

A Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support Between

And

The Canadian Shield Regional Council of The United Church of Canada

And

God

The Manual (2021)

B.1.3 Covenantal Relationship

B.1.3.1 Terms of Covenant

A community of faith is recognized by the regional council through a covenantal relationship with the regional council. The community of faith and the regional council have the flexibility to negotiate and create a covenant that is responsive to the contextual reality of the community of faith and its unique needs and challenges.

The terms of the covenant include:

- a) The governance requirements for the community of faith in these bylaws;
- b) Any applicable policies set by the General Council; and
- c) Any other terms that the community of faith and the regional council may agree to include within denominational policies.

B.1.3.2 Changes to the Covenant

The terms of the covenant may be changed from time to time within denominational policies with the agreement of the community of faith and the regional council.

Preamble:

The communities of faith and the Canadian Shield Regional Council 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 the Canadian Shield 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

Canadian Shield 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 engaging with the Spirit to inspire, connect and empower 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;*
- *Remind our communities of faith of our commitment as the Canadian Shield Regional Council to being a part of Affirm United. To encourage respectful treatment and inclusion of all LGBTQTS+ people.*

- *Encourage our communities of faith and our regional bodies to be committed to living into right relations with Indigenous peoples.*
- *Encourage our communities of faith and our regional bodies to work with our denomination's intention to become an anti-racist organization.*

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 with a commitment to...

(Insert Mission Statement here)

In keeping with this commitment, the 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 the Canadian Shield 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.

Care for the Covenantal Relationship

Both _____ and the Canadian Shield_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 _____
(Name) (community of faith)

(Name) On behalf of the Canadian Shield Regional Council