

**THE CONSTITUTION OF SILVER SPIRE
UNITED CHURCH**

366 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario

THEOLOGICAL PREAMBLE

Ministry has its source in God, the Creator and Redeemer, is most visible in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Those who share a common life encounter with God in Christ enter into a covenant relationship with God and with one another. Together they seek to understand Jesus' life and ministry among them, and to live out its implications by Christian stewardship of all gifts given by God, continually depending on grace, and affirming one another.

Church structures should be designed to liberate and to enable the people of God to exercise their ministry in building up the body of Christ through worship, reconciliation, evangelism and outreach, service, and the seeking of justice. (The United Church *Manual*, 2007, Sections 101 – 103)



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1.0 AMALGAMATION

Silver Spire United Church came into being through the vision of three congregations (Memorial United, St. Paul Street United and Welland Avenue United) and by the action of Niagara Presbytery on July 1, 2008 as an amalgamated congregation. The Amalgamation Agreement is Appendix A of this constitution.

2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

Learning, Living, Loving

3.0 CORE VALUES

We are committed to:

- ALL AGE GROUPS: We care for our children, youth and adults.
- BEING CHRIST-CENTRED: We strive to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- COMPASSIONATE: We show concern for others through listening, feeling and responding to their needs.
- HOSPITALITY: We are intentional about being inviting, building relationships, and building community.
- LEARNING: We study to grow in our faith.
- OPENNESS AND ACCEPTANCE: We honour diversity among people and relate with all in loving and caring ways.
- REVERENCE: We treat the earth and all creation as sacred gifts of God.
- STEWARDSHIP: We give a portion of our talents and gifts to God, the community and the wider world.

4.0 AREAS OF MINISTRY

The congregation, the ministers and the support staff shall work as partners to strengthen the work of the Church through the following four areas of ministry:

- Spiritual Nurturing
- Care
- Human Resources
- Administration.

5.0 THE MANUAL

As a congregation of the United Church of Canada, Silver Spire United Church is bound to organize its life according to the United Church *Manual*, 2007. This constitution applies *The Manual's* regulations to local needs. The mission of the congregation shall be carried out using the organizational model of Church Council as described in *The Manual*, 215-245.

6.0 PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Congregational, Council and Team meetings shall be conducted according to accepted procedures for quorums, chairing of meetings, proposing and voting on motions and keeping of minutes as described in *The Manual, Appendix III*.

7.0 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The congregation shall meet annually as soon as audited financial statements are completed, normally in the month of February.

7.1 The purpose of the Annual Meeting is:

- to celebrate the previous year's accomplishments and to anticipate the future;
- to approve the annual reports of the congregation's activities;
- to approve the financial statements;
- to approve the budget on recommendation of the Church Council;
- to elect officers and a congregational chair;
- to appoint representatives to Niagara Presbytery;
- and to deal with any other business that might rightfully arise.

7.2 The Congregational Chair shall preside over all congregational meetings including the Annual Meeting. Each congregational meeting shall elect a secretary to keep minutes of the proceedings.

7.3 Further congregational meetings may be called as needed by the Minister/s, the Congregational Chair or at the written request of ten members of the congregation in good standing. The date, time and purpose of the meeting shall be announced to the congregation for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

7.4 All members of the congregation automatically have voting rights. In matters of pastoral relationship, only those persons in full membership of the congregation may vote. Voting privileges on temporal matters may be extended to adherents by the majority vote of those members present.

8.0 MINISTRY CLUSTERS AND TEAMS

The four areas of ministry are divided into "clusters", with each cluster being a grouping of "teams" or committees which have relational functions. The groupings represent an attempt to maximize communication across the ministries. Each cluster may add Teams as new ministries emerge to fulfil the mission of the congregation. Ministry and Personnel is a "committee". The four clusters with their teams are:

Spiritual Nurturing Ministry

- Christian Nurturing
- Worship
- Youth

Care Ministry

- Outreach
- Pastoral Care
- Social

Human Resources Ministry

- Membership;
- Stewardship/Human Resources
- Communication

Administration Ministry

- Finance
- Property

Ministry and Personnel Committee

- 8.1 Each Team is expected to consist of 5-7 members, including a chair and a secretary. The Team will elect its own officers. Members and adherents should be willing to serve and have an interest in promoting the mission of the congregation through the activities of a Team.
- 8.2 All teams are required to meet regularly; keep minutes of meetings; identify a chair from its membership; report regularly to Council; prepare an annual budget and submit it to the Finance Team by October 31; prepare an annual report for the Annual Meeting of the congregation.
- 8.3 Teams have the authority to spend their budget, undertake projects and launch initiatives that will strengthen the work of the Church in keeping with its mission, with policies set by Council and with the provisions of *The Manual*.
- 8.4 Duties of Teams are appended to this Constitution as Appendix C.
- 9.0 CHURCH COUNCIL
- 9.1 Church Council is responsible for governance of the overall life of the church. It works with ministry clusters, teams, committees and staff to engage the congregation in its ministry.
- 9.2 Council has the authority to re-organise ministry clusters and teams to address changing needs and circumstances. Any reorganisation shall be communicated to the congregation and ratified at the next Annual Meeting.
- 9.3 Council consists of the following elected persons: the Co-chairs, Secretary, Cluster Coordinators, Chair of Ministry and Personnel Committee, one representative from the U.C.W., one representative from the Board of Trustees, and the Settled Ministers (See Appendix B). Elected members of Council must be members of the Pastoral Charge (*Manual*, 219).
- 9.4 Council normally meets monthly, September to June. At least two of these meetings shall be designated for attendance by all members of Clusters and Teams. Meetings are open to all members of the congregation.
- 9.5 A Council meeting may be called by either the Co-Chairs or the Minister.

9.6 A *quorum* for a Council meeting requires the attendance of the Minister or an appointee of the Presbytery, and at least 50% + 1 of the remaining members of Council.

9.7 Council is expected to communicate regularly with the congregation so that members and adherents are informed about issues, discussions and decisions.

10.0. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The officers of Council are: co-chairs, immediate past chair and secretary.

10.1. **Co-Chairs:** prepare an agenda, preside at all Council meetings (alternating each month), communicates regularly with team chairs, maintains regular contact with ministry staff, provides leadership, assistance and direction so that the mission of the congregation is furthered and its ministry strengthened. The chair is an *ex officio* member of all Teams. If both of the co-chairs are unable to preside at a Council meeting, Council shall appoint one of its members, normally the immediate past chair to preside.

10.2 **Secretary:** maintains accurate minutes of all meetings of Council; records attendance at meetings and notes regrets; maintains file copies of agenda, minutes, reports and other relevant documents; receives and responds to correspondence to Council; posts approved minutes; assists the Chair.

11.0 BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

The Board of Trustees shall fulfill the duties and obligations as required by *The Manual*, 2007 and specifically documented in Sections 250 – 262, and other requirements, which may be amended from time to time, as well as any specific requirements which may be listed in this Constitution.

11.1 Administers all church property held in trust and administers bequests and other funds given in trust to the church

11.2 The number of Trustees shall consist of not less than 3, and not more than 15. The optimum recommended is 8. Other membership requirements listed in *The Manual*, 2007, specifically Section 256, will apply.

11.3 The Trustees are elected by the Congregation to fulfill the above requirements, in accordance with *The Manual*. The Trustees, after being elected, shall remain Trustees until they are no longer able to fulfill their duties, or are unwilling to do so and notify Council in writing, or are removed as Trustees by a majority vote of the congregation at a Congregational Meeting.

12.0 THE UCW

United Church Women (UCW) maintains its own organizational structure and works within parameters established by Council. The President of the UCW (or designate) is a member of Council

13.0 MEN'S GROUP

The men of the United Church shall be free, for whatever reasons they may have, to come together into organized groups, provided only that the aims and activities of such groups are not in conflict with those of the United Church. Indeed they are strongly encouraged to do so, in order that the needs of men and the gifts of men may be recognized and appreciated within the total life and work of the United Church.

(The Manual, 830-845)

14.0 YOUTH TEAM

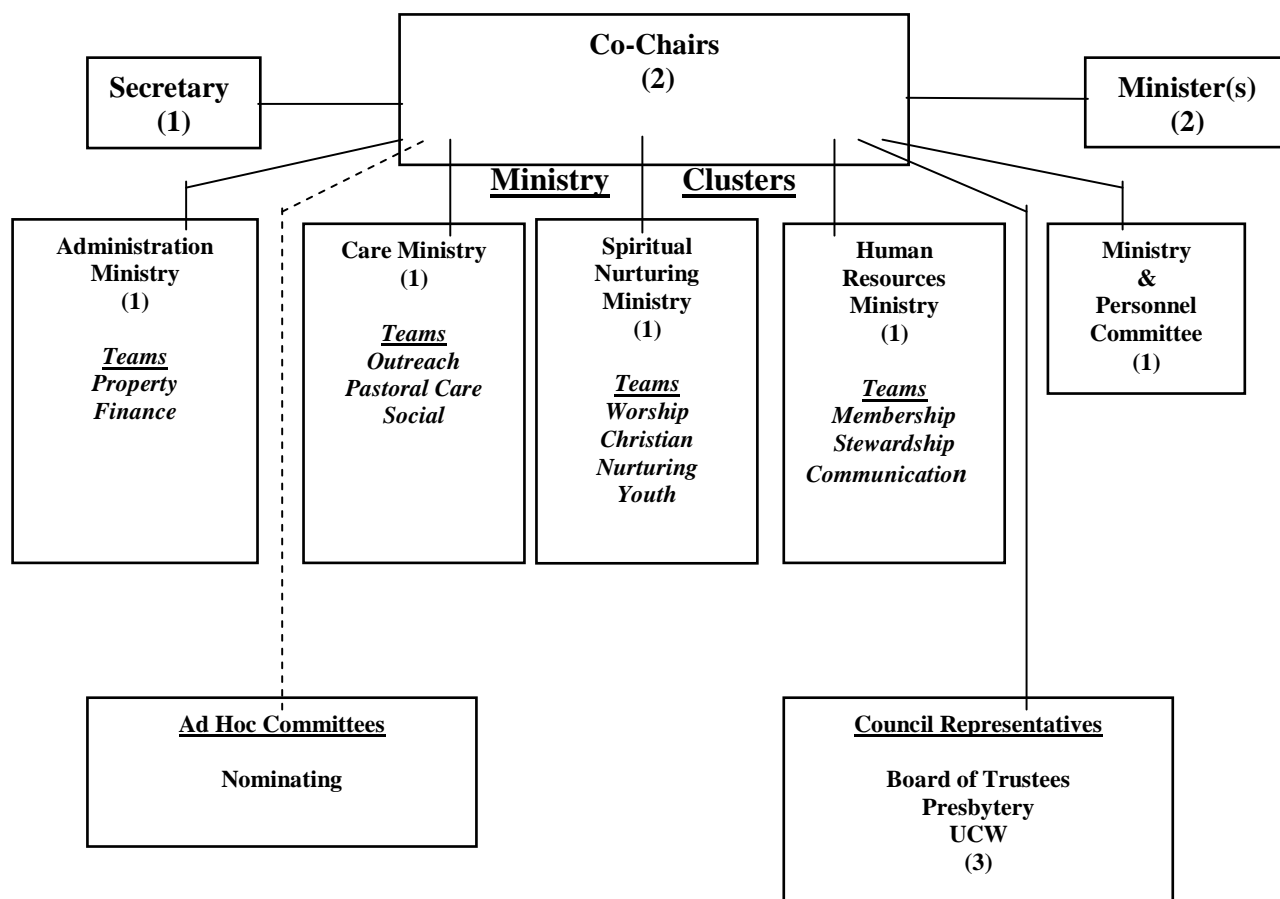
The youth of the United Church shall be free to come together into organized groups, provided that the aims and activities of such groups are not in conflict with those of the United Church. The Youth Team shall be under the guidance of the Christian Nurturing Team.

15.0 AMENDMENTS

This Constitution is a tool for furthering the mission and ministry of the church. It is a living document which reflects the changing life, uncharted ways and emerging spirit of a new congregation. Changes are expected. Amendments may be proposed to Council in writing by any member of the congregation, stating the reason for the suggested change. Council may approve changes; such changes must be ratified at the following Annual Meeting, or at a special congregational meeting after notice of motion of the proposed change has been given.

APPENDIX A. THE AMALGAMATION AGREEMENT

APPENDIX B. GRAPHIC SHOWING THE ORGANIZATION OF COUNCIL



Notes:

Ministry clusters are groups of Teams with similar ministry attributes.

The Ministry & Personnel Team stands alone due to the confidential nature of the activities carried out.

Numbers (bracketed in the boxes) represent the number of individuals who attend Council meetings – total 13.

Ad Hoc committees will attend Council meetings when necessary or when invited.

The Ad Hoc Nominating Committee is made up of the outgoing Co-chair, the Congregational Chair and the Membership Team Leader.

APPENDIX C. DUTIES OF TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

Christian Nurturing Team

Overall Objective:

To plan and direct the Christian Nurturing program of the Church (excepting the order of Public Worship) by:

Providing opportunities for learning and faith development for all ages; and overseeing the operation of the Nursery, Sunday school, Youth and intergenerational events and adult faith development programs.

Principal Duties include:

1. Publicize and encourage participation in events.
2. Approve and evaluate curriculum and program materials for Church School and youth groups.
3. Promote the use of United Church curriculum and program materials by all church groups.
4. Secure superintendents, teachers and leaders for Church School and youth groups.
5. Ensure that proper equipment and accommodations are provided for educational groups.
6. Plan and promote workshops and conferences, and arrange for the training of teachers and leaders.
7. Operate the Church Libraries.
8. In cooperation with the Outreach Team, plan and publicize Mission and Service Programs with the Church School and Youth Groups.
9. Initiate plans for Summer Junior Church and/or Vacation Bible School.
10. Be responsible for obtaining from each Church School volunteer a current police record check (at the expense of the C.D. Team).

Note: Any person appointed as the Director of Christian Nurturing shall be a member of this team, and in conjunction with the team, shall be directly responsible for the duties outlined in the Overall Objective.

Additional responsibilities are described in *The Manual*, 242.

Communications Team

Overall Objective:

To connect all people within the Silver Spire Community creatively and consistently, communicating the values, mission and goals of the congregation and to effectively advertise the presence of the church in the wider community.

Principal Duties include:

1. Give advice and support to the Communications staff person
2. Maintain the church website.
3. Promote the use of the website and provide assistance with its use.

4. Produce the church newsletter.
5. Publicize congregational events in co-operation with the various groups/teams.
6. Be a resource for the minister(s) for press releases to the media.
7. Develop guidelines for the use of all bulletin boards.

Finance Team

Overall Objective:

To monitor the day-to-day financial affairs of the church and to ensure that sound, transparent procedures are followed in the recording and reporting of all receipts and disbursements.

Principal Duties include:

1. Have an understanding of the United Church of Canada “Financial Handbook for Congregations”.
2. Prepare and keep current an Accounting Procedures Manual covering, in particular, Section 3 of the “Handbook” and Clause 3.4.8.
3. Maintain a current job description for the bookkeeper, review contract and job performance annually, in cooperation with the Ministry and Personnel Committee.
4. Arrange for the distribution of offering envelopes, coordinating with the Membership team for a list of current members.
5. Arrange for Sunday counters and bank deposits, including a written procedure.
6. Organize the recording of weekly offerings and issuing of charitable tax receipts.
7. Ensure that appropriate procedures are followed and records are kept during fundraising, outreach projects or similar events.
8. Review income and expenses as submitted by the Bookkeeper, monthly.
9. Authorize payment of bills.
10. Present a Statement of Accounts to Council, monthly.
11. Keep the congregation apprised of the financial needs of the church and encourage support, particularly in the promotion of giving by PAR.
12. Prepare a draft budget for the next financial year for review at the December Council meeting, and amend and finalize the budget for approval by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The budget will be based on input from the various committees, which are required to prepare budgets.
13. Provide independently audited financial statements to the Annual Meeting.

The Audit is to follow the guidelines of Section 3.5 of the “Financial Handbook”. See *The Manual*, Section 167.

The management of money which has been left to the church from estates, bequests etc. is administered by the Trustees, and is not the responsibility of the Finance Team.

The UCW has its own treasurers, who will prepare separate Statements of Account for the Annual Report. The Bookkeeper will include all eligible offerings in the records for tax receipts, and will prepare a consolidated T3010A form to CRA.

Membership Team

Overall Objective:

To develop and strengthen the membership of the Pastoral Charge through communication, accurate records, and provide leadership for a welcoming Church community.

Principal duties include:

1. Be involved in the ceremony to receive new members and arrange for new member orientation events.
2. Provide records identifying resident and non-resident members.
3. Design and enact communication strategies for keeping connected with members and adherents.
4. Develop strategies for generating new members and for making newcomers welcome.
5. Maintain the Church membership roll annually and revise as necessary.
6. Determine a fixed period for the removal of members from the Church membership roll active list to the inactive list.
7. Oversee the Archives.
8. Additional relevant duties as identified in Sections 010 through 015 of *The Manual, 2007*.

Note: Each team member will sign a confidentiality agreement.

Additional duties are described in *The Manual, 244*.

Outreach Team

Overall Objectives:

The purpose of the Outreach Team is to help the congregation engage with matters of social justice through study and action on local, provincial, national and global levels, and to liaise with other church groups, community groups and agencies in doing so, towards the fulfillment of the gospel command, "Feed my sheep."

Principal duties include:

1. Promote the work of the United Church of Canada through the support of the Mission and Service Fund and other special projects.
2. Organize study sessions about mission and social justice issues.
3. Lead and support the congregation in outreach activities in the local community.
4. Determine with appropriate consultation, political action in which the congregation may engage.
5. Develop annually a plan of core outreach activities/projects for the congregation with rationale for such and submit to the Council with supporting budget.
6. Provide information and reports to the congregation as required

Pastoral Care Team

Overall Objective:

Provide all forms of pastoral care of the congregational members, adherents and their families and support the ministerial personnel in pastoral care ministry.

Principal Duties include:

1. Emphasize the importance of confidentiality in all pastoral care issues and initiatives.
2. Create a systematic process for regular visits and communication on a needs basis as pastoral care issues arise.
3. Communicate regularly with the minister on pastoral needs of the congregation.
4. Maintain a "Care List" of members and adherents who are in long-term facilities or are shut-ins.
5. Arrange for and accompany the minister for home communion services.
6. Keep a confidential record of all contacts.
7. Connect with members/adherents in long-term care facilities and shut-ins.
8. Be responsible for communicating clearly with the congregation about all the various caring resources available to people.
9. Prepare a report of pastoral care for the Annual Report for the Annual General Meeting.

Property Team

Overall Objective:

Monitor, maintain and improve the building and property.

Principal Duties include:

1. Develop a work schedule in conjunction with the custodian.
2. Appoint a committee member to liaise with the custodian in the discharge of his duties.
3. Be responsible for the security of the church building and ensure that the church is a safe environment.
4. Schedule and train the night guards and Sunday lock-up volunteers.
5. Determine and review annually a petty cash limit for the custodian and secretary.
6. Annually prepare a short-term plan and long-term strategic plan for repair and preventative maintenance for the church building and equipment and recommend major improvements or renovations to Church Council.
7. Keep a current inventory of equipment and furnishings.
8. Meet on a regular basis to conduct the business of the Property Team.
9. Communicate building policies, uses and changes to the Church Council and Trustees.
10. Negotiate, review and manage equipment contracts and maintenance agreements for the church.
11. Ensure compliance of the church with the Ontario Fire Code regulations.
12. Oversee the purchasing of equipment and supplies, including office and printing supplies.

Note: Additional duties are described in *The Manual*, 391

Social Team

Overall Objective:

Plan and present a program of fellowship activities for the congregation

Principal duties include:

1. Organize social time after the Sunday Church service.
2. Plan events for fellowship and celebrations.
3. Plan the luncheon for the Annual General Meeting.

Work in conjunction with other teams in planning and coordinating seasonal celebrations.

Stewardship/Human Resources Team

Overall Objectives:

The Stewardship/Human Resources Team is responsible for encouraging members to practice wise stewardship of their time, talents, energy and money in the spirit of the early Christian church, and for the growth and maintenance of a viable and healthy 21st century church community.

Principal Duties include:

1. Reflect theologically on the stewardship of congregational resources and gifts and membership responsibility for using them in the church and community.
2. Educate the church community about stewardship, in its broadest sense.
3. Promote stewardship of individual and congregational resources.
4. Work with the Finance Team to advance the long-term financial viability of Silver Spire United Church.
5. Promote a program for planned giving.
6. Oversee fundraising activities.
7. Coordinate congregational stewardship campaigns.
8. Recommend a Mission and Service target to the congregation annually.
9. Help members identify their gifts and skills and ways in which they may use these to contribute to the health and well being of the church community.
10. Develop and maintain a database of skills of members and adherents and manage access to this resource.
11. Work with other teams and groups in recruiting, training and deploying people in the various tasks and ministries of the congregation.
12. Provide information and reports to the congregation as required.
13. Provide support and encouragement for individuals and groups to come forward with ideas and initiatives for new ministries.

Worship Team

Overall Objective:

Act as a supportive body to the Minister(s) and Director of Music Ministries in the shaping of worship as a celebration, utilizing a variety of expressions to respond to the intergenerational composition of the worshipping community.

Principal duties include:

1. Meet at regular intervals with the Minister and Director of Music Ministries to prepare worship schedules corresponding to the seasons of the church year.
2. Oversee the preparation and distribution of the sacraments.
3. Consult with the Christian Nurturing Team to ensure that intergenerational worship services are encouraged as part of the worship schedule.
4. Encourage and empower the participation of the laity in worship.
5. Arrange and oversee lay readers and ushers.
6. Assist in the planning for special services, including that of the Church anniversary.
7. Be responsible for the decoration and furnishing of the Sanctuary for all Sunday services.
8. Review and authorize requests for services of baptism and confirmations.
9. Maintain the Marriage and Baptism registers.
10. Maintain pew cards and other supplies in the Sanctuary
11. Develop a protocol for funeral and memorial services in consultation with the minister/s.
12. Authorize the appropriate use of the Sanctuary for purposes other than worship.
13. Arrange for supply ministry (pulpit and music) in consultation with the Ministry & Personnel committee..
14. Offer ideas and assist with their implementation for the conduct of worship in keeping with the Team's overall objective.
15. Arrange for instrument maintenance in consultation with the Music staff.

Perform other duties as they arise, which are deemed to be within the purview of the Worship Team.

Ministry and Personnel Committee**Overall Objective:**

Be responsible for all areas of Ministry and lay staffing for the Pastoral Charge of Silver Spire United Church with the exception of the hiring of Ministers.

Principal Duties include:

1. Provide a consultative and supportive agency for the staff of the Pastoral Charge and for members and adherents of the Congregation.
2. Review working conditions and remuneration for the staff of the Pastoral Charge and make appropriate recommendations to the Church Council.
3. Oversee the relationship of the staff of the Pastoral Charge to members of the Congregation and others.
4. Oversee the relationship between and among different members of the staff of the Pastoral Charge with respect to their responsibilities and authority.
5. Consult with all members of the staff of the Pastoral Charge about their plans for continuing education and ensure that those eligible avail themselves of the provisions for continuing education and that money and time are made available.

6. Review and evaluate annually the effectiveness of the staff of the Pastoral Charge as those persons and positions relate to the mission of the Pastoral Charge as defined by the Church Council.
7. Maintain close liaison with Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.
8. Review regularly the responsibilities of all staff of the Pastoral Charge and revise position descriptions when required or requested.
9. Receive from the Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to the Pastoral Charge, a current vulnerable sector (level 2) police records check, at the expense of the Ministry and Personnel Committee, no later than the completion of each six-year period of the pastoral relationship.
10. Appoint a team member to be the liaison for each staff member of the Pastoral Charge.
11. Maintain appropriate personnel records and store in a safe, secure place in the church, including all (photocopies of) police checks of staff and volunteers.

Nominating Committee

Overall Objective:

Is responsible for filling Committee and Council positions annually; has three members: the congregational chair, the membership team chair and the Immediate Past Co-chair who chairs the committee.

Principal Duties Include:

1. Determine and monitor the election process for officers and members of Council.
2. Recommend slate of nominees to the Annual General Meeting.
3. Fill vacancies that may occur in between the Annual General Meeting.

Note: The Manual refers to *The Manual 2007* of the United Church of Canada.

Congregational Chair

Principal Duties Include:

1. Call and chair all congregational meetings.
2. Be a member on the Nominating committee.

Note: The congregation elects the Congregational Chair at the Annual Meeting

This Constitution was adopted by Silver Spire United Church at the Annual Meeting of

Co-Chair of Council

Co-Chair of Council