

# **A Constitution for Wellington United Church**

## **Preamble**

The purpose of this Constitution is to provide insight and guidance for all members, adherents and officers of the congregation regarding the governance structure in place at Wellington United Church.

## **General Approach to Governance**

Wellington United Church has adopted a leadership structure which is compliant with The Manual of The United Church of Canada, which incorporates governance best practices of its past experiences and which provides for faithful and effective leadership for the life and work of the congregation.

While the Church Council is the primary court for administration within the congregation, final decisions on certain matters shall be made through due process by the congregation. They are:

- approval and amendment of the Constitution,
- the pastoral relationship with Order of Ministry personnel,
- approval of budgets and financial goals,
- the election of officers,
- approval and amendment of formal statements concerning the congregation's faith, vision or mission,
- the disbursement of income from funds held in trust by the congregation,
- the sale, purchase or mortgaging of property and others matters specified in the Trust of Model Deed of The United Church of Canada.

The Church Council shall have the discretion to refer any other matter for action by the congregation.

The Church Council shall act as a resource to the congregation in the preparation and/or review of proposals requiring congregational approval.

The Church Council shall oversee and support the life and work of the congregation and its various committees and organizations. The Standing Committees shall support the Church Council in the execution of its responsibilities. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all property, real and personal, for use of the congregation.

In the case of any details of administrative responsibility or procedure not described in this Constitution, The Manual of The United Church of Canada shall be the authority.

## **Election of Officers**

At its Annual Meeting the Congregation shall elect, on recommendation of the Task Group for Nominations, the congregation's lay delegate to the East Central Ontario Region of The United Church of Canada, the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of Council, and the Chairs of Standing Committees of Council for terms as specified in this Constitution. The congregation may also elect up to two Council members-at-large. The Church Council may act to fill vacancies which occur between Congregational Meetings.

Members of the Church Council and its Standings Committees shall be elected for one-year terms and may serve in any one role for a maximum of three consecutive terms. If it is deemed to be in the best interests of the congregation, the Task Group on Nominations may recommend in its report that an exception be granted for the three-term limit.

The Past-Chair of Council shall be an ex officio member of Council.

Members of the Board of Trustees are elected without time limit. New Trustees shall be elected at a Congregational Meeting on recommendation of the Task Group on Nominations.

Members of the Order of Ministry settled in or appointed to the congregation are ex officio members of the Church Council and all Standing Committees except for the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

## **Approval/Amendments**

This Constitution is adopted by action of the congregation of Wellington United Church. The action of the congregation requires approval by a majority of members at a duly constituted Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. Such a meeting shall follow notice to the congregation specifying the purpose of the meeting given on at least two Sundays when public worship occurs.

Amendments to this Constitution may be initiated by the Church Council, the Board of Trustees or by members of the congregation. Responsibility for assisting those proposing amendments and for reviewing the wording and implications of proposed amendments shall normally belong to the Chair and Secretary of the Church Council.

The procedure for amending this Constitution shall be the same as that for its approval.

This Constitution shall be reviewed two years after its initial approval and at least every five years thereafter. Any proposed changes shall be considered amendments and shall be enacted through the process described above.

## **The Church Council**

The purpose of the Church Council shall be to administer the life and work of the congregation.

The members of the Church Council shall be:

Ex Officio:

Order of Ministry personnel settled in or appointed to the congregation (non-voting), Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Past-Chairperson of Council

Elected by the Congregation:

The Chair of the Church Council, Secretary of the Church Council, the Treasurer, the congregation's lay delegate to the East Central Ontario Region and Chairs of the Standing Committees. There is also provision for up to two members-at-large.

It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council:

- a) to plan, initiate, direct and oversee the total life and work of the congregation;
- b) to direct, as required, through its committees, the work of all paid and volunteer staff;
- c) to meet at least monthly, except July and August, or as required;
- d) to ensure that the congregation is kept adequately informed of its decisions and actions, including that of its Standing Committees;
- e) to provide theological reflection within the life and work of the congregation:
  - i. by reviewing, if deemed appropriate, decisions and actions of church committees and organizations in the light of Biblical witness, denominational polity or tradition, and report its findings and recommendations to the Church Council;
  - ii. by receiving and reviewing petitions and appeals from Wellington United Church members and groups and by making recommendations to the Church Council concerning its response, including referral to other church courts;
- f) to provide spiritual oversight for the congregation:
  - i. by considering matters related to the discipline of members of the congregation;
  - ii. by receiving applications for Order of Ministry candidacy and overseeing the discernment process within the congregation;
- g) to appoint and oversee task groups and ad hoc committees as may be needed;
- h) to review the Annual Budget proposed by the Finance Committee and recommend it for approval to the congregation;
- i) to receive regular reports from the Standing Committees, the Board of Trustees and the East Central Ontario Region;
- j) to appoint each year a Nominations Task Group to recruit volunteers and prepare a slate of officers to recommend to the congregation at its Annual Meeting; and,
- k) to provide for training and orientation for all officers of the congregation;

Special meetings of the Church Council may be called by the Chair of Council, any member of the Order of Ministry settled in or appointed to the congregation, any ten members of the congregation who request a meeting in writing, or the East Central Ontario Region.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chair of Council:

- a) to preside at all regular and special meetings of the Church Council and the congregation;
- b) to prepare a proposed agenda for all meetings of Council, in consultation with the Lead Minister, including all unfinished business and other items pending from previous meetings of the Church Council;
- c) to ensure that quorum and all other meeting requirements have been met;
- d) to vote only in the event of a tie; and,
- e) to be the official representative of, and spokesperson for, the Church Council.

It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of Council to ensure that all Minutes of the Council and Congregational Meetings are recorded and maintained in accordance with guidelines described in The Manual of The United Church of Canada.

### **The Standing Committees**

#### **Outreach Committee**

##### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to encourage all members of the congregation to grow in their concern and care for others, and to oversee the congregation's ministries of benevolence, outreach and mission.

##### **Membership:**

The members of the Outreach Committee shall be the Chairperson and at least three members-at-large duly elected by the congregation. The Lead Minister shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Outreach Committee.

##### **Duties:**

- a) to enable the congregation to be aware of, and responsive to, needs within the local and global community;
- b) to educate the congregation in the total mission of the church in Canada and abroad by sharing information and by providing mission education resources and events;
- c) to promote the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada by sharing information and by recommending an appropriate Giving Objective for the Mission and Service Fund;
- d) to recommend the congregation's response to appeals for financial support;
- e) to seek and develop new avenues by which the congregation may serve its community;
- f) to give leadership, in consultation with the Lead Minister, to the congregation's evangelistic outreach;
- g) to encourage and support the congregation's inter-church and inter-faith relationships;
- h) to oversee the communication tools of the congregation, including its printed and on-line presence, and to provide for promotion of the congregation's life and work in the community;
- j) to submit a proposed budget for the upcoming year to the Finance Committee;
- k) to deal with matters referred to it by the Church Council; and,
- l) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.

## **Worship and Pastoral Support Committee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Worship and Pastoral Support Committee is to provide leadership to, and adequate resources for, the worship life of the congregation and its ministry of pastoral care.

### **Membership:**

The members of the Worship and Pastoral Support Committee shall be the Chairperson and at least four members-at-large duly elected by the Congregation. The Lead Minister, Director of Music and Coordinator of the Pastoral Care Team shall be ex-officio non-voting members of the Worship and Pastoral Support Committee.

### **Duties:**

- a) to provide for regular and special Services of public worship;
- b) in consultation with the Lead Minister, to determine the Order of Worship for regular services;
- c) to encourage and foster the developing worship life of the church and its members;
- d) to provide for the pastoral care of all members and adherents of the congregation:
  - i. by recruiting, overseeing and supporting members of the congregation's Pastoral Care Team;
  - ii. by encouraging church members and organizations in their disciplines of mutual support;
- e) to recommend to the Church Council the congregation's policies related to baptism, church membership and marriage;
- f) to ensure that the congregation's Registers for Baptism, Marriage, Funerals/Memorial Services are maintained;
- g) to approve candidates for full membership in the congregation and encourage their full assimilation in the life and work of the congregation;
- h) to ensure that the congregation's Membership Roll is maintained;
- i) to recruit, train and support the worship service volunteers including greeters, ushers, lay readers, a/v operators and fellowship hosts;
- j) to act as an advisory group for the Lead Minister in matters of worship;
- k) to oversee the use of the sanctuary;
- l) to provide for pulpit and music supply in the absence of staff;
- m) to provide for the proper care and maintenance of all audio-visual equipment;
- n) in consultation with the Director of Music, to provide for the care and maintenance of the church's musical instruments;
- o) to oversee the use of audio-visual equipment and musical instruments, in accordance with policies approved by the Church Council;
- p) to submit a proposed budget for the upcoming year to the Finance Committee;
- q) to provide for worship leaders at the Church Council meetings;
- r) to deal with all matters referred to it by the Church Council; and,
- s) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.

## **Fellowship and Faith Formation Committee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Fellowship and Faith Formation Committee is to plan, coordinate and supervise fellowship activities and opportunities for the Christian education and nurture of adults, youth and children in the congregation so that they may grow in faith and faithfulness.

### **Membership:**

The members of the Fellowship and Faith Formation Committee shall be the Chairperson and at least three members-at-large duly elected by the congregation. Congregational organizations, including the UCW, may appoint representatives who will be voting members of the Fellowship and Faith Formation Committee. The Lead Minister shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Fellowship and Faith Formation Committee.

### **Duties:**

- a) to promote and support fellowship groups and activities in the congregation;
- b) to direct, support and provide for the congregation's ministries with children and youth, ensuring that resources and volunteers are sufficient for programs and other activities;
- c) to promote, oversee and support groups and activities in the congregation which provide for Christian nurture and growth;
- d) to promote, oversee and support small group ministries in the congregation;
- e) to encourage and promote the use of summer camps and other programs and facilities for children, youth and adults;
- f) to provide for the recruitment, training and support of lay leaders within the congregation;
- g) in consultation with the Lead Minister, to plan seminars, workshops, retreats and other events for church officers and leaders;
- h) to encourage the involvement of children and youth in all areas of the church's life and work;
- i) to submit a proposed budget for the upcoming year to the Finance Committee;
- j) to deal with other matters referred to it by the Church Council; and,
- k) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.

## **Finance Committee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to encourage all members of the congregation to be faithful stewards of their time, talents and treasure; and to administer the financial resources of the congregation in accordance with policies approved by the Church Council.

### **Membership:**

Members of the Finance Committee shall be the Chairperson, the Treasurer, at least four members-at-large duly elected by the congregation, and the Envelope Steward appointed by the Committee. The Lead Minister shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Finance Committee.

### **Duties:**

- a) to recommend and comply with regulations for the handling of all congregational finances;
- b) to supervise and support the work of the church's Bookkeeper;
- c) to appoint, support and supervise the work of the Envelope Steward;
- d) to foster faithful stewardship among all people of the congregation;
- e) to recruit and oversee a Stewardship Team to plan and conduct Stewardship Programs, in accordance with policies established by the Church Council;
- f) to recruit and oversee a Fundraising Team to encourage and coordinate fundraising activities in the congregation;
- g) to inform the people of the congregation about opportunities for planned and deferred giving;
- h) to make recommendations regarding the wise and faithful use of resources by the congregation;
- i) to prepare and present the proposed Annual Budget of the congregation;
- j) to administer the disbursement of congregational funds, and ensure the accurate recording and acknowledgement of all receipts;
- k) to provide for Offering Counters to act according to guidelines determined by the committee;
- l) to provide monthly financial reports to the Church Council and regular Stewardship Summaries to the congregation;
- m) to provide a review of all receipts, disbursements and financial assets at the end of each year for printing in the Annual Report and presentation at the Annual Meeting of the congregation;
- n) to deal with matters referred to it by the Church Council;
- o) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.

## **Property Maintenance Committee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Property Maintenance Committee is to provide for the care and maintenance of all buildings and grounds held in trust by the congregation.

### **Membership:**

The members of the Property Maintenance Committee shall be the Chairperson, a representative of the Board of Trustees, and at least four members-at-large duly elected by the congregation. Then Lead Minister shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Property Maintenance Committee.

### **Duties:**

- a) to provide for the supervision, maintenance and improvement of all church property, including buildings, grounds and contents;
- b) to ensure adequate levels of safety and security in the church building;
- c) to maintain an inventory of church property, equipment and furnishings and to provide for the disposal of any church equipment and property as authorized by the Church Council;
- d) to recommend to the Church Council and to enforce Guidelines for use of the church building, with the exception of the sanctuary;
- e) in consultation with the Board of Trustees, to recommend to the Church Council priorities for major property maintenance and improvements;
- f) to submit a proposed budget for the upcoming year to the Finance Committee;
- g) to deal with matters referred to it by the Church Council; and,
- h) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.



## **Ministry & Personnel Committee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Ministry and Personnel Committee is to provide a confidential setting for the support, consultation and performance review of Order of Ministry personnel settled in, or appointed to, Wellington United Church, and all paid staff employed by the congregation.

### **Membership:**

The members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee shall be the Chairperson, at least three members-at-large duly elected by the congregation, and the person chosen by the Lead Minister to represent her/him. Members of the Order of Ministry settled in, or appointed to, the congregation shall not be members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

### **Duties:**

- a) to oversee and support members of the Order of Minister and all employees of the congregation, including volunteer staff;
- b) to designate members of the committee who will act as liaison for each non-Order-of-Ministry member of the paid church staff;
- c) to co-ordinate interrelations between staff members;
- d) to act as liaison between church staff and members of the congregation;
- e) to annually review and recommend salaries and other working conditions;
- f) to annually review and evaluate the effectiveness of staff members in terms of their Job Descriptions as approved by the Church Council;
- g) to maintain close liaison with the Covenant Team of the East Central Ontario Region;
- h) to submit to the Finance Committee a proposed budget for the upcoming year, including staff remuneration and all expenses related to personnel;
- i) to deal with matters referred to it by the Church Council; and,
- j) to report regularly to the Church Council its work and recommendations.

### **Accountability:**

- a) The Ministry and Personnel Committee reports to the Church Council and should receive direction from it. While the committee's formal actions and recommendations should be reported to the Church Council, much of its effective work will be conducted quietly and confidentially in dialogue with Order of Ministry personnel, other staff members, and the people of the congregation.
- b) In case of any challenge to the work of the Ministry and Personnel Committee, the arbitration authority shall be the Church Council.

## **THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The purpose of the Board of Trustees is to hold in trust all properties, real and personal, for use of the congregation.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than three (3) nor more than fifteen (15) members, a majority of whom shall be members in full communion of The United Church of Canada, and the Lead Minister. In the event that the Lead Minister is not available, the Board of Trustees shall include a representative appointed by the East Central Ontario Region of The United Church of Canada.

The members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the congregation for terms without limit.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees:

- a) to elect annually a Chairperson and Secretary;
- b) to name its representative to the Property Maintenance Committee;
- c) to consultation with the Property Maintenance Committee to make sure there is adequate property and liability insurance, and to ensure that all insurance and government regulations are met;
- d) in consultation with the Finance Committee, to oversee the management of Memorial and other funds held in trust by the congregation, including their investment in accordance with policies approved by the Church Council, and to recommend the use of such funds at Congregational Meetings duly called for that purpose;
- e) to regularly monitor the condition of church buildings and property and to report to the Church Council its suggestions for the care and maintenance of such holdings;
- f) to report its work and funds held in trust to the congregation's Annual Meeting.