



# CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH

## CONSTITUTION



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
VISION, MISSION AND VALUES.....	5
COMMUNAL WORSHIP .....	6
GOVERNANCE .....	6
MEMBERSHIP .....	6
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD .....	7
MEETINGS OF THE BOARD .....	10
COMMITTEES AND TEAMS.....	11
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE .....	12
ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS.....	15
GENERAL .....	16
BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT.....	16
APPENDIX: HOLY MANNERS.....	19

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **THE MANUAL**

Guidance is taken from the 41<sup>st</sup> edition of *The Manual, 2022 (The Manual)* of The United Church of Canada (UCC) which came into effect on January 1, 2022.

### **CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution of Central United Church (Central) is the written document which outlines the governance principles and policies by which Central is organized. It outlines the basic principles that determine the powers and duties in effect that govern the church. It also delineates the rights and responsibilities of the people who are members or affiliates of it.

The Constitution itself is governed by *The Manual* of the UCC.

### **COMMUNITY OF FAITH**

Central is a Community of Faith (COF) within the governance structure of the UCC. It is a group of people who gather together locally as part of the worldwide Christian faith community, following the Protestant Reformed Tradition. A COF is under the spiritual leadership of a Minister(s) and a duly appointed leadership team known as the Board.

### **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

A Regional Council is an administrative grouping of communities of faith in a local area. Laypeople and ministers meet to oversee the work of the church within each region. Central is a member of the Chinook Winds Regional Council (Regional Council).

### **DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL**

The Denominational Council is the UCC's highest legislative court. Ordained Ministers (OM), Commissioned (DM), Designated Lay Ministers (DLM) and lay commissioners are elected by the regions and meet every three years to set church policy. A Denominational Council Executive and Sub-Executive govern between meetings of the Council.

## INTRODUCTION

Central is a COF as described in *The Basis of Union: Polity, page 34 of The Manual*.

Central is situated on the traditional lands of the Indigenous nations of Treaty 7. These include the Blackfoot Confederacy, which is comprised of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai Nations, the Stoney Nakoda First Nations, comprised of the Bearspaw, Wesley, and Chiniki First Nations, as well as the Tsuut'ina Nation. This is also within traditional northwest Métis homeland, specifically the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Our COF started as a mission outpost of the Morley Methodist Church in 1875, first meeting in the original Fort Calgary. With the growth of the community, it moved a number of times before settling on the corner of what we now call 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street S.W.

Our church has served our city from its current location since February 5, 1905, first as Central Methodist Church and subsequently as Central United Church when it became a member church of the UCC, inaugurated on June 10, 1925.

Central serves as a beacon in our urban landscape, illuminating its surroundings with the light of God, helping travellers navigate difficult journeys and casting the light of hope and love to those around it. Central is a place for pilgrims. With open hearts and hands, we provide space for recovery, for restored dignity, for exploring life and for experiencing authentic change.

Central is a place of prayer, of sharing, of teaching, of listening and of healing – a church community that believes we are not fans of Jesus... but followers. A spiritual community that values the gospel of peace and reconciliation, trusts in the scriptures of our faith and anticipates the leading of the Spirit with energy and involvement. Central is ultimately a community of love: love that forgives quickly; love that exhibits compassion; love that seeks the will of God; love that provides each person space to grow in their understanding of God in an environment of authenticity, grace and safety.



# **VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

## **OUR VISION**

Central United Church, an historic downtown hub, is committed to living out the mission of knowing the radically, relentlessly, and unconditionally loving God we follow.

We are a community in which God is encountered, the message of Jesus is received and the Holy Spirit transforms lives. Our music ministry is integral, some remarking they come for the music and stay for the message.

Central is a crossroads where connections and interactions are made, attracting individuals and groups of varied interests, concerns and expressions.

## **OUR MISSION**

To create a safe and vibrant community in which God's unconditional love is demonstrated by people who choose to follow the teachings of Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

## **OUR VALUES**

### **Connecting, Caring, Committed, and Courageous**

By demonstrating caring relationships and through creative programming, we will provide dynamic worship services, based on Holy Scripture that support spiritual development.

#### **Connecting**

- Radically accepting others
- Praying

#### **Caring**

- Refusing to look away from other's pain
- Practicing kindness and generosity
- Forgiving

#### **Committed**

- To sharing the message of the unconditional love of God
- To creating a safe environment where people can grow in their faith
- To making connections within the church and the wider community

#### **Courageous**

- Having the courage to allow the Holy Spirit to make changes
- Having courage that is risk-taking, creative and kindness

## COMMUNAL WORSHIP

Two worship services are held on Sundays. The morning gathering is referred to as the "Spirited Traditional Worship Service". The evening gathering is referred to as the "Celebrate Life Recovery Gathering." Our COF is a reflection of God's wide diversity in human creation. We strive to be welcoming and affirming to all in our practises of worship at Central.

## GOVERNANCE

Central's representative Board model of governance promotes accountability, diversity, commitment and creativity. It assumes responsibility for all aspects of the ministry and encourages broad lay participation, using a shared model of leadership, based on principles of mutual respect and collaboration.

### Membership

Board members are:

- a) full members of the COF and duly elected by the COF or appointed by the Board in the case of a vacancy;
- b) members of the OM who have been called or appointed to the COF or a COF Supervisor who has been appointed by the Regional Council;
- c) DLMs who have been recognized by the Regional Council and appointed to the COF; or
- d) any other full members that the COF chooses to include in the membership of the Board (e.g. representatives from women's groups, men's groups, recovery ministry, youth, Duty of Care or the Trustees).

Central's Board is to be made up of:

- Chair
- Past Chair
- Recording Secretary
- Finance Team Chair or Treasurer
- OM and DLM ministry personnel
- Chinook Winds Regional representatives
- Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee Chair
- Chairs of every Team except the Duty of Care Team and the Board of Trustees (Trustees)

Responsibilities of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are described in *Bylaws B. Community of Faith, Section B.7.6, pages 69 and 70 of The Manual.*

## **TERM OF OFFICE**

The term of office for the Board Chair is two years. The Chair may serve only two consecutive terms. At the end of the two- or four-year period, the Chair remains on the Board in the capacity of Past Chair for another two years, after which time he/she must step down for at least one year.

All other Board members, excluding the OM and DLM personnel, are elected for a three-year term, serving a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms. Upon completion of the six-year period, they must step down for at least one year.

## **ADMISSION TO OFFICE**

The COF elects members to the Board at its Annual Congregational Meeting.

If any person serving on the Board is unable to complete their term of office, for whatever reason, the Board is given the authority to appoint someone to the vacant position until the next Annual Congregational Meeting, at which time the candidate's name can be officially ratified by the COF.

## **RESIGNATION**

A member of the Board may resign at any time during their term of office.

## **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

A Board member may be removed from office

- a) by the Board through a discipline process;
- b) by the Board if the member has been absent from meetings for a year without formal notification as to the reason for the absence;
- c) by the COF after a just and fair review; or
- d) by the Regional Council if the Regional Council decides it is in the best interests of the COF.

## **Responsibilities of the Board**

### **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Board has general responsibility for leadership in the care and oversight of the spiritual life and the temporal interests of the COF.

The Board follows the policies set by the COF in fulfilling these responsibilities, including:

### **SPIRITUAL MATTERS**

The Board oversees the spiritual interests of the COF, including

- a) admitting individuals as full members;
- b) removing individuals as full members;

- c) granting certificates of transfer of membership;
- d) the discipline of members, which may include removal of membership;
- e) the administration of the sacraments;
- f) Christian education;
- g) public worship;
- h) the use of the church building;
- i) pastoral care and visiting; and
- j) outreach.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Central is a not-for-profit religious organization granted tax-exempt status by Canada Revenue Agency. Central pays no income tax on donations received or on any money earned through fundraising. All income is returned to Central if extra funds beyond budget needs are generated.

The Board, through its Finance Team, has oversight of the finances of the COF, including

- a) fundraising;
- b) disbursement of funds; and
- c) the operating budget, including capital expenditures, approved by the COF at its Annual Congregational Meeting.

It may also authorize borrowing funds with the approval of the COF.

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS MATTERS**

The Board deals with pastoral relations matters as directed by the COF, working in collaboration with the Office of Vocations of the Regional Council.

### **PROPOSALS**

The Board receives, makes decisions on, and transmits proposals to the Regional Council.

### **RECOMMENDING MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY LEADERSHIP**

The Board recommends suitable members for consideration by the appropriate body as

- a) licensed lay worship leaders;
- b) sacraments elders; and
- c) candidates for ministry using the discernment process established by the Denominational Council and overseen by the Regional Council.

### **PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Board gives order and direction to the Trustees who hold the property in trust for the UCC. Property matters include ensuring that the building and its contents are insured, authorizing the sale of the property, authorizing major renovations to or demolition of the property.

### **REPRESENTING THE COF TO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The Board contacts the Regional Council, on behalf of the COF, when the COF authorizes it to communicate with the Regional Council about:

- a) the pastoral relationship; or
- b) the sale or dissolution of assets, amalgamation, realignment, re-purposing or disbanding of the COF.

### **REPORTING**

The Board reports to the COF at least annually on

- a) the life and work of the COF; and
- b) the COF's financial situation, with details of all income, expenses, assets and liabilities.

### **RECORDS**

The Board is responsible for maintaining and keeping safe the following records:

- a) the current membership roll of the COF;
- b) the historic membership roll of the COF;
- c) the register of baptisms, marriages, and burials;
- d) approved meeting minutes and reports received at Board meetings; and
- e) approved minutes of Team meetings, including Trustees and all functioning teams within the governance structure of the church.

The above documents must be turned over, on a regular basis, to the UCC Provincial Archives located in Edmonton, Alberta.

### **SHARING REPORTS OF THE REGIONAL OR DENOMINATIONAL COUNCIL**

The Board must share with the COF reports and policy directives, for action, issued by the Regional Council and the Denominational Council.

### **COMPLETING STATISTICAL FORMS**

The Board must complete the Annual Community of Faith Statistical and Information forms, returning them, either electronically or in written format, to the Denominational Council by the date prescribed.

## **Meetings of the Board**

The Board must meet on at least a quarterly basis.

Board meetings must be called by the Chair or by a member of the OM. The person who calls the meeting is responsible for giving advance notice of the meeting, stating the purpose of the meeting and providing a prepared agenda.

Quorum – A Board meeting may take place or continue only if at least one-half of its members are present. Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.

In order for a Board meeting to take place, a member of the OM who has been called or appointed by the COF or a member of the OM who has been appointed by the Regional Council as the COF Supervisor must be present.

The Board may set procedures for conducting its meetings. In the absence of such procedures, *The Manual* and *Bourinot's Rules of Order* provide acceptable guidelines for the conduct of meetings.

## Committees and Teams

The COF and its Board fulfill their responsibilities with the assistance of duly appointed committees, teams, task groups, steering groups and any other cluster of lay people or OM personnel named by the Board.

The only committee deemed mandatory is the M&P Committee. Its responsibilities are described in *Bylaws B. Community of Faith, Section B.7.8.5, pages 72 and 73 of The Manual.*

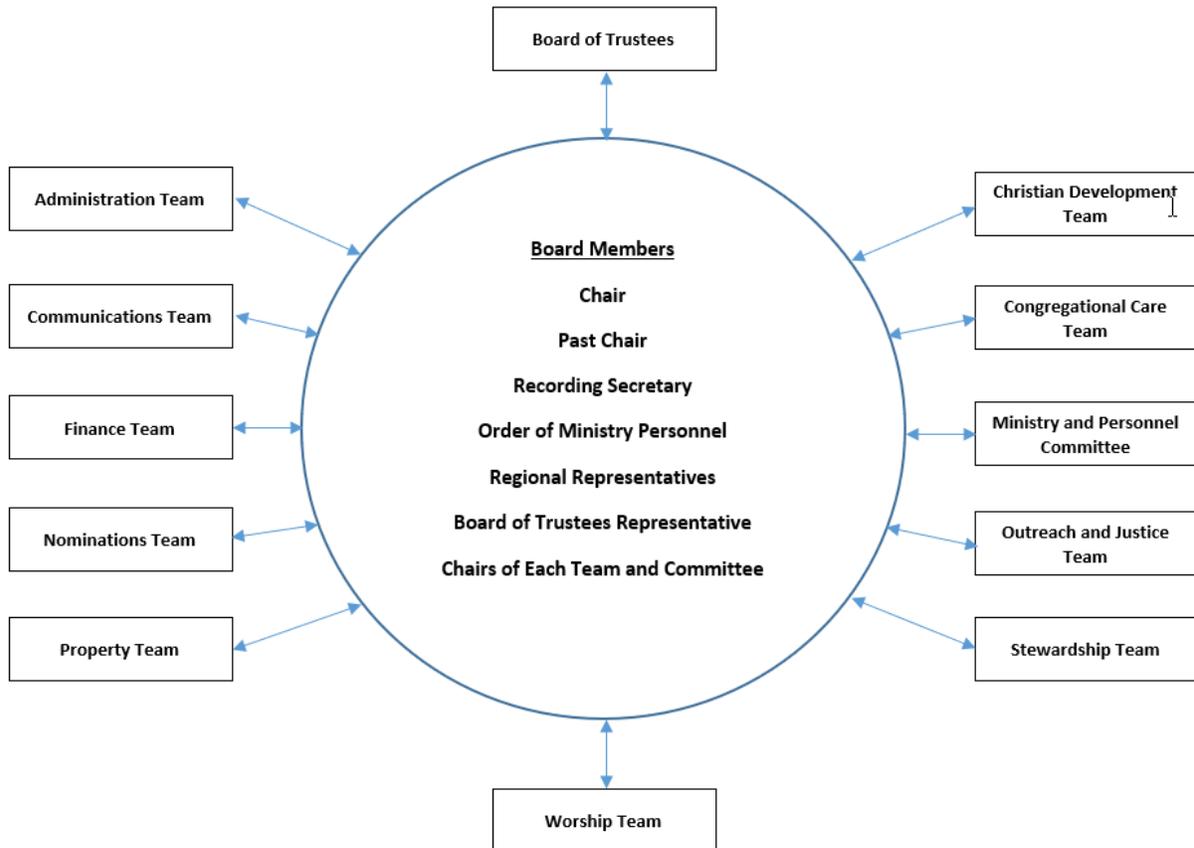
Also noted are three other areas of work which must be undertaken by the Board:

- a) Christian education – meeting the faith formation and Christian education needs of the COF.
- b) Stewardship
  - educating the COF on the mission of the United Church, both locally and in the wider church;
  - educating the COF on the funds required to sustain our mission and how those funds will be used;
  - encouraging commitment and participation from the COF in this mission; and
  - reviewing regularly the balance of funds given for local purposes and funds given for the Mission and Service Fund of the UCC.
- c) Nominations – recommending people who are eligible, suitable and willing to serve in positions deemed necessary by the COF and its Board to fulfill its vision, mission and values.



## Governance Structure

The following diagram illustrates Central's governance model, showing the Board organization in the centre circle and all the supporting teams and committee surrounding it:



**All Teams and Committees must carry out their duties in accordance with the Vision, Mission and Values of the COF (see Page 5).**

### **ADMINISTRATION TEAM**

The Administration Team is tasked with promoting operational efficiency, overseeing consistency in communication, both inside and outside of the COF, ensuring appropriate storage of information and caring for archival material. The Team serves as a connector between all sectors of the church, striving to bring order to all things administrative.

### **CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

The Christian Development Team is responsible for providing leadership, direction, encouragement and oversight for all Christian education/development programs conducted by Central. It is devoted to the Christian nurture, discipleship, faith development and leadership growth in all who call Central their faith home.

## **COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**

The Communications Team is tasked with sharing, through a multiplicity of channels and media platforms, the essence of who we are as a faith community and the work to which we have been called in God's name. Communication is an essential part of our work as a faith community; the vehicle by which we share the "good news" of God's love for the world. There are any number of communication channels that can be used to share our faith and ministry, but we are called, at all times, to a high standard of ethical conduct in the use of those channels and media platforms. Copyright infringement is subject to severe fines and consequences for a COF and must be upheld as rigorously as possible.

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM**

The Congregational Care Team offers compassionate concern, assistance, support, nurture and prayer to Central's COF and the wider community as need arises. The Team is responsible for oversight of all pastoral care offered by the church and works in collaboration with the Minister. The work of the Team involves connecting with people in the COF who are in crisis and offering support, informing the Minister of any special needs that are expressed and embracing all who are in need of our healing love. The Team also celebrates, in a multitude of ways, with those who call Central their spiritual home.

## **FINANCE TEAM**

The Finance Team performs functions that are crucial in the stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to Central by its members, adherents and rental groups, including disbursement of funds and preparation of the budget approved by the COF. It may also authorize borrowing funds for the COF. The Team is key to enabling Central to carry out its mission and plays an important role in ensuring Central's compliance with government legislation and with policies of the UCC. Other financial requirements are set out in *Bylaws Governing Congregational Life, Section G.4, page 125 of The Manual* which details responsibilities of the Finance Team.

## **MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The M&P Committee is the only mandated committee of the UCC. It is tasked with assisting all staff members of Central in their work, including the Minister of the COF. The Committee is involved with coordinating the hiring of non-ministerial staff and/or contract personnel and is responsible for human-resources related issues for all Central staff, as well as the administrative work that accompanies their employment. The Committee's goal is to create a safe, productive and enjoyable work environment that enables staff members to serve Central to their fullest potential. The Committee facilitates communication to promote stronger working relationships among the staff, the Minister, the Board and the Congregation.

Calling a new Minister remains the responsibility of the Board and the COF, working in collaboration with the Office of Vocations of the Regional Council.

## **NOMINATIONS TEAM**

The strength and vitality of Central's COF is maintained by ensuring a wide variety of volunteers are available to carry out the ministry and mission objectives established by the COF. The Nominations Team is responsible for discerning and assessing the gifts of congregational members and adherents, inviting them to serve in appropriate leadership roles on the Board as Team Chairs and ensuring that the names of potential candidates are brought to the congregation at its Annual Congregational Meeting.

## **OUTREACH AND JUSTICE TEAM**

Central operates on the "Imago Dei" principle, proclaiming that all people are made in the image of God and worthy of love. Adhering to that principle, the Outreach and Justice Team helps the COF respond to the call to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. The Team focuses on local, national and international projects and initiatives which address matters of social justice. It also focuses on issues surrounding addictions and their impact on the lives of the addicted and their families.

## **PROPERTY TEAM**

The Property Team is tasked with all maintenance and upgrade projects related to the operation of the church. The Team is responsible for ensuring the church property is safe, in good repair and able to accommodate the requirements of the COF and its user groups.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

The Regional Representatives (RR) provide official liaison between the Regional Council and the COF. Information is shared between the two bodies, including educational opportunities, as well as innovative and inspiring approaches to ministry. RR are elected by the COF at its Annual Congregational Meeting. The size of the congregation determines the number of RR who are eligible to serve.

## **STEWARDSHIP TEAM**

The Stewardship Team encourages members of the COF to offer their time, their talents and a portion of their financial resources to the ministry of the church in its service to God. The Team invites the COF to thoughtfully reflect and act upon the meaning of stewardship, both in the church and in their personal lives. The Team also reminds the community to act responsibly when using the earth's resources.

## **WORSHIP TEAM**

The Worship Team is responsible for providing deeply spiritual, scripturally centred, vibrant and relevant worship experiences that include the whole people of God. Through scripture, prayer, the Sacraments and music, the community of Central is invited into a deeper relationship with God, lived through the ministry of Jesus.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Trustees are legally appointed by the COF. In accordance with *The Manual*, no less than 3 or more than 15 members may comprise the Board of Trustees. Based on the Model Trust Deed, which was part of *The United Church of Canada Act*, at the time of Union in 1925, the Trustees hold the Congregational property in trust for the UCC. This includes land, buildings, funds, investments and any other kind of property. The Board of Trustees is a consultative body providing support to the Board and acting at the direction of the Board.

When buying, selling, leasing or renovating Central's property, Trustees must give written permission for such transactions to take place. Central then must cooperate with the Regional Council, within denominational guidelines, in the sale, purchase, lease or renovation to the property held in trust for the UCC by Central. The Regional Council cooperates with Central in this regard and in the distribution of any proceeds within denominational guidelines.

## **Organizations and Groups**

All organizations and user groups operating within the COF are accountable to the COF through its duly appointed Board.

## **GENERAL**

The Central Community of Faith adheres to the following Behavioural Covenant that embraces Holy Manners.

### **BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT**

*As the people of God, then, the holy people whom God loves,  
you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion,  
in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience.  
Bear with one another; forgive each other.*

*Colossians 3:12 and 13 (NRSV)*

This document reflects our core belief that our God is a good God, loving all of creation and loving each one of us as part of that creation. We are created in love and are called by God to love one another.

At the instruction of God, we are to clothe ourselves in compassion, generosity of heart, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing the burdens of each other and forgiving each other in times of hurt and conflict. With this in mind, the congregation of Central United Church (Central) commits itself to the following **Behavioural Covenant** which will govern our interactions in the congregation; on the Board; with our paid, accountable staff, including ministry personnel, salaried staff and contract staff; with our Celebrate Life Recovery ministry; with our volunteers and in all aspects of our shared life as a community of faith.

### **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

In all of our interactions in the church, we will remind ourselves that we are the people of God. When we gather for meetings, congregational functions, worship services and any other gatherings related to the ministry of Central, prayer, meditation or some other form of Christian spiritual practice will be included in our gathering time.

### **RESPECTFUL LISTENING AND SPEAKING**

We value the warmth and concern for others that is expressed in our community life at Central. In affirming that value, we will treat each other with respect and dignity, listening carefully to one another, responding with care and attention, knowing that wisdom comes to us through mutual respect and a determination to fully understand the perspectives of each other. We will refrain from personal, judgemental comments about others, seeking always to honour the Godliness in each person, respecting where each person is at in the journey of their life. However, we will not be reticent about naming inappropriate behaviour when it occurs, including gossip and triangulation, recognizing that grace, mercy and love must guide our actions.

We will seek to communicate with each other directly and respectfully. We will respect boundaries that we have set for ourselves and boundaries set by those with whom we are interacting.

This document recognizes there are many ways in which human beings interact and communicate with one another, including direct conversation, body language and gestures, written and digital communication methods that may include e-mails, Facebook, Twitter, Messenger and other social media platforms.

We also recognize that in all human interactions, messages are sent and messages are received. In this document, we stress that it is important for there to be reciprocal agreements in place to govern our interactions with one another; in other words, if a message is sent that is not welcome, the person receiving the message should indicate that such is the case, so that awareness is raised and, ultimately, all are able to participate comfortably in the life of the community.

We also reiterate in this document that unsigned or anonymous correspondence, letters, e-mails or social media correspondence will not warrant any effort at a response. If such communication contains threats to the personal safety of persons or the property of Central, appropriate action will be taken to immediately address the threat.

### **EMBRACING DIVERSITY**

We will honour diversity, as well as the breadth, depth and uniqueness of each person's perspective and life journey. We will create a space where it is safe to express opinions and ask questions, without an atmosphere of judgement or disapproval. We will create an environment where openness and transparency are considered normative for our work together. We recognize that all of us are vulnerable at times, with some more vulnerable than others, and have written Duty of Care Policy and Procedures to minimize power differentials that may exist in our faith community.

We also recognize the uniqueness of our Celebrate Life Recovery gathering and the gifts such a ministry brings. This ministry deepens our awareness of the vulnerability of the people who come to us in their recovery, compelling us to provide protection for them as part of our behavioural covenant.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

We acknowledge that conflict is a normal part of human relationships and organizations. We will resolve conflict guided by Matthew 18:15-17a

*If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church ...*

The conflict resolution model used for this document is also based on *The Dispute Resolution Handbook (October 2016) of The United Church of Canada*.

- a) In any conflict situation, all parties involved are encouraged to be open to change and deeper learning.
- b) When long term, unheard and unresolved conflicts are revealed, we will make every effort to deal with them in a timely and loving manner, invoking the conflict resolution protocols outlined in this document, but only if no further harm is done.
- c) We will engage directly with the individuals involved in a conflict situation.
- d) Every effort will be made to resolve concerns, disagreements or conflicts openly and transparently unless confidentiality is required to ensure the safety of the individuals involved.
- e) We acknowledge the potential for hurt and pain when conflict arises and commit to dealing with such situations in a timely and appropriate manner.
- f) We will not hesitate to access conflict resolution resources to deal with a conflict situation that is beyond our ability to resolve.
- g) We recognize that in some situations the nature of the conflict requires the intervention of legal authorities such as the police or courts of justice (e.g. child abuse, inappropriate sexual conduct). We will not hesitate to access these authorities and the wider courts of the United Church of Canada to assist in resolving such conflicts.
- h) We will accept responsibility for the work and decisions undertaken by our faith community at Central. We will support these decisions with grace and will not undermine or find fault with others when we are not in agreement with the outcome.
- i) We will direct our feedback to the appropriate person or decision-making group. We will offer forgiveness to one another when mistakes are made and feelings are hurt, recognizing forgiveness is often a long and difficult journey. We recognize forgiveness is sometimes unattainable and ultimately left in the hands of God.
- j) We will pray for one another and with one another as we seek to resolve conflicts.
- k) We will believe the best in each other and seek to conduct ourselves with humility and grace in all of our interactions with each other.
- l) We will communicate decisions directly, openly and in a timely manner to those most directly impacted by the conflict to ensure accountability and lessen conflict.
- m) When conflict cannot be resolved at the moment or in the situation from which it arises, we will set an agreed upon time to deal with the conflict, thereby lessening the possibility for increased conflict with a prolonged passage of time until resolution.
- n) If paid, accountable staff members are involved in an unresolved conflict situation with each other or the congregation, it may be brought to the M&P Committee

who, in turn, have the authority to bring the conflict to the Board or the wider courts of the church, as deemed necessary.

- o) Conflict situations that arise between congregational members that are unresolved may be brought to the Minister(s) of the pastoral charge who has access to wider resources for resolving conflict.

### **EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION**

We recognize that our work as a community of faith is often difficult and demanding. We will, therefore, express our appreciation to one another, in concrete and specific ways. We will speak words of love and thankfulness to one another for our shared life and the work we carry out in the name of Jesus.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT**

To ensure compliance with the covenant thus established, we will conclude each meeting or gathering with a “check in” time to review the Behavioural Covenant. We will offer mutual agreement when the covenant has been upheld. We will name those places where we have contravened, whether consciously or with unintended actions, the intentions of this covenant. If persons are non-compliant with the articles of this covenant, we will invite them to make amends. If non-compliance continues, we will use the conflict resolution process outlined above to resolve difficulties.

This document is a living document and can be changed or revised with the approval of the Board.

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## **APPENDIX: HOLY MANNERS**

The phrase “Holy Manners” comes from *Behavioural Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honouring Differences* by Gil Rendle. (An Alban Institute Publication, 1998)

Holy Manners are promises we make to each other that embrace shared expectations of the Christian behaviour we strive to offer each other. Practicing Holy Manners creates safety within the faith community. We are more likely to experience healthy relationships within the faith community and are better able to create or renew meaningful friendships.

As children of God, we strive to make the following Holy Manners a reality as God continues to fill us with love, recognizing as human beings there will be times when we fail to live up to our covenant promises. It is then that learning to forgive one another, even as we ask God to forgive us, is part of our commitment to Holy Manners.

In our shared life as a faith community, we recognize some among us are more vulnerable than others and that there are power differentials within a faith community. We have developed Duty of Care Policy and Procedures to deal with such power differentials.

We promise, to the best of our ability:

- To **love** one another, as God has loved us.
- To **respect** one another. Harassment in any form including but not limited to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual or sexual abuse will not be tolerated.
- To use **"I Statements"** that share our personal thoughts and discourage anonymous complaints.
- To **"step back"** in the midst of difficult issues to allow an opportunity for prayer and reflection.
- To **value** different ideas and opinions.
- To **manage** conflict in such a manner that there are no winners and losers but respected participants.
- To practise **forgiveness** in our interactions with each other.
- To demonstrate **patience** in every situation.
- To show **compassion** and **kindness** to everyone in need, recognizing that each one of us carries an inner life that is sometimes fragile, requiring care.
- To demonstrate **sensitivity** to another person's circumstances.

*Ratified by the Board of Central United Church March 25, 2018*

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The Central Community of Faith is also governed by its Duty of Care Policy and Procedures as well as numerous policy documents.

