

**CONSTITUTION  
and  
BY-LAWS  
of  
THORNHILL UNITED CHURCH**

**SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

As a Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, the administration and activities of Thornhill United Church are governed by the appropriate sections of the Manual of the United Church of Canada, as revised from time to time (the “Manual”). The Constitution and By-Laws are subject to the Manual and are solely for the governance of the affairs of Thornhill United Church.

**SECTION 2 - MISSION**

The Mission of the congregation of Thornhill United Church is as follows:

*Our Faith in God's love moves us to celebrate spirituality, to care with compassion, and to welcome all warmly.*

**SECTION 3 - SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

It is intended that much of the life and work of the church will be achieved through small groups which will be formed for various purposes and which will be established, monitored and supported by the Standing Committees. The Standing Committees will implement the policies and plans as set out by the Council; they will be responsible for establishing specific priorities within their respective areas of ministry, and providing support and direction as required to small groups which may be formed to achieve these priorities.

**SECTION 4 - COUNCIL**

1. The governing body of Thornhill United Church shall be the Council.
2. Council shall consist of
  - a) all member(s) of the order of ministry settled in or appointed to the Pastoral Charge, the designated lay minister(s) appointed to the Pastoral Charge and any pastoral charge supervisor, as the case may be,
  - b) all members of the Executive of Council,
  - c) the Chair, or one of the Co-Chairs, or a designated alternate of each Standing Committee, and
  - d) One of the lay representatives to the relevant Regional Council of the United Church of Canada (the “Regional Council”).
3. Council shall meet regularly, as required, and as deemed necessary by the Chair of Council or at the request of any two (2) members of Council to the Chair,

- provided that there shall be at least four (4) meetings of Council in any calendar year. Meetings may also be held by telephone conference call, or by any means by which each member has the opportunity to hear and be heard at the meeting. Notice of meetings may be given in public worship on the Sunday before any meeting or may be given in person or in writing to all members of Council. The notice of meeting must indicate the purpose of the meeting
4. A quorum of Council shall consist of one-third (1/3) of the members provided that a member of the Order of Ministry settled or appointed to the Pastoral Charge or an appointee of the Regional Council is in attendance.
  5. The Chair of Council shall preside at all Council meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside. In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, a meeting chair shall be elected by the members in attendance at the meeting.
  6. Each member of Council, excepting the Chair and members of the ministerial staff, shall have one vote on all matters requiring Council approval. Where a single person represents more than one constituency on the Council, they shall nevertheless be limited to one vote. All matters requiring approval shall be passed by a majority vote of the members in attendance at a meeting. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall cast the deciding vote. Decisions of the Council may also be made by electronic means (individual votes confirmed by e-mail as an example) when necessary or convenient..

## **SECTION 5 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL**

The responsibilities of Council shall be to provide spiritual oversight to the members and adherents, and to manage the business and affairs, of the Pastoral Charge and shall include:

1. Advancing the goals and objectives of the congregation.
2. Reviewing and managing the financial commitments of the Pastoral Charge by recommending an annual budget for approval by the congregation and managing operations to meet the budget.
3. Determining from time to time the number of Standing Committees required to properly conduct the affairs of the congregation, and their respective responsibilities, and recommending the establishment of such Committees for approval by the congregation.
4. Receiving reports and recommendations from the Standing Committees, the Executive and the Board of Trustees and making decisions as required regarding any matters brought to Council.
5. The duties and responsibilities set out in the Manual which would otherwise be those of a Session, Stewards or an Official Board, which duties and responsibilities the Council may delegate to various Standing Committees from time to time.
6. All other duties and responsibilities as set out in the Manual.

## **SECTION 6 - EXECUTIVE OF COUNCIL**

1. The Executive of Council shall consist of:
  - a) the Chair, elected by the Congregation;
  - b) the Vice-Chair, elected by Council;
  - c) the Secretary, elected by Council; and
  - d) the Treasurer, elected by Council.
2. The Executive of Council shall meet at such times as deemed necessary by the Chair or at the request of any member of the Executive to the Chair. Three (3) members of the Executive shall constitute a quorum of the Executive.
3. The responsibilities of the Executive are to conduct the business of Council as required or as may be necessary, subject to the ratification of all actions by Council.
4. The Chair shall see that resolutions and directions of Council are carried into effect except when that responsibility is specifically assigned to some other person by Council. In general, he/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed by Council.
5. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the Chair or Council.
6. The Secretary shall be the secretary of all meetings of Council and shall enter or cause to be entered in records kept for that purpose minutes of all proceedings at such meetings, whether or not the Secretary attends such meetings and shall, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the Chair or Council.
7. The Treasurer shall be the principal financial and accounting officer of the congregation and shall
  - a) be responsible for all funds and securities of the congregation, excepting those held in trust for the Pastoral Charge by the Board of Trustees;
  - b) keep correct and complete books and records of account including a record of all receipts and disbursements;
  - c) cause to be deposited all funds and securities of the congregation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall be selected;
  - d) from time to time prepare or cause to be prepared and render financial statements of the Pastoral Charge at the request of the Chair or Council; and
  - e) in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the Chair or Council.

## **SECTION 7 - STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Standing Committees shall be established by the Congregation, at the recommendation of Council, and shall consist of such Committees as are deemed necessary from time to time. It is the intention that the number of Standing Committees will be kept to a minimum such that volunteer time can be most effectively used in task groups. Committees shall meet as required or as deemed

- necessary by the Chair of the Committee or at the request of any (2) members of the Committee. Each Committee shall have at least three (3) members and a quorum for any meeting of the Committee shall be three (3).
2. If deemed appropriate, a Committee may appoint a person to be responsible for the management of a separate bank account, provided that the prior approval of the Council has been obtained and that reports are submitted to the Treasurer as required detailing the status of any such account.
  3. As of the date of the approval of this Constitution, the Standing Committees are as follows:
    - a) Celebrate Spirituality – responsible for the support, exploration and growth of our Christian faith journey through all aspects of the worship experience, music ministry and educational activities;
    - b) Celebrate Caring – responsible for encouraging care and compassion for the congregation, the neighbourhood, and the wider community through outreach ministries and actions, and for promotion of the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada;
    - c) Celebrate Together – responsible for promoting fellowship, belonging and hospitality among new and established members, adherents and visitors through social gatherings and activities that embrace welcoming, inclusivity and fun;
    - d) Assets and Administration – responsible for the management and overall stewardship of the physical, financial, administrative and communication infrastructure and resources that have been entrusted to the congregation.
    - e) Ministry and Personnel – responsible for the oversight of the relationship of staff with members of the congregation, providing consultation, liaison and support for and assessment of all staff members, and shall more particularly fulfill the responsibilities of a Ministry and Personnel Committee as set out in the Manual.
  4. The number and the responsibilities of the Standing Committees may change from time to time. In the event that any or all of the Standing Committees should cease to exist, all responsibilities held by that committee shall revert to the Council. The Congregation may also elect such other members to the Council as it deems necessary in order to fulfill the governance responsibilities of the Pastoral Charge.

## **SECTION 8 – REGIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

Members elected by the Pastoral Charge to be lay representatives to the Regional Council shall attend regular meetings of the Regional Council and related events and shall maintain communication between the Regional Council and the congregation. The representatives shall select one of their members to be a member of the Council.

## **SECTION 9 - BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

1. The Board of Trustees shall hold and administer the real property of the congregation, in accordance with the Manual and shall report as needed at the request of Council.

2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least three (3) members who shall be appointed by the congregation for an indefinite term. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting of the congregation or at a meeting of the congregation called for such purpose.

## **SECTION 10 - ELECTIONS**

1. Members of Council, other than ministerial staff, shall normally be members of the congregation in good standing. Members of the Standing Committees shall be chosen from among the members and adherents of the congregation for maximum participation.
2. Members of Council and members of the Standing Committees shall be elected annually by the congregation at a congregational meeting. Members of Council shall expect to serve for a term of at least two (2) years in order to allow for learning and continuity. Members may be re-elected for consecutive terms as may be necessary or desirable.
3. Where a vacancy occurs on Council, on the Standing Committees, on any or in the representatives to Regional Council, Council shall make such interim appointments as may be necessary or required. Any such interim appointment shall be confirmed by the congregation at a subsequent meeting.
4. Members of Council may be removed by resignation, or by action of a congregational meeting. Members of Committees may be removed by resignation, or by action of Council. Removal of a member by Council may be appealed to a congregational meeting.

## **SECTION 11 - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**

Any amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws may be proposed in writing by any Standing Committee or member of the Executive or congregational member in good standing and any such proposed amendments shall be reviewed by Council for its recommendation and presentation to the congregation.

***APPROVED by Thornhill United Church  
at its Congregational Meeting held***