**A Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support**

**Between**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(community of faith)***

**and**

**Horseshoe Falls Regional Council**

**Preamble:**

The communities of faith and Regional Council of Horseshoe Falls share ministry in mutual respect as part of The United Church of Canada. Together we celebrate God’s presence, seek justice, and love and serve others. A covenantal relationship, intentionally and willingly entered into by a community of faith with the Regional Council, is an important symbol of our commitment to one another.

 “Covenant” is a term with deep roots in the Christian tradition. In scripture it is frequently used to describe a relationship. For example the covenant at Sinai joined God and the people together in an expression of gratitude and mutual commitment with the Ten Commandments serving as the foundation for their relationship with God and one another. In Jesus, we are given a “new covenant” to love one another as we are loved by Christ. And in our personal relationships, marriage is a covenant that draws two people together into a partnership based on love, mutual respect and promises to care for one another.

This covenant between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, is an expression of our gratitude and commitment to one another, promises to share the ministry entrusted to us as members of The United Church of Canada, and our gratitude for the gifts we have been given by God for this work.

**Regional Council**

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a regional council as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks with a commitment to holding and encouraging communities of faith. In keeping with this commitment, the regional council will

* *make decisions concerning communities of faith with, not for, the community of faith*
* *offer staff resources to assist communities of faith in strengthening their understanding of themselves and to equip them to be partners in God’s mission;*
* *ensure that sources of funds are widely known throughout the regional council;*
* *serve as a connection with mission partners in other denominations and faiths for mission projects on a regional, national, or international level;*
* *encourage the development and ongoing activities of local clusters of communities of faith and of networks that lift up different aspects of the life of The United Church;*
* *enable access to specialized technical and professional services from the staff of the denominational council if such services are beyond the knowledge of the regional council staff;*

**Community of Faith**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of community of faith) covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a community of faith as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of community of faith) will…

* review and update their Living Faith Story and assess their ministry annually;*;*
* respect and follow the policies set out by the regional council;
* recognize that all property (real and personal) is held in trust for the ministry of The United Church of Canada and to act accordingly in partnership with the regional council according to the Model Trust Deed
* Participate in the work of Antler River Watershed Region by electing representatives to the Region, sharing information about the Region with their community, and supporting the Region with prayer and engagement with Regional ministries.

**Symbols:**

Just as the bread and cup, or a wedding ring, are familiar symbols of covenant, our relationship is also represented with tangible symbols of our promises to one another.

The following symbols represent the spirit in which the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council enters this covenant:

**The Bible**: to ground our relationship and ministries in scripture and the

teachings of Jesus

**Basin and Towel**: to serve in practical ways with respect, compassion and love.

**Loaf and Cup**: to remember our unity as the church, the body of Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (community of faith) names these symbols that represent the spirit with which they enter this relationship:

*
*

**Care for the Covenantal Relationship**

Both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (community of faith) and Horseshoe Falls Regional Council commit to working together in positive ways. We commit to a code of conduct that is uplifting and supportive and all take responsibility to stand against bullying and harassment.

We all recognize that there may be times when through misunderstanding, inattention, or poor judgement we may cause harm to the covenant between us. In such moments, we commit to drawing closer even when tempted to create distance and to seeking ways to restore our relationship drawing on whatever resources might help with that until we reach agreement on the way forward. And remembering that at all times we are held together in the love and grace of God.

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (community of faith)

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On behalf of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council