

MOUNT SEYMOUR UNITED CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

(Amended March 4, 2012)

1.0 The Congregation

The Congregation of Mount Seymour United Church, a Pastoral Charge of The United Church of Canada, hereby adopts this Constitution.

2.0 Constitutional Statement of Intent

2.1 Mount Seymour United Church is a diverse Congregation. It strives in a changing world to develop a faithful relationship with God, a loving relationship with all people and a caring relationship with creation. It is a Congregation working towards justice, peace, and wholeness throughout the world, and which is committed to:

- † opening our doors and hearts to all peoples;
- † searching for and discovering the gift of the Christian faith; and
- † sharing our Christian faith with all generations through worship, fellowship, education, outreach and service.

2.2 This Constitution is intended to define governance structures that liberate and enable the people of God at Mount Seymour to exercise fully their ministry in building up the body of Christ through worship, reconciliation, public witness and outreach, service and the seeking of justice.

3.0 The Congregation

3.1 The Congregation shall meet annually in general session, for which there shall be notice in accordance with *The Manual* of the United Church of Canada. Such meeting will be ordinarily held in the month of February.

3.2 An annual report of Council and staff, with financial accounts of the Congregation, to include financial statements for the immediate previous year and recommended budgetary figures for the year just commenced, shall be made available not less than two (2) weeks before the annual meeting, with their review and approval by the Congregation completed in such meeting.

- 3.3 The Congregation shall meet in extraordinary or special general session at the recommendation of Council or by requisition as defined at By-Law 111 of *The Manual*.
- 3.4 The quorum for all meetings of the Congregation, including as defined at Article 13.1 below, shall be 30 (thirty) persons currently listed in the roll of church membership. If no quorum is present at a meeting, a further meeting may be called with notice for the same day of the following week or the week thereafter. Those Members and Adherents present at the second reconstituted meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- 3.5 Those persons not Members who contribute regularly to the support of the church at Mount Seymour shall be accorded voting privileges on Temporal Matters at all meetings of the Congregation.
- 3.6 The date of all meetings of the Congregation shall be issued in writing by the Recording Secretary in Sunday bulletins and other available media at least two weeks prior to such meetings. There is to be a similar announcement during the two Sunday worship services prior to a meeting.
- 3.7 The Chair and the Recording Secretary of the Council shall, respectively, preside as chair and serve as Secretary at all meetings of the Congregation. In the absence of either or both of them, the Council may designate from its members persons suitable to substitute for the required roles.

4.0 Teams

- 4.1 The ministry and mission of the Congregation shall be carried out by Teams as defined below. Members of Teams are to be drawn widely from the Congregation and they may serve on Teams, and support the work of Teams, for periods of their choosing. It is intended that all groups and persons carrying out ministry, service and worship work will do so through the leadership and accountability of Teams.
- 4.2 Each Team shall have a leader who coordinates the work and ministry of the Team and serves as its representative to the Council, while being also a member of the Council. Teams may have two leaders, both of whom shall be elected members of the Council or appointed as defined below.
- 4.3 Each Team, together with the Council and Ministry and Personnel Committee, may create particular task groups or committees with defined terms of reference for their work. Such terms of reference shall be reviewed and approved as required by the Council.

The Worship & Christian Development Team

- 4.4 The Worship & Christian Development Team shall provide leadership and generally oversee and implement the worship and educational development of the Congregation. Its areas of responsibility include, without limit, the following:
- (a) planning and programming worship services, including such services where the Minister may be absent and alternative worship services;
 - (b) the development of music programs and resources used in worship;
 - (c) the implementation of Christian development (or “formation”) programs for all persons in the Congregation, including children, youth and adults;
 - (d) supporting the Minister and staff persons in the better development of worship services and related events, as well as Christian formation programs;
 - (e) baptism and baptismal services;
 - (f) providing for the “confirmation” of persons entering the church through adult profession of faith;
 - (g) weddings and funerals;
 - (h) the planning and delivery of Christian faith development programs and materials, including library and electronic media/internet resources and use of wider United Church and ecumenical training opportunities; and
 - (i) exercising responsibility for the interior appearance of the sanctuary.
- 4.5 The staff associated with the Worship and Christian Development Team will include staff persons responsible for ministries involving children and youth, and music.

The Congregational Life Team

- 4.6 The Congregational Life Team will offer leadership and oversight of those programs and ministries which provide for the building of the congregational community. Its roles include leadership responsibility for the following:

- (a) the delivery of pastoral care to persons in the Congregation and such other persons who, in the opinion of a pastoral care group or team, may require such care;
 - (b) membership development, including the welcoming of newcomers and new members, the coordination of covenant and/or small ministry groups, if so established;
 - (c) maintenance of the roll of church membership;
 - (d) internal and external communications; and
 - (e) the organization and coordination of fellowship and related events.
- 4.7 Those staff persons associated with the Congregational Life Team will ordinarily include the Office Administrator and those persons in ministry for children and youth.

The Administration Team

- 4.8 The Administration Team is responsible for leadership and accountability in the administration, finances and day-to-day operation and development of the Congregation's physical assets. Its responsibilities include, without limitation, the following areas of service:
- (a) financial planning and budgeting, and the reporting of such matters at regular intervals to the Congregation, Teams and the Council;
 - (b) support and operational direction to the Office Administrator, the Treasurer and the Envelope Secretary;
 - (c) building and physical asset maintenance, repair and long-term development, including by the appointment of one or more persons particularly responsible for building maintenance and security;
 - (d) support to the Board of Trustees in the execution of its work;
 - (e) scheduling of building uses, building user relationships, user fees and tenancy-related issues;
 - (f) oversight and support to the work of any Memorial & Gifts Committee or like group, whether standing or constituted *ad hoc*;

- (g) appointing a person to be responsible for property management and maintenance matters; and
 - (h) appointing a person to be responsible for financial issues including monthly statements, and oversight and support to the Treasurer.
- 4.9 The Treasurer and the Envelope Secretary are members of the Administration Team.
- 4.10 Congregational staff associated with the Administration Team will ordinarily include the Office Administrator.

The Congregation Mission & Outreach Team

- 4.11 The Congregation Mission & Outreach Team will provide support, leadership and accountability in areas of outreach and mission of the Congregation to local and wider communities. It has responsibility for the following:
- (a) planning and development of mission and outreach activities and programs by and for the Congregation;
 - (b) education of the Congregation about the United Church Mission & Service Fund;
 - (c) support to and oversight of the Thrift Shop;
 - (d) the coordination of *ad hoc* task groups for social justice initiatives; and
 - (e) liaison with local churches, community organization and governments for wider mission programs, including First United (Mission) Church.

The Ministry & Personnel Committee

- 4.12 The Ministry and Personnel Committee shall, apart from its Chair/Coordinator, be appointed by the Council and function in accordance with By-Law 244 of *The Manual*. The Committee shall have not less than three (3) members. It will fulfill the following responsibilities:
- (a) support the Minister and staff in their work and ministries, fostering close communication and mutual support among them and the Congregation;

- (b) develop and maintain guidelines, in conjunction with the Council, for the responsibilities of staff members;
- (c) serve where necessary as a liaison between the Minister, staff members, the Council and Congregation in administrative matters and relationships;
- (d) address and resolve issues in the compensation, travel allowances, working conditions, and employment practices of the Minister and staff;
- (e) review annually the effectiveness of the staff as it relates to the ministry programs defined by Teams and the Council; and
- (f) liaise with the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery and, where necessary, the British Columbia Conference Personnel Minister.

5.0 Meetings of Teams

- 5.1 Meetings of Teams shall ordinarily be held not less than monthly during the period from September to June. Where possible, they should be held prior to a Council meeting in the same month.
- 5.2 Teams are encouraged to function using a model of consensus decision making appropriate to their circumstances, with a minimum of other procedural formalities.

6.0 Council

- 6.1 The Council is organized and shall carry out its work consistent with By-Laws 215–245 of *The Manual*. Council has a primary responsibility to:

- † articulate the mission of the Congregation;
- † develop and review a mission strategy which encompasses values, goals and objectives, policies and the use of resources; and
- † to implement and monitor mission strategies.

The role of the Council is to offer leadership in the spiritual life of the Congregation including worship, Christian development, mission and service, and congregational life development.

- 6.2 The Council is responsible to the Congregation, and where required to other courts of the United Church of Canada, for the spiritual care and Christian development of those participating and seeking to participate in the life and work of the Congregation. The Council is also responsible for the efficient administrative and financial management of the Congregation and its resources. The Council's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (a) to coordinate and support the work of the Minister, staff persons, Teams and groups within the Congregation;
 - (b) to plan for the long term development of the church community, including Christian formation programs and the effective maintenance of monetary and physical assets;
 - (c) to plan for the long term stewardship of the Congregation, including the appointment of a person responsible for stewardship development;
 - (d) report annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Congregation on a recommended budget for the ensuing year, and make any other reports and recommendations as may be necessary for the Congregation's review and approval;
 - (e) authorize the borrowing of funds as required to meet the current needs as provided for in the budget approved by the Congregation;
 - (f) live within the budget approved by the Congregation. In the event needs or opportunities emerge during the year which require additional funds from the Congregation, the Council will call a general meeting with prior notice to make recommendations to the Congregation;
 - (g) give directions to the Trustees concerning property matters when so required; and
 - (h) receive reports from Presbytery, Conference and the General Council and make them available to members of the Congregation.
- 6.3 The Council shall, in addition to that Member of the Order of Ministry settled in or appointed to the Congregation or such person(s) as may be appointed by the Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery, ordinarily consist of eleven (11) persons elected by the Congregation to the following responsibilities:
- (a) Chair;
 - (b) Recording Secretary;

- (c) Presbytery Representative;
 - (d) two (2) Members-at-Large;
 - (e) Chair/Coordinator of the Ministry and Personnel Committee;
 - (f) the Leader of the Worship & Christian Development Team;
 - (g) the Leader of the Congregational Life Team;
 - (h) the Leader of the Administration Team; and
 - (i) the Leader of the Congregation Mission & Outreach Team.
 - (j) the Treasurer
- 6.4 Members of the Council shall be elected for a term of two (2) years at annual general meetings of the Congregation. The annual term of office for the Council shall be from June 1 to the following May 30. Councillors elected at an annual general meeting shall ordinarily attend meetings of the council in the months of March, April and May immediately thereafter and observe proceedings as non-voting members.
- 6.5 No Member of the Congregation shall serve on the Council, whether by election of the Congregation or otherwise, for a period exceeding four (4) consecutive years. At the end of four (4) consecutive years, a member shall retire from the Council for a period of at least one year.
- 6.6 All members of the Council shall be Members of the Congregation.
- 6.7 In the event of the resignation, transfer of membership or death of a member of the Council, a Member of the Congregation may be appointed to the resulting vacancy for the remainder of its term, either by:
- (a) the approval of not less than 75% of Council members; or
 - (b) by majority vote of Members at a meeting of the Congregation.
- 6.8 In the event that there is not a sufficient number of members elected to the Council, the Council may continue with a vacancy of one Member-at-Large and may also appoint one or more of its members to act as a Team Leader, or in such other additional capacity, apart from their nominative role.

Council and Board of Trustees Succession

- 6.9 The Council shall annually instruct the Chair to form a group to discern Council member and Board of Trustees succession, in sufficient time prior to the Annual General Meeting of the congregation. Such group shall ordinarily include the Minister, the Council Chair and one other person in the Congregation. Those persons responding to a call in leadership to serve as Council members or the Board of Trustees shall be presented to the Congregation for election at the Annual General Meeting following that Advent season.

Council Responsibilities – General

- 6.11 The Council and its members have, in general, those responsibilities detailed in the Schedule to this Constitution, consistent with the mission of the Congregation and the polity of the United Church of Canada.

7.0 Council Meetings

- 7.1 The quorum of voting members for a meeting of the Council is seven (7) members of the Council.
- 7.2 A Team having two of its Leaders present as Team members at a meeting of the Council shall exercise between them one (1) vote.
- 7.3 A member of a Team who is not a Team Leader may attend at Council meetings in the place of a Team Leader.
- 7.4 In the event of the absence of the Chair at a meeting, the Council shall decide by consensus or motion which of its members is to preside.
- 7.5 Council meetings shall ordinarily be held on a monthly basis, unless the Chair determines by prior consultation among Council members that there is a consensus to defer a meeting.
- 7.6 The Council shall ordinarily meet in an annual spiritual and planning retreat.
- 7.7 Notice of Council meetings shall be given through the Sunday bulletin, by other media or through public announcement in the week prior to a meeting.
- 7.8 Council meetings shall be ordinarily open to the Congregation, who shall have the right to speak and be heard by the Council, but not the right to vote on any matters before Council. The Council may conduct proceedings *in camera* at the requirement of the Council Chair or by motion, with such proceedings limited to the extent possible.

8.0 Council Appointees

The Envelope Secretary

- 8.1 There shall be appointed by the Council, for a renewable term of two (2) years, an Envelope Secretary for the Congregation. He or she will be a member of the Administration Team.
- 8.2 The Envelope Secretary shall fulfill the following responsibilities:
- (a) be responsible for collecting and counting the congregational offerings at various worship and other services. He or she shall ensure that members of the Congregation assist with this activity to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the process;
 - (b) be responsible for depositing of all congregational funds into the Congregation's bank accounts and forward a report of such activity immediately to the Treasurer;
 - (c) be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all congregational offerings and provide regular reports to members whose offerings are identified;
 - (d) prepare the yearly Canada Revenue Agency tax receipts for offerors and have them distributed to such persons by February 28 following each tax year; and
 - (e) ensure the confidentiality of all information regarding offerings made by and in the Congregation.

9.0 Board of Trustees

- 9.1 There shall be four (4) Trustees constituted as a Board of Trustees to fulfill those responsibilities defined at By-Laws 223(g) and 250-262 of *The Manual*.
- 9.2 Trustees are to be elected by the Congregation as required at the Annual General Meeting of the Congregation. The term of office of each Trustee shall be three (3) years.

10.0 Financial Accountability

- 10.1 The financial year of the Congregation shall be from January 1 to December 31.
- 10.2 The United Church of Canada *Financial Handbook for Congregations* shall govern the administration and accounting of Congregation finances.
- 10.3 There shall be an annual independent examination of financial records, to determine the accuracy of financial statements, to determine whether financial transactions have been properly recorded, and to identify potential weaknesses in the accounting systems. Such an examination may be conducted by, at the discretion of the Council, an independent public accountant as an audit or a review engagement, or by an individual, who is familiar with bookkeeping and who understands the purpose of an independent examination of financial records.

The procedures shall include:

- (a) ensuring that there is segregation of duties among two (2) or more people who are at arm's length;
 - (b) examining the minute book;
 - (c) examining for accuracy the books of record, by reviewing cash receipts, cash disbursements, payroll, and general ledger transactions;
 - (d) ensuring proper authorization of transactions;
 - (e) reviewing bank reconciliations for the year;
 - (f) ensuring that all donated monies designated for the Mission and Service Fund have been forwarded to the United Church;
 - (g) reviewing the procedures used in the record-keeping of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, and ensuring that the chance of error or fraud is minimized;
 - (h) verifying cash receipts against charitable donation receipts issued; and
 - (i) ensuring that the annual information return was completed and submitted not later than six (6) months after the previous fiscal year-end.
- 10.4 The Council shall annually confirm those persons who are delegated authority to approve and to sign for Congregation accounts, including cheques drawn on such accounts. Such confirmation shall be done by motion at a meeting of the Council.

10.5 There shall be at least two signatures of persons who have been delegated authority to approve, and to sign for congregational accounts on all instruments and cheques for and by the Congregation. Signing authority may be delegated by the Council to persons in the Congregation. Signing authority may also be delegated to the Office Administrator but to no other staff person.

10.6 The Council shall ensure, with the assistance of the Treasurer and Administration Team, that a summary report of finances is made available to the Congregation at least quarterly.

11.0 Transition

11.1 Those motions and proceedings of the Congregation, Board and Committees of Mount Seymour United Church adopted prior to February 22, 2004 shall continue, with any required interpretation and application of them done consistent with *The Manual* and this Constitution.

12.0 Review

12.1 The provisions of this Constitution shall be reviewed at the 2006 Annual General Meeting of the Congregation, with recommendations for their amendment provided by the Council to the Congregation at least four weeks prior to such meeting.

12.2 The provisions of this Constitution shall be reviewed at those Annual General Meetings of the Congregation next after the publication of a new edition of *The Manual*. In such instance, the Council shall inform the Congregation of its recommendations for amendment at least four weeks prior to such meetings.

13.0 Amendment

13.1 Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those Members constituting a quorum for meetings of the Congregation in accordance with section 3.4, above. Notice of proposed amendments shall issued at least four weeks prior to a meeting.

14.0 *The Manual*

14.1 If there is any provision in this Constitution which conflicts with *The Manual* of the United Church of Canada, the relevant provisions of *The Manual* shall take precedence and govern.

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SCHEDULE

**TERMS OF REFERENCE, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS**

General

The Council and its Members have, in general, the following responsibilities, consistent with the mission of the congregation and the polity of the United Church of Canada.

- (a) attend Council meetings on a regular and frequent basis;
- (b) plan appropriate mission goals, objectives and strategies;
- (c) attend Mount Seymour United Church worship services on a regular and frequent basis;
- (d) demonstrate fiscal responsibility in managing of the Congregation's financial resources as provided in the approved budget;
- (e) provide encouragement and support for both the paid and volunteer leaders of various Teams and groups in the Congregation;
- (f) help build a sense of community and fellowship between the various Teams within the Congregation;
- (g) make use of training opportunities provided by lay training centres, Conference and Presbytery Committees;
- (h) keep informed about the major concerns and programs of the United Church;
- (i) communicate frequently with the Congregation in a variety of ways regarding the decisions and actions taken by the Council at its meetings; and
- (j) show genuine concern as Christians for the well-being of the Congregation and the whole Church.

Chair of Council

The Chair of Council shall:

- (1) lead the Council as a Team, supporting the service and ministry of its members, with particular regard to fostering effective communication between Council members, the Minister, staff and Teams;
- (2) preside over the meetings of the Council and of the Congregation, applying the Rules of Debate and Order at Appendix III of *The Manual* as required;
- (2) develop, in consultation with Teams and the Council, agenda for Council meetings and meetings of the Congregation;
- (3) serve as the official spokesperson for the Congregation;
- (4) to plan and arrange for the annual retreat of the Council; and
- (5) serve as a signing officer of all bank accounts, loans or contracts made on behalf of or by instruction of the Council;

Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary shall:

- (1) notify members of the Council of meetings and ensure that a quorum is present at meetings;
- (2) record the minutes of all Council and Congregational meetings and maintain a record of the minutes within the administrative office of the Church available to members of the Congregation to peruse;
- (3) maintain the official record of the attendance of all Council and Congregation meetings;
- (4) give notice of meetings as required to members of the Council and the Congregation; and
- (5) assist the Congregational Life Team and the Office Administrator in the maintenance of the roll of church membership.

Presbytery Representative

The Presbytery Representative shall, in addition to those duties prescribed in *The Manual*, have the following responsibilities:

- (1) liaison with other Courts of the United Church, including the transmission of Petitions from the Congregation and the Council;
- (2) the provision of timely information and education for the Congregation about United Church policies and initiatives, including assistance to Teams and staff persons to obtain training and information from United Church sources.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall perform those duties as prescribed in the current edition of The United Church of Canada's *Financial Handbook for Congregations*. In particular, he or she shall fulfill the following responsibilities:

- (a) maintain all Congregational accounts;
- (b) provide written monthly reports at meetings of the Administration Team on the state of the finances of the Congregation;
- (c) assist the Administration Team to prepare a budget of congregational finances for the following year for presentation to the ordinarily scheduled January meeting of the Council Board; such budget to be discussed, and approved for recommendation to the congregation at its Annual General Meeting;
- (d) pay all legal accounts of indebtedness incurred in the normal operation of the Congregation and maintain an accurate record substantiated by vouchers and invoices of the same;
- (e) ensure jointly with the Trustees that all congregational buildings and property are insured adequately with a reputable insurance company;
- (f) ensure the safe maintenance of proper of records open to review and verification at the direction of the Administration Team, the Council and the Congregation.

Team Leaders

Team Leaders are acknowledged as having unique roles. They serve as leaders in ministry through Teams and also as Council members. The planning and coordination of their work

among themselves, with staff and through the support of the Council is of primary importance. Team Leaders have the following general responsibilities:

- (1) to plan and lead the work of their Teams, in close consultation with other Team Leaders, the Minister and staff persons;
- (2) to support the work of Team members in pursuing the goals and vision of the United Church, the Congregation and Teams; and
- (3) to hold regular meetings of Teams, and work with the Minister, Council, and staff persons to further develop and implement the service and ministry offered by Team members

Members at Large

The Members at Large of the Council have the following responsibilities:

- (1) to ascertain and more fully represent to the Council the views and aspirations of the Congregation in general;
- (2) to support Team Leaders in particular when the demands of their work occasionally peak, including by coordination through and instruction of the Council; and
- (3) to serve in certain ministries as may from time to time be determined, including long term planning and priority development.