

WHITEHORSE UNITED CHURCH

CONSTITUTION



This constitution was first approved at the Annual Financial Meeting of the congregation of Whitehorse United Church on January 20, 2002 and amended at the AGM of June 2014, and the AGM of June 5, 2022.

Most recent update approved at Annual General Meeting of the congregation on June 11, 2023.

Constitution Of Whitehorse United Church

Contents

1. Mission.....	3
2. The Congregation.....	3
2.1. Authority	3
2.2. Congregational Meetings	3
2.3. Elections	4
2.4. Term Of Office	4
2.5. Officers Of The Congregation	5
2.6. Board Of Trustees	5
3. The Church Council	6
3.1. Purpose	6
3.2. Duties.....	6
3.3. Composition And Working Of Council	7
3.4. Officers Of The Council	7
4. Committee Organisation	8
4.1. Membership.....	8
4.2. Structure.....	8
4.3. Responsibilities	9
5. Committees	9
5.1. Christian Growth Committee	9
5.2. Social Justice Committee (“WUC In The World”).....	10
5.3. Finance Committee	10
5.4. Ministry & Personnel Committee	11
5.5. Nominating Committee	12
5.6. Pastoral Care / Community Life Committee	12
5.7. Property Management Committee.....	13
5.8. Worship Committee.....	13
5.9. Special Gifts Committee.....	15
6. Other Matters	16
6.1. Signing Authority	16
6.2. Conflict Of Interest	16
6.3. Addressing Concerns, Complaints – Dispute Resolution Procedures	16

Constitution Of Whitehorse United Church

1. Mission

Mission Statement (*describes the purpose and defines our reasons for being*)

We are the United Church family in Whitehorse in the Yukon. Our purpose is to:

- celebrate Christ's life and presence in our midst
- minister to the needs of our Church family and community
- follow Christ's example in reaching out in love and friendship to all people
- show loving concern towards all of God's creation

Vision Statement (*desired future position*)

Grounded in the teachings of Jesus and open to the work of the Living Spirit of God, we will be an inclusive welcoming community of hope and faith. We will inspire through our worship. We will love and engage with our neighbours and work for reconciliation and social justice. Inspired by scripture, we feel compelled to play an important role in dealing with the climate emergency. We will provide people with fellowship and support along their spiritual journeys, as a place of learning for all ages. We will encourage those who are interested to become disciples of Christ. We will approach our future with flexibility, take risks, and try new ways to grow and flourish as a Christian community. And we will break bread together and sing!

2. The Congregation

2.1. *Authority*

The structure of the United Church of Canada is:

Congregation, Regional Council, and General Council.

The congregation elects the Council, which is responsible to the congregation, to make decisions on its behalf regarding the ongoing work of the congregation.

2.2. *Congregational Meetings*

An Annual Financial Meeting shall be held in January or February of each year to, among other things, approve the financial reports and the budget of Whitehorse United Church. A General Congregational Meeting shall be held in May or June of each year to, among other things, hear committee reports and elect the officers of the church. Special congregational meetings may be held at the call of the Chair of the congregation, in consultation with the Council; or, by ten individuals in full membership who shall submit their request for a meeting to the council in writing; or, by a representative of the Regional Council.

A quorum shall be the lesser of 20 persons or one third of the full members of the congregation. With the consent of full members of the Congregation present, voting privileges in temporal matters (as defined in the United Church of Canada Manual) may be extended to all adherents present.

2.3. *Elections*

The operations of Whitehorse United Church shall be conducted by individuals elected by the congregation. Full members of Whitehorse United Church are eligible for election. The positions to be elected are:

- Chair and Alternate Chair of the Congregation
- Secretary and Alternate Secretary of the Congregation
- Trustees - up to eight
- Regional Council Representatives - two
- Treasurer
- Council Members – up to eleven
- Special Gifts Committee Members – up to six

2.4. *Term Of Office*

All elected positions shall run from July 1st to June 30th.

- Chair and Alternate Chair of the Congregation – one year term, renewable indefinitely
- Secretary and Alternate Secretary of the Congregation – one year term, renewable indefinitely
- Trustees – one year term, renewable indefinitely
- Regional Council Representatives – one year term, renewable indefinitely
- Treasurer – one year term, renewable indefinitely
- Council Members will serve for a 1 year term, renewable for a maximum of three terms. Following a one year absence from Council, during which the individual may serve in any other capacity outside of Council, the member is again eligible for election to Council.
- Special Gifts Committee - one year term, renewable indefinitely

2.5. *Officers Of The Congregation*

Chair

The Chair or Alternate Chair will call and preside over all congregational meetings. The Chair and Alternate Chair may also serve in other positions but may not be the Chair of Council.

Secretary

The Secretary or Alternate Secretary will take the minutes of each meeting and prepare them for distribution to the congregation within four weeks. Distribution will be accomplished by email to the congregational list, posting them on the Whitehorse United Church website, and making hard copies upon request.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- keeping of the financial records of the church
- receipt of monies
- timely payment of all accounts and allocations, and
- the preparation of monthly and annual financial statements of operations for review by the Finance Committee and Council

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year. The treasurer shall be a member but not chair of the Finance Committee.

Regional Representatives

The current size of our congregation entitles election of two representatives to the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. The Regional Representatives shall attend the meetings of our Region, with the ministerial personnel. Following each meeting, the Representatives shall submit a report to Council

2.6. *Board Of Trustees*

Duties

The Board of Trustees shall carry out all duties and procedures prescribed for it in "The Manual of the United Church of Canada" and as further described in the UCC Trustees Handbook 2021. In summary:

- hold the property in trust on behalf of the United Church of Canada for the use of the congregation, and for the purposes approved by the congregation and/or Council, and for the support and maintenance of public worship :
- oversee construction and repair of buildings :

- sell, buy, mortgage, exchange, or lease the trust property, but only with the written consent of Regional Council, and in accordance with the provisions set down in the Manual :
- develop and implement policies for the investment and administration of trust funds:
- keep proper accounts and records of all its meetings and actions :
- receive funds from the congregation for the payment of principal and interest of any mortgage on church property;
- make plans for the retirement of any mortgages, to be submitted to the congregation for approval and implementation, and :
- notify Regional Council should the congregation cease to exist as an organized body, and to make such arrangements for the disposition of property as are necessary. The funds from such disposition will be used as Regional Council shall decide.
- attend Council meetings as requested by the Chair of Council

3. The Church Council

3.1. Purpose

Council is the coordinating body that keeps the work of Whitehorse United Church consistent with its mission. This is done by envisioning, planning and overseeing the work of Whitehorse United Church, within the framework of the United Church of Canada, as outlined in "The Manual of the United Church of Canada".

3.2. Duties

In summary, Council will oversee the work of the committees, and create special committees as the need arises:

- receive and judge petitions and appeals from members:
- transmit petitions and appeals to Regional Council:
- in accordance with the Manual, process applications from persons who believe they have a calling to Ministry:
- present an annual budget to the congregation for approval:
- review and approve recommendations from the Property Management Committee regarding guidelines and fees for the use of church facilities by congregational and outside groups:

- review and approve recommendations from the Ministry and Personnel Committee related to the recruitment, selection and replacement of non-ministerial staff:
- review and approve recommendations from the Worship Committee related to the church musician contract, and:
- to initiate and coordinate the process for seeking a Minister when needed
- attend to all matters affecting the congregation not assigned to or carried out by any of the other committees.

3.3. *Composition And Working Of Council*

Council shall consist of the following voting members:

- up to 11 members elected at large by the congregation, three of whom may be active adherents
- the ministry personnel
- the Regional Council Representative(s)
- the Treasurer

Council shall choose its chair from amongst the full members elected at large; and the secretary from amongst the members elected at large.

Council shall normally meet monthly, and no fewer than 10 times per year. Special meetings of Council can be called by the Chair in consultation with the Minister provided that notice has been provided to the Council members on two consecutive Sundays.

The Committee Chairs will submit a report on the committees' activities and may make recommendations to Council in advance of the Council meeting. Committee Chairs can request to attend Council Meetings, or attend at the request of Council.

A quorum shall be one half of the voting members and must include either the Minister (settled or appointed to the congregation) or a person appointed by Regional Council.

3.4. *Officers Of The Council*

Chair

In consultation with the minister, the Chair shall call Council meetings and preside over them. In the event of the Chair's absence, the Council will choose a temporary chair to preside for that meeting only. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Secretary

The Secretary shall record the minutes and the incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Council. The Secretary shall notify members of all meetings, distribute minutes (including a copy to the church office and each Committee Chair) within 2 weeks of the meeting date, send other correspondence as directed by the Council, and maintain the roll of the Council.

4. Committee Organisation

4.1. *Membership*

Any person who is involved in the life and work of the congregation is eligible to be a member of any committee except the Ministry & Personnel Committee, which requires full membership in Whitehorse United Church. Candidates for committees shall be solicited by the Chairs of Committees, Nominating Committee, or may volunteer independently. A committee has the power to add members as it sees fit, and such people will have voting rights within the committee. Committee members' names shall be submitted to Council annually. A committee may set up ad hoc sub-committees, which are responsible to that committee. Every effort should be made to have in the membership of each committee a broad representation of the whole congregation. The minister is ex officio a member of every committee, except the Ministry & Personnel Committee. It is recommended that each committee shall have a minimum of 5 members.

4.2. *Structure*

Committees shall elect annually, following the Annual General Meeting, a chair from amongst themselves.

The Chair shall call regular meetings and preside over them. The Chair shall retain her/his position until the first meeting following June 30th, at which time he/she shall call the committee together and it will choose its new chair. The name of the new chair shall immediately be communicated to the Chair of Council and the Church office.

The Committee shall keep a record of its decisions and activities and submit a copy of the record to Council monthly.

Committees are free to set their own frequency of meetings, so long as their tasks are being accomplished and there is no lack of communication within or outside the Committee. Regular monthly meetings are recommended.

Each Committee shall establish a workable quorum for itself.

4.3. *Responsibilities*

Each Committee is responsible for carrying out the duties listed in this Constitution, as well as any directions given to it by Council.

All Committees are responsible for submitting an annual budget to the Finance Committee. Any proposed expenses in excess of the approved budget for that committee must be presented to Council, through the Finance Committee, for approval.

Each Committee shall prepare a report for the Annual Report, and is encouraged to communicate its activities through the church newsletters.

5. Committees

5.1. *Christian Growth Committee*

Goal:

To deepen and nurture the Christian spiritual commitment of our church members and adherents by offering opportunities for learning and growth.

Duties:

- identify and assess the needs of the congregation and establish realistic goals to develop programs to meet those needs:
- promote, guide, encourage and support Christian fellowship and program groups of the congregation. This includes congregation-wide activities and small special interest groups:
- promote opportunities for leadership training to foster spiritual growth and commitment:
- oversee the process of selecting curriculum materials for the Sunday School and other groups:
- arrange for programs of preparation for candidates for baptism, confirmation (renewal of baptismal faith), marriage, membership by transfer or by reaffirmation of faith:
- provide materials and equipment to support the various groups of the congregation:
- encourage and oversee the development, use and maintenance of the church resource centre (library).

5.2. *Social Justice Committee (“WUC In The World”)*

Duties:

- inform the congregation regarding the social issues and mission activities of the Whitehorse United Church locally, United Church of Canada nationally and worldwide, and promote the use of related materials :
- liaise with agencies, groups and congregations serving local community needs, and encourage congregational involvement where appropriate:
- initiate, organize and promote regular and special appeals within the committee’s mandate, in co-operation with the Finance Committee.

5.3. *Finance Committee*

Goal:

To manage the church’s financial resources to effectively fulfill the mission of the church.

Duties:

- oversee the financial planning and management of the church funds:
- ensure that financial resources are available for the ongoing growth of the church:
- ensure that ongoing monitoring is in place to meet the financial needs of the church:
- increase Mission & Service givings as overall givings increase:
- set goals for fund-raising activities in conjunction with Council as are deemed appropriate to help maintain the church and to keep it financially viable :
- maintain total offering (Operating, Maintenance, Mission and Service and Special Funds) at the level needed to meet church goals :
- encourage gifts to the church, including testamentary or intervivos gifts and regular offerings:
- work with other committees to hold events that gather our time, talents and treasures for the church:
- give support to community events being held in our church that enhance achievement of the church’s goals:
- complete financial planning including communicating with all committees to gather the information needed for budget forum purposes:
- prepare and present to Council the annual budget based on objectives which reflect the needs and activities of all committees:

- coordinate the counting and banking of Sunday offerings each week:
- purchase insurance in co-operation with the Board of Trustees:
- oversee the preparation and distribution of givings statements to contributors, the final statement being the official receipt for income tax purposes:
- coordinate the implementation of fundraising events in conjunction with Council.

5.4. *Ministry & Personnel Committee*

Goal:

To be a caring model employer

Duties:

- to initiate and coordinate the process for seeking a Minister when needed;
- to employ administrative staff and other full time or part time contracted personnel, as directed by Council, in accordance with the provisions of the United Church of Canada Manual.
- to review responsibilities and roles with staff as required (at least annually)
- to review and evaluate annually the effectiveness of the staff in the performance of their duties in accordance with the United Church of Canada Manual (section 244) and the Ministry and Personnel Handbook;
- to review and evaluate staff salaries, travel allowances, working conditions and all other employment practices, and make recommendations to Council
- to revise position descriptions of staff as needed.
- to oversee the relationship among and between different church staff members with respect to their responsibilities and authority :
- to act as liaison between staff members and the congregation on general administrative matters and relationships :
- to be an effective channel for members of the congregation to express their feelings on matters relating to Whitehorse United Church staff.
- to consult with all staff members about their plans for continuing education and ensure that those eligible avail themselves of the provisions for continuing education, and that time and money are made available :
- to maintain a close liaison with the Pastoral Relations Committee of Presbytery :
- to provide a report of the Committee's activities and any recommendations to regular meetings of the Council.

5.5. *Nominating Committee*

Goal:

To become aware of the skills and talents of the people in the congregation as potential participants in leadership.

Membership shall be comprised of minimally (i.e. not limited to) the immediate past chair of council, the immediate past chair of the congregation, the serving ministry personnel, and a representative from Christian Growth.

Duties:

- solicit candidates for election to office and provide the list of candidates to Council.
- present the names of candidates at the Annual General Meeting.
- assist with seeking volunteers to serve on Committees when requested to do so by the Committee Chair

5.6. *Pastoral Care / Community Life Committee*

Goal:

To provide loving care and support for the family of Whitehorse United Church as Christ has called us to do.

Duties:

Care and support are provided by members of the committee in the following ways:

- Hospital visitation as required
- Visiting Personal Care homes (minimum 2 times per month)
- Visiting house-bound individuals (by phone or in person minimum once per month)
- Keep in contact with students away at school
- Maintaining a Prayer Web
- Attempt to provide transportation to Worship to those who require it
- Provide follow up visits to newlyweds and the newly baptized
- Take part in Baptism Preparation

Training for members of this committee will be provided on an as-needed ongoing basis.

5.7. *Property Management Committee*

Goal:

To manage the church's physical resources to effectively fulfill the mission of the church.

All decisions affecting the real property of the church are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Membership:

In addition to other members, this committee shall include:

- a representative of the Board of Trustees
- the Church Administrator shall be an ex-officio member.

Duties:

- co-ordinate the maintenance, renovations and improvements of the land, buildings and contents of all church properties:
- consult with congregation on the preparation and maintenance of a long-range plan for major renovations, improvements, and replacement projects:
- develop policies for Council's approval regarding the use of church facilities:
- develop and manage an annual operating and maintenance, and capital budget for the church facilities:
- ensure that appropriate insurance is maintained on church facilities, with Trustees:
- coordinate the use of church facilities by congregational groups and outside organizations:
- maintain a registry of the use of church facilities, guidelines and fees:
- oversee janitorial duties in church properties:
- maintain the sound and audio-visual system.

5.8. *Worship Committee*

Goals:

- to foster worship policies and practices within the traditions and visions of the United Church of Canada and appropriate to the diverse and ever changing needs of the community of faith centred in the Whitehorse congregation.
- to sustain celebratory worship that is life giving and life forming.

- to promote spiritual growth of individuals and of the worshipping community that is respectful of individuals and of the community of faith centred in the Whitehorse congregation.
- to promote worship reflective of inclusivity, wide participation, understanding, and inspiration.

Duties:

The worship committee works in conjunction with the ministerial staff in carrying out their duties as follows:

- yearly, as required: establish, revise and maintain congregational worship policies and practices, including policies for weddings, funerals, baptisms, communion, and other services:
- yearly or by season: establish and publish the liturgical calendar to be used in each church year taking into account the liturgical season, the secular calendar, the natural seasons, and significant local and world events:
- recruit, train, and support worship leaders, scripture readers, and musicians; appoint and commission music leaders and other lay leaders as required:
- evaluate worship services and practices. Use evaluation as a means of developing depth and understanding of worship. Devise and implement feedback mechanisms to involve congregation members in evaluation:
- ensure appropriate worship service leadership at all times, including when the Minister is away:
- explore various forms of spiritual celebration, ecumenical worship, and community spiritual gathering, with the aim of enriching congregational and community engagement:
- recruit and organize sextons (persons responsible for the physical preparation of the church for worship services):
- recruit and organize greeters (persons responsible for greeting congregants to worship services, and providing refreshments following regular Sunday services):
- assume responsibility for physical elements required for worship services, including decoration, art, and ambience, with support from other committees and Greeters/Sextons as required:
- annually, review contracts under its purview and make recommendations to Council.

5.9. *Special Gifts Committee*

Goal:

To promote and administer bequests and gifts to the church's ongoing work, made outside the regular donations.

Duties:

- Oversee the investment and management of the special gifts fund
- Review projects as requested by a donor or by members or adherents of Whitehorse United Church and approve if appropriate
- Maintain a memorial register to commemorate donors
- Promote and consult on planned giving
- Maintain a list of possible items and projects to sponsor
- Regularly inform Council and the congregation of its activities

(Please refer to the Committee's terms of reference and operations for more details)

6. Other Matters

6.1. *Signing Authority*

All cheques and negotiable instruments shall be signed by any two of the following:

- the Treasurer, or
- the Chair of Council, or
- the Vice-Chair of Council, or
- the Secretary of Council, or
- the Chair of the Finance Committee, or
- any other individuals designated by Council as having signing authority.

Contracts, documents, or any instrument in writing requiring the signature of a representative of the congregation, except those required to be dealt with by the Trustees, shall be signed by the Secretary of Council, after a vote of Council authorizing the signature.

6.2. *Conflict Of Interest*

A 'conflict of interest' is defined as a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest sufficient to influence, or appear to influence, the objective exercise of his or her official duties.

Everyone performing an official duty as a member of Council, a committee, Board of Trustees, or in a similar capacity, has an obligation to avoid conflict of interest situations where possible; and, a responsibility to disclose a conflict of interest, or a perceived conflict of interest, when the situation arises.

No one shall vote on any issue on which he/she has a conflict of interest.

6.3. *Addressing Concerns, Complaints – Dispute Resolution Procedures*

When needed, dispute resolution procedures will be used as mandated by Pacific Mountain Regional Council.