

# Constitution of Fonthill United Church

## 1.0 MISSION

The mission of Fonthill United Church is  
to be an inclusive community of hope,  
to offer opportunity for worship, learning and fellowship,  
to inspire its people to follow in the path of Jesus,  
to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and  
to love our neighbours, as we love ourselves.

## 2.0 AREAS OF MINISTRY

The congregation, the Settled Ministry and any other pastoral staff will work as partners to strengthen the following five areas of ministry:

- Worship
- Christian Education
- Pastoral Care
- Stewardship
- Fellowship
- Outreach to the community and the world.

## 3.0 THE MANUAL

As a congregation of the United Church of Canada, Fonthill United Church shall govern itself according to the United Church *Manual*. The mission of the congregation shall be carried out using the organizational model of Church Council as described in the *Manual 215-245*.

## 4.0 PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Congregational, Council and Committee meetings shall be conducted according to accepted procedures for *quorums*, chairing of meetings, moving and seconding of motions and keeping of minutes, as described in *Appendix III* of the *Manual*. However, parliamentary procedure is to be followed in such a way as to facilitate debate and discussion and encourage participation. Procedure is to be regarded not as an end in itself but as a means to further and enhance the life and ministry of the congregation. Members should at all times conduct themselves with dignity, fairness, and understanding. The prime concern is the good order and welfare of the church. When there is a discrepancy between the *Manual* and this *Constitution*, the *Manual* takes precedence.

## 5.0 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The congregation shall meet annually as soon as the independently reviewed financial statements can be completed, normally on the second Sunday of February.

- 5.1 The purpose of the Annual Meeting is:  
to celebrate the previous year's accomplishments and anticipate the future;  
to approve the annual reports of the congregation's activities;  
to approve the financial statements;  
to approve the budget on recommendation of the Church Council;  
to elect officers;  
to appoint representatives to Niagara Presbytery, Cave Springs Camp and Fonthill Seniors Non-Profit Accommodation Corporation;  
and to deal with any other business that might rightfully arise.
- 5.2 The Council Chairperson shall preside over the Annual Meeting. The meeting shall elect a secretary to keep minutes of the proceedings.
- 5.3 Further congregational meetings may be called as needed by the Settled Minister, Chairperson of Church Council or at the written request of ten persons in full membership of the congregation. The date, time and purpose of the meeting will be announced to the congregation for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. All members of the congregation automatically have voting rights and voting privileges on temporal matters may be extended to adherents by the majority vote of those members present.

## 6.0 CHURCH COUNCIL

- 6.1 MEMBERSHIP: Elders are elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting, one representative appointed by the UCW, one representative appointed by the Board of Trustees, the lay representatives to the Presbytery, the Treasurer and the Settled Minister.

To be eligible for elections elders shall be members of Fonthill United Church. Adherents may serve the Council as corresponding members and as committee representatives taking part in Council meetings; however only elders are permitted to vote or to sit *in camera*. The normal term of office for elected elders will be two years, renewable twice, for a maximum of six years.

Council shall elect its own chairperson, secretary, presbytery representatives, and representatives to its standing committees. A *quorum* for a Council meeting requires the attendance of the Settled Minister or pastoral charge supervisor, or an appointee of the Presbytery, and at least one-third of the remaining members of Council.

- 6.2 DUTIES: The Council shall govern the overall life of the congregation. It ensure that standing committees are set up to engage the congregation in its ministry and that administrative support is provided. The Council is expected to meet at least four times year and to communicate regularly with the congregation so that members and adherents are informed about issues and decisions. A Council meeting shall be called either by the Chairperson or by the Settled Minister.

## 6.3 OFFICERS OF COUNCIL-DUTIES

### 6.3.1 CHAIRPERSON:

to prepare an agenda;  
to preside over all meetings of Council following proper procedure as outlined in this *Constitution* and in the *United Church Manual*;  
to communicate regularly with committee chairpersons in order to understand, support and encourage their work;  
to maintain regular contact with staff;  
and to provide leadership, assistance and direction so that the mission of the congregation is furthered and its ministry is strengthened.

If the chairperson is unable to attend a meeting of Council, Council shall appoint one of its members (normally the immediate past chairperson) to preside at the meeting. The Chairperson of Council is an *ex officio* member of all committees.

### 6.3.2 SECRETARY:

to maintain accurate records of minutes of all meetings of Council;  
to record attendance at meetings and note regrets;  
to maintain file copies of agendas, minutes, reports and other relevant documents;  
and to work with the Membership Committee to keep an accurate and current membership list.

### 6.3.3 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

to provide an agenda to ensure that the committee's responsibilities are fulfilled;  
to preside at Committee meetings ensuring that minutes of proceedings are kept;  
and to provide representation and report regularly to Council, and annually to the congregation.

### 6.3.4 BOARD OF TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVE, UCW REPRESENTATIVE AND PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVES:

to provide a liaison between their respective bodies and the Council.

## 7.0 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Between Council meetings or when a *quorum* is unavailable, a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be called either by the Chairperson or by the Settled Minister in order to execute the responsibilities of the Council for emergent matters. All resolutions by the Executive Committee are subject to the approval of the full Council. The Executive Committee will be composed of the Chairperson, Secretary, an elder appointed by Council to represent one of the Ministry Committees, and elder appointed by Council to represent one of the Administrative Support Committees, an elder appointed by Council to represent the Ministry & Personnel Committee, and the Settled Minister (*ex officio*). The Executive Committee requires the attendance of four elders, in addition to the

Settled Minister to constitute a *quorum*.

## 8.0 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In order to facilitate the election of elders, an *ad hoc* Nominating Committee, made up of the Council Chairperson, Secretary, and the Chairpersons of Standing Committees shall prepare a slate of nominations and propose its adoption at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Nominations from the floor, if any, may also be considered and, if necessary, elections held. Between congregational meetings, the Council may add to its number to fill vacancies.

## 9.0 STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Standing committees are responsible for carrying out the five areas of the congregation's ministry.

The Ministry Committees are:

- Worship Committee
- Christian Education Committee
- Pastoral Care Committee (Shepherd Visitors)
- Membership Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Stewardship Committee

The Administrative Support Committees are:

- Finance Committee
- Property Committee
- Ministry and Personnel Committee

Council has the authority to reorganize the committees to address changing needs and circumstances. Any reorganization shall be communicated to the congregation and ratified at the next Annual Congregational Meeting.

All Committees have the authority to spend within their budget, undertake projects and launch initiatives to support the mission of the congregation, and work with other committees, and within policies set by the Council and provisions of the United Church *Manual*. Committees elect their own chairperson, and (with the exception of the Ministry and Personnel Committee) may add to their number throughout the year.

Committees are expected:

- to meet regularly,
- to report to Council monthly,
- and to communicate regularly with the congregation through newsletters, bulletins and announcements.

## 9.1 WORSHIP COMMITTEE

9.1.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), members and adherents who have an interest in the worship life of the congregation and are willing to serve (one of whom should also be a member of the Choir), the Music Director (*ex-officio*), and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio*.)

### 9.1.2 DUTIES:

to oversee Sunday worship and other worship services, music, and sacraments;  
to oversee the work of the Chancel Guild, the use and care of the sanctuary;  
to approve baptisms and marriages;  
to make arrangements for lay readers, ushers, servers and greeters;  
and to arrange pulpit supply when needed, and supply musicians when needed.

## 9.2 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

9.2.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), members and adherents who have an interest in the faith development of the congregation and are willing to serve, paid staff engaged in the work of Christian Education (*ex-officio*), and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio*).

### 9.2.2 DUTIES:

to provide opportunities for learning and faith development for all ages;  
to oversee the operation of the nursery, Sunday School, Youth and intergenerational events and adult faith development programs;  
to publicize and encourage participation in events;  
and to provide liaison with the Scouting and Guiding groups. Additional responsibilities are described in the *Manual 242*.

## 9.3 PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE (SHEPHERD VISITORS)

9.3.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), members and adherents who want to share the love of Christ by providing pastoral care to the members and adherents of the congregation and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio*).

### 9.3.2 DUTIES:

to assist the Settled Minister by providing pastoral care to members and adherents of the congregation by visiting;  
to maintain good communication by telephone with those in need of pastoral care;  
to keep the Settled Minister informed of the pastoral care needs of the congregation recommending when visits are needed;

to send out sympathy cards on behalf of the congregation;  
to arrange for and accompany the Settled Minister for home Communion services;  
and to arrange occasional events for seniors for fellowship and spiritual renewal.

#### 9.4 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

9.4.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), members and adherents who are willing to serve the Committee to increase the membership and enhance the fellowship of the congregation, and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio*).

#### 9.4.2 DUTIES:

to work with the Secretary of Council to keep an accurate membership roll, including adherents;  
to make contact with visitors at worship and new people in the community to invite their greater involvement;  
to arrange for new member orientation events and for services to receive new members;  
to promote Fonthill United Church in the community through advertising; including overseeing the church's website and quarterly newsletter;  
to arrange opportunities for fellowship and to encourage the Friendship Group, Men's Club and other social groups within the congregation;  
to oversee the keeping of archives;  
and to acknowledge memorial gifts.

#### 9.5 OUTREACH COMMITTEE

9.5.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), members and adherents who are willing to serve and have an interest in promotion the mission of the congregation in the community and throughout the world, and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio*.)

#### 9.5.2 DUTIES:

to promote the work of the United Church of Canada through the support of its Mission and Service Fund, the United Church World Development and Relief and other special projects as are being promoted by the United Church of Canada;  
to conduct mission education in the congregation;  
to encourage outreach in the local community, to recommend special projects for the congregation's support, normally during Lent;  
and to offer the congregation opportunities to promote justice through political action, signing petitions, writing letters, and other forms of social action.

#### 9.6 STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

9.6.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), and other members and adherents who have an interest in and a

willingness to promote stewardship in the congregation, and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio.*)

9.6.2 DUTIES:

to reflect theologically on the stewardship of congregational finances  
to promote stewardship of time and talent;  
to work with the Finance Committee to advance the long term financial viability of Fonthill United Church;  
to assess the level of financial stewardship within the congregation;  
to conduct a program of stewardship education throughout the year;  
to call for a financial response (normally in November);  
and to promote a program for planned giving;

9.7 FINANCE COMMITTEE

9.7.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson (who may function as Treasurer), a Council representative (who may be the same person), the Chairperson of the Stewardship Sub-Committee, and other members and adherents who have financial expertise and a willingness to work towards promoting the financial interests of the church, and the Settled Minister (*ex-officio.*)

9.7.2 DUTIES:

to oversee the work of the treasurer and bookkeeper with reference to the United Church of Canada-Financial Handbook for Congregations;  
to arrange for Sunday counters;  
to receive revenues, pay bills;  
to administer Special Funds;  
to report regularly to Council, and  
to provide independently reviewed financial statements to the Annual Meeting;  
to develop plans to ensure the long term financial stability of the church;  
and to keep the congregation apprised of the financial needs of the church and to encourage support.

9.8 PROPERTY COMMITTEE

9.8.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), and others members and adherents who have expertise in maintaining buildings and a willingness to work towards keeping the building in good repair, and the settled minister (*ex-officio.*)

9.8.2 DUTIES:

to maintain the church property, keeping the church building in a state of good repair and planning future repairs and renovations;  
to be responsible for the church's energy use, security and rentals;  
to oversee the work of the custodian;

and to communicate building policies, uses and changes to the congregation.

## 9.9 THE MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

9.9.1 MEMBERSHIP: Chairperson, Council representative (who may be the same person), and at least three but not more than seven members of the congregation appointed at the Annual Meeting. Paid staff may not be members of this Committee.

### 9.9.2 DUTIES:

to provide a consultative and supportive agency for the staff of the Pastoral Charge and for members and adherents of the congregation;  
to review working conditions and remuneration for the staff of the Pastoral Charge and make appropriate recommendations to the Church Council;  
to oversee the relationship of the staff of the Pastoral Charge to the members of the Congregation and others;  
to oversee the relationship between and among different members of the staff of the Pastoral Charge with respect to their responsibility and authority;  
to consult with all members of the staff of the Pastoral Charge about their plans for continuing education and ensure that those eligible avail themselves of the provisions for continuing education and that money and time are made available;  
to review and evaluate annually the effectiveness of the staff of the Pastoral Charge as those persons and positions relate to the mission of the Pastoral Charge as defined by the Church Council;  
to maintain close liaison with the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee;  
and to review regularly the responsibilities of all staff of the Pastoral Charge and revise position descriptions when required or requested; and  
to receive from each Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to the Pastoral Charge, a current vulnerable sector (level 2) police records check, at the expense of the Ministry Personnel, no later than the completion of each six-(6) year period of the pastoral relationship. (*Manual 244*)

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly. While the deliberations of this Committee are confidential, its decisions shall be reported to Council. The Committee is accountable to the Council. It shall make informed recommendations to the Council, but it shall not take action itself.

## 10.0 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

10.1 MEMBERSHIP: Trustees are elected by the congregation, normally at the Annual Meeting. There will be not fewer than three and not more than fifteen members including the settled minister (*ex-officio*.) The Settled Minister shall have the right to preside as Chairperson at all meetings and may appoint a deputy to act as

the Chairperson. The Trustees shall appoint one of its members as a representative to Council.

10.2 DUTIES:

to administer property held in trust for the United Church of Canada including the approval for all mortgages, insurances, sales and major renovation of property and the administration of bequests and other funds given in trust to the congregation. The Board of Trustees shall obey all lawful orders and directions of the Church Council, the Presbytery, or the Conference. The duties of the Trustees are described in the *Manual* 250-262 and in the United Church of Canada- Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook. The Trustees shall appoint one of its members as a representative to the Council.

11.0 UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (UCW)

11.1 The UCW's purpose is to unite all women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a way for them to express their loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, fellowship and service.

11.2 All the women of the congregation are members of the United Church Women. The UCW shall maintain its own organizational structure and work to promote the mission of the congregation. The President of the UCW or designate shall be a member of Council.

12.0 FONTHILL SENIORS NON-PROFIT ACCOMMODATION CORPORATION

At the Annual Meeting, two representative members from Fonthill United Church will be elected to the Board of Town Square Manor. The term of office will be two years, renewable twice.

13.0 AMENDMENTS

This Constitution is a living document that reflects the changing life of the congregation and as a tool for furthering its mission and ministry. Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed to the Council in writing by any member of the congregation, stating the reason for the suggested change. Council may approve changes but such changes must then be ratified at the next annual congregational meeting or at a special congregational meeting after notice of motion of the proposed change has been given.

END

**This Constitution was adopted by Fonthill United Church at the Annual  
Meeting on February 10, 2008 and  
Revised at the Annual Meeting on February 22, 2009.**

**TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS:**

*Manual* – The Manual contains the basic laws of the United Church of Canada, including those that govern the procedures of a congregation, and is binding. A copy of the Manual is available through the church office or at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).

*Adherent* – A person who is attached to a congregation and who contributes regularly to its life and work while not being a member thereof.

*Temporal Matters* – Those transitory and secular affairs that pertain to the life, work, and finances of the congregation. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Temporal Matters do not include: the calling of a member of the Order of Ministry; a request to a Presbytery for an appointment; the election of an Elder or a Trustee; the order of worship; the discipline of the United Church; the amalgamation of Pastoral Charges or congregations; the disbanding of Pastoral Charges or congregations; and property matters requiring the consent of the Presbytery.

*Settled Minister* – The minister(s) who has been called by the congregation or appointed by the Presbytery. During a vacancy the Pastoral Charge Supervisor appointed by the Presbytery takes the place of the Settled Minister.

*Ex-Officio Membership* – Full membership by virtue of office for all purposes unless otherwise specifically restricted.

*Quorum* – The minimum number of persons who must be present to validate the transaction of business.

*In Camera* – When Council moves in camera, only those who are members may sit; others must be excused. Deliberations conducted in camera are to remain confidential but decisions taken are recorded in the Minutes and become part of the public record.

*Committee of the Whole* – Council may, for greater freedom of discussion, move into a Committee of the Whole. Any decisions taken in Committee must then be approved by the Council. For information on detailed procedures consult the Manual, Appendix III, Section 13.