



**HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL  
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

***Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith***

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December, 2020

To: The Governing Body of Your Community of Faith

Greetings on behalf of the Horseshoe Falls Covenant Commission.

Recognizing that this has been a year like no other, we want to thank you for everything you have been doing to continue your ministry. We especially want to thank ministry personnel, staff and volunteers for your creativity, dedication, leadership and willingness to embrace new technology, new ideas and new ways of being the church. Please remember that the covenant commission is here to support you as you live out your ministry.

Despite the pandemic, the work of the church continues, and that includes such tasks as filing a 2019 charity return. CRA has set the new deadline as December 31, 2020. Please ensure this is completed to avoid losing your charitable status. Other tasks included creating an annual report and holding an annual meeting. Despite being unable to gather in person in large numbers, communities of faith are finding ways to hold congregational meetings and continue to make decisions, and your commitment to the ministry you share is inspiring.

The General Council Executive recently approved the following pandemic related changes for annual meetings and budgets in 2021. This is with the understanding that if possible it is still recommended that a congregation hold an annual meeting and have the budget approved by the congregation. For those congregations unable to hold meetings safely, these new provisions will apply:

- a) extend the temporary amendments to pastoral relations policies that were originally adopted in April, 2020;*
- b) temporarily suspend the requirement in section B.5.1 of The Manual for congregations or pastoral charges to hold an annual meeting; and*
- c) temporarily amend the responsibility of the congregation or pastoral charge to make a decision on their annual draft budget by allowing the governing body of the congregation or pastoral charge to fulfil this responsibility where necessary, Each of the foregoing to be in effect until June 30, 2021.*

More information is available of the UCC website Faith Communities and Covid-19 page.

We also recognize that creating a budget will be challenging this year as so much remains unknown. Communities of faith are encouraged to do their best and to be clear about the assumptions being made, for example when in person worship might resume, or rental income be available, so that everyone understands how the budget was created. Simply do the best you can. For more information on creating a budget for 2021 check out the recorded United-in-Learning webinar “Congregational Finances During the Pandemic, November 25, 2020” on the United-in-Learning webpage.

In this package you will find suggestions that may be helpful as you create your annual report and plan your annual meeting in the coming year. Please share this information with your ministry personnel and the governing body of your congregation. We have also included information regarding the annual self-assessment, profile and living faith story that all communities of faith are asked to complete. Due to the uncertainty of Covid-19, and the different schedules congregations follow for annual meetings, there is no set date when these items are required. Please send a digital copy as soon as they are completed to Lynne Allin, Minister, Congregational Support and Mission [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca) . If you have not yet begun work on your profile and living faith story, we hope that you will take time for discussion and prayerful reflection as you discern your strengths, challenges and ministry priorities.

Most of all, we pray that you will be safe and well. Thank you for all you do.

Peace be with you.

Rev. Adrienne Robertson  
Chair, HF Covenant Commission

# Covid-19 Information Update

Please share this with your governing body – most information is shared by our online newsletter – please subscribe to it from the website at [www.hfrcucc.ca](http://www.hfrcucc.ca).

## Congregational Meetings:

On November 26 2020, the Sub-Executive of General Council approved the following, effective immediately. These remain in place until 30 June 2021, subject to earlier cancellation or further extension by decision of the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council:

### **GS 81 Extension of Temporary Amendment of Bylaws re: Pastoral Relations; Temporary Amendment re: Congregational Annual Meeting**

The General Secretary recommends:

That the Sub-Executive of the General Council:

1. extend the temporary amendments to pastoral relations policies that were originally adopted in April, 2020; (*allowing governing bodies to make pastoral relations decisions if a congregational meeting is not possible*)
2. temporarily suspend the requirement in section B.5.1 of The Manual for congregations or pastoral charges to hold an annual meeting; and
3. temporarily amend the responsibility of the congregation or pastoral charge to make a decision on their annual draft budget by allowing the governing body of the congregation or pastoral charge to fulfil this responsibility where necessary, and where permitted by the regional council;

with each of the foregoing to be in effect until June 30, 2021, subject to earlier cancellation or further extension by decision of the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council.

## Use of Restricted Funds

The Covenant Commission has extended approval for communities of faith to use investment funds previously restricted by presbytery or regional council in order to meet payroll or insurance expenses if needed due to the impact of Covid-19. This approval is in effect until June 30, 2021. If your congregation uses these funds, please complete the reporting form available on the website and send it to [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)

## Pre-approval for the Canada Emergency Business Account Loan (CEBA)

The Covenant Commission has given approval to all communities of faith to apply for the federal government CEBA loan, if directed by to do so by their governing body. If your application is approved by the bank, please complete the reporting form available on the website and send it to [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)

## Resources

More information related to doing ministry in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic can be found on the regional council website and The United Church of Canada website.

# Annual Reports Best Practices

Each year congregations are faced with the task of compiling their annual report for the previous year. While each community of faith will have its own presentation style, there are some best practices that will ensure the annual report is complete and easy to read.

## Contents:

Please ensure your annual report includes:

1. Table of Contents
2. Report from the Board of Trustees including property insurance details and report on investments
3. Financial report for the community of faith including income and expenses
4. Financial report from any groups which manage funds on behalf of the congregation, for example a youth group, special interest group, UCW, AOTS, social group, choir etc.
5. Operating budget for the coming year
6. Financial report for special projects such as a capital campaign
7. Mission and Service givings report
8. Audit/Review
9. Membership report showing the change in membership numbers, number of deaths, baptisms, weddings, and communion services. The number of adherents can also be reported.
10. List of current members on the governing body and trustees. Include dates if they have been elected for more than one year.
11. Nominating report for the coming year
12. Minister/Pastoral Charge Supervisor's Report
13. Other reports you may wish to include

## Other Considerations:

- Ensure that the annual report does not reveal personal information, such as phone numbers and email addresses unless you have obtained permission.
- A narrative budget may be a helpful way to discuss finances
- Is the tone of the annual report consistent? How does it tell the story of your ministry over the past year?
- Send a digital copy of the Annual Report to the Covenant Commission [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)

# Annual Meeting Best Practices

## Purpose

At the annual meeting, the congregation or pastoral charge is responsible for:

- a) electing a chair and a secretary for the annual meeting;
- b) receiving the annual reports from the governing body, committees, and other groups in the congregation or pastoral charge;
- c) electing the governing body, regional council representatives, and members of the committees; and
- d) considering, and making, a decision on the draft annual budget. (Manual 2019)

## Before the Meeting

- Ensure that notice of the meeting is read in worship for two Sundays before the date of the meeting. The meeting can be held the on the next day (Monday) or any time after that. If you are not meeting in person due to covid-19 you can hold the meeting electronically or by phone. Notice should be given by email, phone or in writing as needed. The minutes shall record how notice was given. The same time requirements apply for giving notice. (Manual 2019)
- Provide copies of the annual report for review before the meeting.
- Provide an agenda and copies of the minutes from the previous annual meeting for review before the meeting. These may be included in the annual report.
- Whenever possible provide copies of other material being approved at the annual meeting for review by the congregation in advance. For example, the profile worksheets and living faith story
- Have a list of members and adherents available. *An adherent of a congregation is a person who contributes regularly to the life and work of the congregation but is not a member or full member. The governing body is responsible for deciding who is an adherent.* (The Manual 2019 B.3.4)

## Quorum:

- a) for congregations or pastoral charges with 100 or more full members, at least 20 full members must be present;
- b) for congregations or pastoral charges with between 30 and 99 full members, at least 10 full members must be present; and
- c) for congregations or pastoral charges with fewer than 30 full members, at least 1/3 of the full membership must be present. (Manual 2019 B.5.5)

Note: It may be helpful to have a copy of the historic roll available if there is a question regarding membership, and a list of adherents.

## Basic Rules of Order

1. A motion is put forward by a member or adherent (if voting privileges have been extended).
2. The chair asks for someone to second the motion.
3. The motion is then open for discussion, and all comments are in reference to the motion. During discussion “friendly amendments” can be made with the agreement of the mover and seconder.
4. Following discussion the chair calls the vote by asking for a show of hands from those who are a) in favour b) opposed c) abstaining.
5. If a secret ballot is requested it must be provided
6. In the case of a tie, the chair casts the deciding vote. The chair would generally vote against the motion i.e. against change and in favour of the status quo, based on the fact that there is not enough support for a change.

## Agenda

It is helpful to have a written agenda. The following is a sample template for use at an annual meeting with some additional information provided in brackets.\*

1. Welcome, territorial acknowledgement, opening prayer	Pre-arrange with minister or other person to do this
2. Constitution of the Annual Congregational Meeting	Meeting is called to order
3. Election of a Chair and Secretary for the meeting.	Those elected as congregational chair and secretary may fill these rolls at all congregational meetings throughout the year. This is not the same as the chair and secretary of the governing body
4. Motion to allow adherents to vote	Members can vote to extend voting privileges to adherents for all matters. It is helpful to have a list of adherents who have been recognized as such by the governing body
5. Review of Holy Manners	Reminder to speak and listen with open hearts and minds and to treat one another with respect.
6. Approval of the Agenda	Any additions may be made before approval.
7. Approval of Minutes	This includes the previous annual meeting and any other <u>congregational</u> meeting held during the year.
8. Approval of Annual Reports	This includes the reports included in the Annual report with the exception of Finance and nominating reports as these are dealt with separately.
9. Approval of Finance Committee Report	Review and approve the financial report for the year.
10. Approval of Proposed Budget	

11. Report of the Financial Review Committee	Approve the report of those who reviewed the financial report or auditors if a full audit was conducted
12. Nominations Committee Report for open positions on the governing body, followed by the election of officers to these positions. This may be done individually or as a slate.	After the report is presented, a request is made for further nominations from the floor. If the congregation has set terms for various positions then it is helpful to provide a list of those who are not up for re-election.
13. Appointing Trustees	If there is a need for an additional trustee or if the congregation has set the term of office for trustees at 1 year then they may be appointed at this meeting
14. Ministry Personnel Appointments	If ministry personnel are on appointment rather than a call, the congregation can pass a motion to renew the appointment for a set period of time.
15. Profile and Living Faith Story	It is expected that the profile and living faith story be updated and approved annually by the congregation. The annual meeting may be an opportunity to do so.
16. New Business	Opportunity for people to raise questions, ideas, proposals etc.
17. Motion to Adjourn	

\* Based on the "Annual Meeting Agenda Helper" by Rev. Brad Morrison

## After the Annual Meeting

1. Send a digital copy of the Annual Report to the regional Council covenant commission by emailing it to [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)
2. Ensure the minutes are written up and stored safely for approval at the next annual meeting.
3. Update signing authority at the bank, on investments and with Canada Revenue if necessary.
4. Send an updated and approved copy of the profile worksheets and living faith story to the covenant commission by emailing it to [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)
5. Save a copy of the annual report, profile worksheets and living faith story on your ChurchHub account.
6. Update contact information on your ChurchHub account as needed.
7. Arrange for training for new members of the M&P committee (optional, but recommended)
8. Update appointment forms based on decisions to re-appoint ministry personnel. If the decision was made not to re-appoint ministry personnel, contact Diane Blanchard, Minister for Pastoral Relations regarding next steps. [Dbianchard@united-church.ca](mailto:Dbianchard@united-church.ca)

# Your Profile and Living Faith Story

## What is it?

- A discernment tool for helping communities of faith identify trends, strengths, challenges and ministry priorities
- A requirement for any proposal that requires approval by regional council
- A requirement for declaring a vacancy
- Part of the required annual self-assessment of the community of faith (Manual 2019 I.1.4)
- The purpose of the community of faith profile is to
  - a) articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel
  - b) articulate the ministry needs of the community of faith
  - c) summarize the community of faith's resources and community context

(Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile)

## Who Completes it?

- The governing body is responsible for preparing the profile, including the living faith story. They can choose to delegate this work to an ad hoc committee. Normally the profile and living faith story is approved by the congregation, however during the Covid-19 pandemic, the governing body may approve it if necessary.
- All communities of faith are required to complete the profile worksheets and living faith story and submit a digital copy to the covenant commission by emailing LAllin@united-church.ca
- At this time all communities of faith that have been without ministry personnel for two years or longer must complete this work by June 31, 2021 and send a copy to the covenant commission for review.

## Resources

Copies of the handbook and profile worksheets can be found on the regional website under "Congregational Support Toolkit #2. For more information contact Lynne Allin, Minister, Congregational Support and Mission LAllin@united-church.ca

# Annual Self-Assessment

## What is it?

Under the new structure of the United Church of Canada, communities of faith are required to complete an annual self-assessment each year for review by the regional council. This process is set out in the Manual 2019 as follows:

G.1.2.2 Regular Self-Assessments Congregations and other communities of faith are responsible for doing self-assessments of their ministry regularly. They must reflect on their understanding of their identity and their community context. They may consider

- a) their accomplishments;
- b) the present opportunities and challenges; and
- c) the resources required for meeting those opportunities and challenges.

They must file a report of the self-assessment with the regional council. The regional council participates as a partner in this review, offering resources and support from the wider church.

In your region, the self-assessment includes the annual report, profile and living faith story and the self-assessment checklist. Congregations may also choose to send additional information. All items are to be sent to the Minister, Congregational Support and Mission for review by the covenant commission. [LAllin@united-church.ca](mailto:LAllin@united-church.ca)

**Annual Report** As approved at the annual meeting. See the information provided for best practices in preparing your annual report.

**Profile and Living Faith Story** Communities of faith are to update their profile and living faith story annually and have it approved by their congregation. During Covid-19 it is acceptable to have it approved by the governing body, with the expectation that they have sought input and feedback from the congregation. Resources and worksheets are available on the regional council webpage under “Congregational Support Toolkits #2. If your community of faith has not yet completed this process, please make it a goal for 2021.

**Self-Assessment Checklist** The self-assessment checklist has been developed to help communities of faith carry out the responsibility of performing an annual self-assessment. It provides a list of policies and practices required by provincial/federal law and the United Church of Canada. It also serves as a reminder of the responsibilities shared by the community of faith. If there are several items on the checklist that need to be addressed, **Don't Panic!** Instead make a plan to address the ones of highest priority in the coming year. Report on the checklist which items the congregation will be working on. The checklist can be found on the regional council webpage under “Congregational Support Toolkits #7.