide and act upon matters under their jurisdiction, including the establishment and supervision of subcommittees as appropriate, within the context of the plans and budgets approved by the Council and the congregation.

Standing Committees (other than Ministry and Personnel) will consist of members elected by the congregation, members co-opted or appointed by the chairperson, and members ex-officio who serve as full members of the Committee by virtue of their position. The number of co-opted members must never exceed the number of elected members on any Committee.

Each Standing Committee will ensure that its chairperson or an alternate attends each regular meeting of the Council.

1. Christian Development

This Committee will have responsibility to develop and oversee programs and activities offered to children, youth and adults which nurture and encourage faith exploration and formation, and in particular will:

- a) have responsibility for selection and oversight of Christian Development staff, and for oversight of the recruitment of Christian Development leaders, teachers and assistants,
- b) support the training of persons offering service to Christian Development programs and activities,
- c) encourage the whole church family to take advantage of opportunities for faith exploration and formation through continuing education,
- d) encourage support for and experience in various events and educational developmental opportunities within RHUC, the wider church and our communities such as: summer camps, retreats, Presbytery and Conference events, ecumenical events, etc.,
- e) review and select the educational materials for Christian Development programs, in light of educational and theological value,
- f) select and maintain appropriate Christian Development resources; including curriculum, books, audio/visual materials etc.,
- g) maintain as accurately as possible the rolls for church school and nursery programs, in cooperation with the church office,
- h) promote knowledge and understanding of the church's overall mission, in cooperation with all committees within RHUC, and
- i) ensure the offering of opportunities for reaffirmation of baptismal faith (confirmation).

The Christian Development Committee will be composed of a chairperson, elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

2. Fellowship

This Committee will have general responsibility for organization and coordination of events and activities to sustain and develop fellowship within the congregation, and in particular will:

- a) coordinate social activities in and for the church,
- b) organize special and regular fellowship events and activities,
- c) maintain liaison with fellowship groups within the church,
- d) encourage the development of new fellowship groups.

The Fellowship Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members. At least one member (elected or co-opted) must be a member of the United Church Women.

3. Finance

This Committee will have general responsibility for oversight of financial expenditures and coordination of budgeting, and in particular will:

- a) consolidate the budget plans of the various standing committees, and coordinate at the Council's direction the preparation of an annual report and budget to be submitted to the congregation for approval,
- b) maintain in cooperation with the Property Committee a long-term capital plan setting out major capital projects and sources of funding, and develop an annual capital budget to be submitted to the congregation for approval,
- c) monitor budgeted revenue and expenditure against actual results and present regular statements of income and expenditure to the Council,
- d) ensure that ongoing financial planning is conducted for the congregation,
- e) make financial information and statistics available as needed to support effective stewardship,
- f) maintain records of givings and supervise the accounts of all church funds; distribute offering envelopes; and arrange for the counting and deposit of offerings, including those of the church school,
- g) maintain oversight of the Special Gifts Committee, to ensure that gifts accepted to be used only for specified purposes are accounted for separately from gifts given to the church for general purposes, that such restrictions are documented in the congregation's records, and that expenditures of restricted funds are properly approved and documented,
- h) ensure that Mission and Service funds are submitted to the national church as required by the Manual,
- i) ensure that there is an independent annual review of the financial report, records, and internal controls of the church by a qualified person or persons as required by the Manual,
- j) recommend for Council approval of appropriate signatories for bank accounts,
- k) ensure that premises are adequately insured for all purposes,
- l) monitor the church's charitable status,
- m) administer and/or invest all Personal Property (as defined in the Manual – i.e. assets other than real estate) on behalf of the congregation, and
- n) have oversight of church office operations, including selection and oversight of office staff, in cooperation with the minister(s)

The Finance Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, the Treasurer, the Treasurer of the United Church Women, and the Envelope Secretary ex-officio, and co-opted members.

4. Lay Pastoral Visitors

This Committee will have general responsibility for the development, organization and oversight of a program of lay pastoral visitation, and in particular will:

- a) develop, organize, and oversee a program of lay pastoral visitation for those members of the congregation who want and/or need it,
- b) recruit visitors and supervise their training, and
- c) maintain close liaison with church staff to ensure prompt communication in cases of special need.

The Lay Pastoral Visitors Committee will be composed of a chairperson selected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

5. Ministry and Personnel

This Committee will be a Ministry and Personnel Committee as described in section 7.8.5 of the Manual, and in particular will:

- a) be available for consultation and support for matters involving the local ministry unit staff,
- b) oversee the relationship of the church staff to each other and to people in the congregation,
- c) regularly review the working conditions, responsibilities and compensation of all church staff,
- d) make any recommendations necessary as a result of these reviews to the Council,
- e) revise position descriptions of church staff as needed,
- f) conduct annual performance reviews of the church staff
- g) ensure church staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given, and
- h) maintain close contact with the Conference Minister for Personnel Support

The Committee will meet and report to the Council quarterly, or more often as circumstances warrant.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, and not less than two nor more than six additional members appointed by the Council. No member of the church staff nor his/her spouse may be a member of this Committee.

6. Outreach and Social Action

This Committee will have general responsibility to foster understanding and action concerning the church's mission in our local community, our country, and our world, and in particular will:

- a) encourage study of and action in support of world mission and social justice,
- b) encourage study of and action in support of local mission and social justice, and
- c) provide liaison with community groups on social justice issues,.

The Outreach and Social Action Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

7. Property

This Committee will have general responsibility for the supervision, maintenance and improvement of all church property, including the manse, and in particular will:

- a) have responsibility for selection and oversight of caretaking staff,
- c) maintain inventory and required equipment in good condition, with regular inspection, and
- d) ensure that premises meet required safety and fire regulations.

The Property Committee will consist of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

8. Stewardship (Generous Spirit)

This Committee will have responsibility for encouraging the congregation's stewardship of time, talents and treasure, and in particular will:

- i) educate the congregation about the mission of the United Church of Canada, both locally and in the wider church,
- ii) educate the congregation about the resources (of time, talents and treasure) needed for this mission,
- iii) educate the congregation about the human and financial resources of the congregation, including the relationship between funds given for local purposes and those given for the Mission and Service Fund or other wider church purposes (e.g. the Stephen Lewis Foundation or special projects),
- iv) encourage commitment and participation from the congregation in this mission through overseeing the organization and supervision of raising revenue for the general fund, the Mission and Service Fund (in cooperation with the Outreach and Social Action Committee), and special projects, through such activities as solicitation of pledges, fund raising events, and communicating with individual givers about the honouring of their pledges and commitments, and
- v) prepare and maintain an inventory of time and talents, and provide information on such human resources in the congregation to other committees.

The Stewardship Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

9. Welcome

This Committee will have general responsibility to develop and oversee a program to welcome new people into our, church, and in particular will:

- a) devise and supervise a strategy for the integration of new people,
- b) have oversight of staff with specific responsibility for implementation of this strategy, and
- c) establish and supervise a subcommittee to implement the congregation's Affirming Ministry.

The Welcome Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) ex-officio, and co-opted members.

10. Worship

This Committee will have general responsibility for the worship life of the congregation, and in particular will:

- a) have general oversight in consultation with the minister(s) of the forms of worship and orders of services, and arranging for pulpit supply and special services,
- b) oversee the administration of the sacraments,
- c) supervise the decoration and appearance of the sanctuary, through the Sanctuary Committee,
- d) have responsibility for music in the services. This will include the selection and oversight of professional musicians, the maintenance of musical instruments, oversight of the music budget, and support and encouragement for voluntary participation in musical aspects of worship, through such organizations as choirs and bands,
- e) have responsibility for ushering, including distribution of church bulletins and collection of offerings,
- f) oversee implementation of the congregation's accessibility policy, and
- g) establish and supervise subcommittees as needed, such as the Music Committee, Sanctuary Committee, etc.

The Worship Committee will be composed of a chairperson elected by the congregation, elected members, the minister(s) and a representative of the choir ex-officio, and co-opted members.

SECTION III CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The congregation is the source from which the Council and Standing Committees are drawn, and bears ultimate responsibility on all matters assigned to these bodies.

At a regular annual congregational meeting to be held at the beginning of each year, the congregation will be called upon to elect members of the Council and of Standing Committees, and to approve the annual report and plan prepared and coordinated by the Council.

Other congregational meetings may be called at the request of the Council, or as provided in the Manual.

SECTION IV UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

The United Church Women is open to all women of the congregation who are willing to contribute to the work of the church.

SECTION V TRUSTEES

The Trustees hold the property in trust for the United Church of Canada. The Board of Trustees is selected and performs duties as outlined in the Manual.

SECTION VI ELECTIONS

Members of the Council will be elected annually, normally with the expectation of a three-year term in the position. Any individual will normally not be elected to serve in the same Council position for more than six consecutive years. No member of the church staff nor members of his/her immediate family may be elected to the Council.

Members of Standing Committees, other than the chairperson, will be elected for three-year terms. Any individual will normally not serve on the same committee for more than two consecutive three-year terms.

A slate of nominations for election to the Council, to Standing Committees, or to the Nominating Committee will be presented to the congregation by the Nominating Committee. After the report of the Nominating Committee, additional nominations will be allowed from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

The Nominating Committee will be composed of the Vice-chairperson of the Council (who will serve as chairperson), the minister(s), the Chairperson of the Council, the chairperson of the Welcome Committee, and two members elected by the congregation.

SECTION VII AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any time at a duly constituted congregational meeting provided that the intent of the amendment is indicated when the meeting is announced, and a two-thirds vote of those present in support of the amendment is secured.