

# Governance Handbook 2019

## A.1 INTRODUCTION

Good governance is essential for a congregation in order to conduct its mission effectively and to maintain the peace and stability of its fellowship. The United Church of Canada's governance is organized as a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith (including congregations [B.1.1]), regional councils and the general council. [II.4.2] Fonthill United Church is a congregation of the United Church of Canada [III.5.1] living in covenantal relationship to the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. [III.5.1.2]

Fonthill United Church must be governed according to the current United Church *Manual*. The structure of the governing body will be the Church Council. [B.7.2.1.c] The purpose of this *Governance Handbook* is to provide an easy reference to the parts of the *Manual* that apply to its life and work and to describe the responsibilities of the Fonthill United Church Council and its committees. The references in square brackets refer to the 2019 edition of the *Manual*. The *Manual* is available as a free download here: [https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/the-manual\\_2019.pdf](https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/the-manual_2019.pdf)

## A.2 MISSION

The Community of Faith has authority and responsibility for mission as outlined in the *Manual*. [III.5.3.1]

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

## A.3 AREAS OF MINISTRY

The congregation, the minister and other staff will work as partners to strengthen the following five areas of ministry:

- Worship
- Christian Education
- Pastoral Care
- Fellowship
- Outreach

## A.4 PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING A MEETING AND DECISION-MAKING

Congregational and Council meetings shall be conducted according to accepted procedures for chairing of meetings, moving and seconding of motions and keeping of minutes, as described in the *Appendix* 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 not to be regarded 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, observing "Holy Manners" as described in the *Manual* [appendix page 188]. The prime concern is the good order and welfare of the church. When there is a discrepancy between the *Manual* and this *Governance Handbook*, the *Manual* takes precedence.

## B.1 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS [B.5.1]

The congregation or pastoral charge must meet annually. This meeting must be held as early as possible in the calendar year. The congregation may also decide to meet more often than annually.

### B.1.2 Who May Vote

All full members whose names are on the membership roll have the right to vote at all meetings of the congregation.

Adherents may vote at meetings of the congregation if the full members decide to allow adherents to vote. [B.3.7.2] The *Manual* does not allow voting by proxy or mail-in ballot at congregational meetings. [Appendix 3.4.1]

## **B.2 ANNUAL MEETING [B.5.2]**

At the annual meeting, the congregation is responsible for:

- a) electing a chair and a secretary of the annual meeting;
- b) receiving the annual reports from the governing body, committees, and other groups in the congregation;
- c) electing the governing body and its chairperson, Regional Council representatives, and members of the committees;
- d) considering and making a decision on the draft annual budget;
- e) appointing representatives to Extension Council, Cave Springs Camp and Fonthill Seniors Non-Profit Accommodation Corporation, and other representatives as required;
- f) to deal with any other business that might rightfully arise.

### **B.2.1 ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

In order to facilitate the election of Council, a Nominating Committee made up of the Chairperson of Council and the Chairpersons of the standing committees (or their designates) shall prepare a slate of nominations and propose its adoption at the Annual Congregational Meeting. With the permission of those nominated, 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.

### **B.2.2 OTHER CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

Further congregational meetings may be called as needed according to the *Manual* [B.5.3]. Notice of the meeting must be read during public worship on two Sundays. After notice has been read on the second Sunday, the meeting may take place

on the next day (Monday) or on any day after that. [B.5.4.a] All full members whose names are on the membership roll have the right to vote at all meetings of the congregation. [B.3.7.1] Adherents may vote at meetings of the congregation if the full members decide to allow adherents to vote. [B.3.7.2]

## **C.1 CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **C.1.1 MEMBERSHIP**

Those persons who are elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting, one representative appointed by the UCW, one representative appointed by the Board of Trustees, the elected representatives to the Regional Council, the Treasurer and the called or appointed Minister. [B.7.1] In order to be eligible for elections, members of Council shall also be members of Fonthill United Church. [B.7.3.1.] Adherents may serve the Council as corresponding members and as committee representatives taking part in Council meetings; however only Council members are permitted to vote.

A meeting of the governing body may take place only if one of the following people is present:

- a) a member of the order of ministry who has been called or appointed to the pastoral charge;
- b) a designated lay minister who has been recognized by the regional council and appointed to the pastoral charge;
- c) the pastoral charge supervisor; or
- d) another person appointed by the regional council to attend the meeting. [B.7.7.4.b]

### **C.1.2 DECISION MAKING**

The members of the Council make decisions:

- a) on the basis of an understanding of scripture and of the ethos of the United Church;
- b) in the light of Christian experience; and

- c) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit moving in the discussion during the meeting of such a body.

They decide themselves how they will vote in any matter. They are not bound by the opinions, directions, or previous decisions of the body that elected or appointed them. [A.2]

### **C.1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL**

The governing body has general responsibility for leadership in the care and oversight of the spiritual life and the interests of the congregation. [B.7.4.12] The Council shall fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the Manual [B.7.4.] including: spiritual matters, financial matters, pastoral relations matters, proposals, recommending members for ministry leadership, property matters, representing the pastoral charge to Regional Council, reporting annually to the congregation, keeping records, sharing reports, completing statistical forms.

#### **C.1.3.1 Christian Education**

Council will work with the ordained minister to provide Christian Education opportunities for adults, and to provide nursery and Sunday School programs for children, when they are needed. Council may do this by appointing a Christian Education Committee.

#### **C.1.3.2 Stewardship**

Council shall be responsible for making an annual appeal to the congregation to support the mission of Fonthill United Church.

#### **C.1.3.3 Denominational Support**

Council shall be responsible for paying assessments to General Council, Regional Council and Mission & Service contributions, totalling 10% of offerings received. In addition, when the United Church issues a special appeal to meet an immediate need (famine relief, natural disasters) Council will set up a special fund and invite the congregation to support it.

#### **C.1.3.4 Outreach**

Council shall be responsible for allocating money from fund raising activities to support local outreach projects.

### **C.1.4 MEETINGS**

The Council must meet at least once quarterly [B.7.7.1], but it may decide to meet more often normally monthly except in summer. Council will ensure that standing committees are set up to engage the congregation in its ministry and that administrative support is provided. A Council meeting shall be called either by the Chairperson or by the Minister.

### **C.2 OFFICERS OF COUNCIL**

The officers of the Council are:

- a) chairperson, normally elected to a three year term;
- b) secretary;
- c) treasurer (normally chairperson of the Finance Committee);
- d) two regional council representatives;
- e) one trustee representative;
- f) one UCW representative;
- g) chairpersons of standing committees: Worship and Membership, Pastoral Care, Ministry and Personnel;
- h) and any others as appointed by Council.

#### **C.2.1 OFFICERS OF COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **C.2.1.1 Chairperson**

- a) to prepare an agenda;
- b) to preside over all meetings of Council following proper procedure as outlined in this *Governance Handbook* and in the *United Church Manual*;
- c) to communicate regularly with committee chairpersons in order to understand, support and encourage their work;
- d) to communicate regularly with the congregation so that members and adherents are informed about issues and decisions made by Council;

- e) to maintain regular contact with staff;
- f) 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 over the meeting. The Chairperson of Council is an *ex officio* member of all committees.

#### **C.2.1.2 Secretary**

- a) to maintain accurate records of minutes of all meetings of Council; to record attendance at meetings and note regrets;
- b) to maintain file copies of agendas, minutes, reports and other relevant documents.

#### **C.2.1.3 Trustee, UCW, and Regional Council Representatives**

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

#### **C.2.1.4 Committee Chairpersons**

- a) to call meetings;
- b) to provide an agenda to ensure that the committee's responsibilities are fulfilled;
- c) to preside at Committee meetings ensuring that minutes of proceedings are kept;
- d) to provide representation and report regularly to Council; and
- e) to report annually to the congregation.

### **C.3 STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL**

Standing committees are responsible for leadership in carrying out the congregation's ministry.

- a) Worship and Membership
- b) Pastoral Care
- c) Finance and Property
- d) Ministry and Personnel

Council has the responsibility to reorganize the committees and establish new committees to address changing needs and circumstances. Such reorganization shall be communicated to the congregation and approved at the next Annual Congregational Meeting.

**D. ALL COMMITTEES** are responsible to spend within their budget, undertake projects and launch initiatives to support the mission of the congregation, to work with other committees, and within policies set by the Council and provisions of the current 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; to communicate with the congregation through newsletters, bulletins and announcements.

#### **D.1 WORSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP**

##### **D.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/or an interest in increasing the membership and enhancing the fellowship of the congregation and who are willing to serve, (one of whom should also be a member of the Choir), the Music Director (*ex-officio*), and the Minister (*ex-officio*.)

### **D.1.2 WORSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- a) to oversee Sunday worship and other worship services, music, and sacraments;
- b) to oversee the use and care and decoration of the sanctuary;
- c) to make arrangements for lay readers, ushers, communion servers and greeters;
- d) to arrange pulpit supply and supply musicians when needed.

### **D.1.3 MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- a) to work with the Church Administrator to keep an accurate membership roll, including adherents;
- b) to make contact with visitors at worship and new people in the community to invite their greater involvement;
- c) to arrange for new member orientation events and for services to receive new members;
- d) to promote Fonthill United Church in the community through advertising; including overseeing the church's website and newsletter;
- e) to encourage opportunities for fellowship and to encourage existing groups;
- f) to oversee the keeping of archives by the Church Administrator.

## **D.2 PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE**

### **D.2.1 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 Minister (*ex-officio*).

### **D.2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) to assist the Minister by providing pastoral care to members and adherents of the congregation by visiting;

- b) to maintain good communication by telephone with those in need of pastoral care;
- c) to keep the Minister informed of the pastoral care needs of the congregation recommending when visits are needed;
- d) to send out sympathy cards on behalf of the congregation;
- e) to arrange for and accompany the Minister for home Communion services.

## **D.3 FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**D.3.1 MEMBERSHIP:** Chairperson (who may function as the Treasurer), a Council representative (who may be the same person), and other members and adherents who have expertise in finances and building maintenance, and the Minister (*ex-officio*.)

### **D.3.2 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) to oversee the work of the Treasurer and bookkeeper with reference to the United Church of Canada: Financial Handbook for Congregations;
- b) to arrange for Sunday counters;
- c) to receive revenues, pay invoices;
- d) to administer Special Funds;
- e) to report regularly to Council;
- f) to provide independently reviewed financial statements to the Annual Meeting;
- g) to develop plans to ensure the long term financial viability of the church;
- h) to keep the congregation apprised of the financial needs of the church and to encourage support.

### **D.3.3 PROPERTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) to maintain the church property, keeping the church building in a state of good repair and planning future repairs and renovations;

- b) to be responsible for the church's energy use, security and rentals;
- c) to oversee the work of the custodian;
- d) to communicate building policies, uses and changes to the congregation.

#### **D.4 THE MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

[B.7.8.5]

All congregations or pastoral charges must have a committee or other body, which may be called the Ministry and Personnel Committee or a different name, with the following responsibilities:

- a) being available for consultation and support for matters involving the pastoral charge staff;
- b) overseeing the relationship of the pastoral charge staff to each other and to people in the congregation;
- c) regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities, and compensation of all pastoral charge staff;
- d) making any recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the governing body;
- e) revising position descriptions of pastoral charge staff as needed;
- f) conducting annual performance reviews of the pastoral charge staff;
- g) ensuring pastoral charge staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given; and
- h) maintaining close contact with the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Human Resources Commission.

The Committee shall meet regularly as needed and report actions taken to Council.

Two helpful resources provided by the United Church of Canada to assist Ministry and Personnel Committees in their work may be found here: [https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/ministry-personnel-committees\\_policy-procedures-practices.pdf](https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/ministry-personnel-committees_policy-procedures-practices.pdf) and here: <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources-for-mandp-committees.pdf>

#### **E.1 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

##### **E.1.1 MEMBERSHIP**

Trustees are elected by the congregation, normally at the Annual Meeting. A majority of the Trustees must be members of Fonthill United Church [G.3.3.2]. There will be not fewer than three and not more than fifteen members including the minister (*ex-officio*.) The Trustees appoint one of its members as a representative to Council.

##### **E.1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) 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.
- b) The duties of the Trustees are described in the *Manual G3* and in the United Church of Canada: Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook.
- c) The Board of Trustees shall obey all lawful orders and directions of the Church Council, and Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. The Trustees shall appoint one of its members as a representative to the Council.

## **E.2 UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (UCW)**

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. 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.

## **E.3 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.

## **F. AMENDMENTS**

This *Governance Handbook* 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 *Governance Handbook* 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.

## **G. 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 and on-line:

[https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/the-manual\\_2019.pdf](https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/the-manual_2019.pdf)

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

*Minister* – The minister(s) who has been called by the congregation or appointed by the regional council.

*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. For Council meetings one-third of members plus ministry personnel constitutes a quorum. For congregational meetings with 100 or more full members, at least 20 full members must be present. [B.5.5.a]

*In Camera* – The Manual makes no provision for sitting in camera and excluding voting members of Council, including the minister. When the minister or regional council representative is absent Council does not have quorum and cannot act.

*Committee of the Whole* – Council, for greater freedom of discussion, may move into a Committee of the Whole. Any decisions taken in Committee must then be adopted by the Council. All voting members of Council including the minister are entitled to take part in discussions held in committee of the whole.

# **Governance Handbook Fonthill United Church (adopted 2019)**



**(formerly the Constitution)**