

# Squamish United Church Constitution

Adopted November 15, 2020

Effective November 15, 2020

## A. Context and Preamble

1. Squamish United Church is a congregation within The United Church of Canada; it is part of the Pacific Mountain Region.
  
2. Brief History:
  - a. **1927** The Squamish Presbyterian Church became the Squamish United Church (SUC) following the Union in 1925 of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches.
  - b. **1963** The church had been growing and thriving as a family church and the congregation took on a building commitment to build a Christian Education Centre. The CE Centre served as the church sanctuary, and the plan was to build a church at a later date.
  - c. **2012** Worship was still in the aging CE Centre and the congregation committed to another building project. A partnership with Sea to Sky Community Services Society (SSCS) was formed, to jointly build Centrepont. Each organization raised their own funds for their own part of the building. A third partner, BC Housing came on board to build 32 units of affordable housing for individuals/families.
  - d. **2017** Centrepont was completed and SSCS and SUC took occupancy in October. SUC owned 5 city lots and gifted these lots to SSCS. SUC built a sanctuary and SSCS built offices, a preschool, boardrooms, other work spaces and a commercial kitchen. There are designated shared spaces. In return for the gift of property to SSCS, the SUC congregation has a 99-year lease and can use the shared portions of Centrepont when not in use by SSCS.
  - e. **2020** SUC is described as a family sized congregation, approximately 75 members who attend 2-3 times a month. On an average Sunday 20-30 adults and 4-17 children attend. Approximately 10% are 80 years or older, 48% are in their 60s or 70s and 37% are in their 30s, 40s or 50s. Due to COVID-19, services, meetings and social events moved online in March.

3. The mission of the Squamish United Church is to be “An Inclusive Community Serving God’s world”. We are a dedicated group of people with a desire to share God’s grace and love within the community in which we live, work, play and worship.
4. Squamish United Church is a community of faith that values treating others with love, generosity and humility no matter a person’s background or belief. We value spiritual nurturing, care, and teachings. We have a multigenerational focus, emphasizing fellowship, support for one another, mission, and wider community service. Being part of a larger body of faith stimulates our spiritual growth and our compassion for ourselves and for the world.
5. *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada is the congregational resource and guide for the Board to reference. All matters considered in this constitution, whether stated or unstated, remain subject to the provisions of the current edition of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada.
6. The wider context for being church has changed dramatically and is continuing to change in ways that are discontinuous with the past and at a pace that challenges churches as to what ministry is needed, how that ministry should be implemented and for how long. We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. People continue to seek meaning that can be found in the life of the spirit. The institutional church, however, is no longer at the center of that pursuit for meaning in a world of competing truths that for many has led to a distrust of institutions. We say yes to the Spirit moving among us and leading us into a purposeful ministry in our wider community. We are called in this radically changing time to continue to scan the landscape for the possible shapes of ministry to come and to be as agile and responsive as possible to God’s call in our time and place.
7. This constitution is made in the extraordinary time of COVID-19 and in the world described above (see previous section). Governance must be shaped to support ministry and be responsive to the Holy Spirit in our current context for ministry. *The Manual 2019* supports innovation and creativity in governance so long as its requirements are also met. Section B.2.1.7 Organization states: “The community of faith is responsible for having a governance structure as a framework for the life and work of the community of faith. The governance structure must free people to live out their commitment to God and to each other.” Section B.7.2.1 d) states: “The governing body may take any shape the congregation or pastoral charge chooses, with the approval of the regional council.” Section B.7.2.2 provides the authority and terms for making changes to the governing body structure.

## B. The Congregation

1. The congregation of Squamish United Church is responsible for approving its mission vision, and for approving any major decisions that impact the congregation as laid out in *The Manual*. Other than an annual general meeting, congregational meetings may be called to deal with other matters as should properly come before the congregation. The congregation shall also be called to meet from time to time to give feedback and guidance to the governing Church Board.
  - a. Squamish United Church shall meet at least once a year as a congregation and shall celebrate the previous year's ministry, approve a budget, and deal with any matters that should properly and normally come before the congregation. One of the responsibilities of the annual general meeting shall be to elect a Church Board.

## C. The Church Board

1. Squamish United Church shall be governed by a Church Board, which is a fiduciary, visionary and evaluative ministry of the congregation. There is no division recognized between temporal and sacred matters as God is in all, and to the extent not prohibited by The Manual, the Church Board will collaborate with and be in a partnership relationship with the Minister as to all church matters.
2. The Church Board shall have the following broad functions:
  - a. Identify, discern and clarify the mission of the pastoral charge based on theological reflection and contextual analysis along with consultation with the members and adherents of the congregation, the Squamish community and the United Church of Canada.
  - b. Create best practice strategies to live out the discerned mission and purpose of the congregation in consultation with the congregation and the wider community.
  - c. Set policy within which staff, volunteers and teams will achieve their specific goals. Assist in clearing barriers which impede the achievement of those goals. Facilitate training and recommend needed resources. include budgets and empower staff, volunteers and ministry teams to be self-directed to establish and revise their goals. Facilitate evaluation of goals.

- d. Develop a collegial partnership and consensus building relationship with ministry personnel in identifying and living out the church's mission and purpose. The Church Board and the minister will review the church's purpose together at least once a year in consultation with the Leadership Team.
3. The Church Board is responsible for exercising leadership in the care and oversight of the mission and purpose of the Squamish Pastoral Charge.
4. The Church Board shall consist of 5 elected members that broadly represent the congregation. The skills necessary to adequately fill the roles of board members should be kept in mind. These members shall be generally representative of the congregation and in addition, the board will include any Ministry Personnel appointed or called to the congregation. The composition of the board may be determined by the members following the election. Specific roles will be:

Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and 2 members at large.
5. The election of members of the Church Board shall initially be staggered as one and two-year appointments so that Board membership does not turn-over all at once. At the first meeting after the congregational annual general meeting, the Church Board will annually elect the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Board members will normally be appointed for 2 year terms, renewable up to 6 years. Should a position become vacant before the term has been completed, it may be filled by a Board appointment only until the next annual general meeting of the congregation when a new member will be elected.
6. The Church Board shall determine the manner in which it will operate given the broad principles outlined above. Parameters to include, but not be limited to:
  - a. A quorum shall consist of three board members and the appointed or called Ministry Personnel, or the Pastoral Charge Supervisor in the absence of Ministry Personnel;
  - b. Shall meet at least quarterly.
  - c. The business of the Board shall be conducted through the use of a consensus decision making model. This is defined as being based on three criteria:
    - i. Agree without reservation (consensus),
    - ii. Agree with reservation but will not block decision (consensus),

- iii. Do not agree (no consensus). If there are those who choose “do not agree,” the resolution fails and returns to the Board for further clarification.

7. The Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Board of Trustees shall operate as *The Manual* stipulates and shall report to and take direction from the Church Board.

- a. Ministry and Personnel Committee: Each United Church congregation is required to have a Ministry and Personnel Committee to manage the relationship between the paid staff and the congregation. Members of this committee are appointed by the Church Board.
- b. The Board of Trustees: All property and assets of the congregation are held in trust for The United Church of Canada by the Squamish United Church Trustees. The Model of Trust Deed shall shape the work of the Trustees. The Trustees shall recommend and the Church Board shall have final authority to appoint representatives to the Strata Committee or any committee necessary for carrying out the fiduciary requirements relating to its Strata interests.
- c. Representatives of the Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Board of Trustees are not required to regularly attend Church Board meetings. The Church Board may request attendance from time to time and these committees may attend to present any recommendations as to the work of the committees for review or action by the Church Board.

8. The Church Board may name committees, teams or task groups to help it in its work. These teams shall be formed from the congregation and its adherents. The teams will be task or theme-specific and continue for a time period that the Church Board may determine necessary.

## D. Church Board Executive, Committees and Ministry Teams

1. The Church Board shall define the organization, membership, responsibilities and term of any ad hoc or standing committees. These committees shall assist the Church Board in fulfilling its responsibilities.
2. The board in conjunction with the congregation shall form a Leadership Team relating to the ministry and mission of the church. The Leadership Team is a recommending team

responsible to the Church Board. Its function is to support the mission and vision of the church in light of the spiritual landscape of ministry in its community context. Ministry Personnel are participating members of the Leadership team. At least one member of the Church Board shall serve on the Leadership Team.

3. The Church Board shall define the organization, membership, responsibilities and term of any Ministry Teams that are formed to fulfill the ministry needs, programs and functions of the congregation. These teams shall assist the Church Board in fulfilling its responsibilities. Such teams will be formed from the congregation including adherents and are not elected positions; they will meet as necessary, not according to a defined schedule; and they will self-organize in a way that allows for evaluation and accountability. The Minister, whether full time or part time, acts as liaison between the Church Board and all Ministry Teams.
4. In accordance with the Manual, B.7.8.4, all ministry personnel called or appointed to the pastoral charge are automatically members of all committees of the congregation or pastoral charge, with three exceptions. They may not be members of a Search Committee; the Ministry and Personnel Committee; or a Nominations Committee.
5. Representatives of Standing or Ad Hoc Committees and Ministry Teams are not required to regularly attend Church Board Meetings. The Church Board may request attendance from time to time to consider the work of such groups and the committees and teams may request an appearance at a Board Meeting as to a matter it wishes the Church Board to consider. Otherwise, communication may take place by emails, texts, memos, and direct contact.