

# UNDERSTANDING OUR CHURCH

The Unitarian Church of Montreal / Église unitarienne de Montréal  
5035 de Maisonneuve Blvd W.  
Montreal QC H4A 1Y5

This booklet contains the By-Laws and Standing Rules (policies, information about the Church's financial operation, and mandates of standing committees.)

This booklet is intended to provide every member and prospective member with information about the operation of our Church.

Part of the definition of "Church Member" is acceptance of the By-Laws. Therefore, this booklet shall be given to prospective members before they sign the Membership Book. Each prospective member shall be provided an opportunity to question and discuss all information in the booklet with a member of the Board of Management before joining the Church.

The Secretary of the Board of Management is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of this booklet. The file is maintained as a print-on-demand document by the Church Office. Date of approval of the By-Laws is June 4, 2007, unless otherwise indicated. Date of approval of the Standing Rules is May 20, 2009, unless otherwise indicated.

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# **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this religious Congregation is The Church of the Messiah recognized as a church in the Province of Lower Canada in 1845 (Chap. 35, 8 Vict., March 17). Incorporated in the Province of Quebec in 1906 (Chap. 91, 6 Ed VII, March 9) and with clarification on the keeping of registers in 1922 (Chap. 137, 12 Geo. V, March 21). This Congregation is commonly known as The Unitarian Church of Montreal.

### **ARTICLE I.b: CHANGE OF NAME**

That the name of the ‘Church of the Messiah’ pursuant to an act passed by the late Province of Canada, 8 Victoria, chapter 35 and duly incorporated by an Act of the Province of Quebec, 6 Edward VII, chapter 91 as amended by 12 Geo. V chapter 137 be and is hereby changed to “Unitarian Church of Montreal”.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Church is to affirm and promote: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our Congregation and in society at large; the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 A CHURCH MEMBER is a person eighteen (18) years of age or over who has subscribed to the By-Laws by signing the Church Membership Book and who makes an annual identifiable financial contribution to the operating funds of the Church. A Church member is eligible to vote on regular business matters, to serve on and chair committees, to observe at Board of Management meetings, and to hold elected office.

Section 2 A LIFE MEMBER is a person who has been a member for many years but is no longer able to make a financial contribution and/or participate in the life of the Church. Appointment of life members shall be decided by the Wardens, after consultation with the member involved, if that is possible. Life Members shall enjoy all of the advantages of membership except the vote and elected office.

Section 3 A SPECIAL-VOTING MEMBER is a person who has been a Church member for at least the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the special vote. Only special-voting members are eligible to vote on the calling or dismissal of a Minister, purchasing or selling land,

building a church, selling or alienating the immovable property of the Church, amending the By-Laws, merging the Congregation with another, or disbanding the Congregation.

Section 4 In cases where two people contribute jointly, when either or both persons have made identifiable financial contributions, either or both shall be considered Church members and special-voting members if they individually meet the other requirements.

Section 5 A person shall cease to be a member of the Church:

- A. by delivering his/her resignation in writing to the Board Secretary or by mailing or delivering it to the address of the Church;
- B. on his/her death;
- C. on failing to make an identifiable financial contribution to the operating fund during an entire fiscal year.

Section 5 A member may be expelled from Church membership only by the acceptance of a special resolution at a Congregational (regular business) meeting which is passed by at least two thirds of those casting votes. (See Roberts Rules of Order for details of process.) [See also Disruptive Member Policy in this booklet]

#### **ARTICLE IV: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

This Congregation shall be a member of the Canadian Unitarian Council.

#### **ARTICLE V: COMMUNION**

For those who wish to partake, communion shall be observed on Easter Sunday and on a Sunday close to All Souls' Day.

#### **ARTICLE VI: RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The rules of procedure set out in Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed at all meetings in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with the By-Laws.

#### **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

There are three kinds of business meetings: the annual general meeting, regular business meetings, and special business meetings called to consider calling or dismissal of a Minister, purchasing or selling land, building a church, selling or alienating the immovable property of the Church, amending the By-Laws, merging the Congregation with another, or disbanding the Congregation.

The annual general meeting shall be held on the first Monday of June unless the Board of Management selects another date within a few weeks thereof. The annual general meeting shall

conduct required elections, receive the annual financial report, and any other business as may properly come before it.

Regular and special business meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or at the written request of ten (10) Church members. The business to be transacted at any business meeting shall be set forth in the notice of meeting.

Notice of all business meetings shall be given at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance. Notice of meeting shall be posted in the Church, announced from the pulpit, and published in the Congregation's newsletter.

### **ARTICLE VIII: QUORUMS**

Fifteen percent (15%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at the annual general meeting and regular business meetings. Thirty percent (30%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at special business meetings.

Three (3) shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee. Seven (7) shall constitute a quorum for the Board of Management from September through June. During July and August, the Board of Management quorum shall be five (5) of which at least two (2) are members of the Executive Committee.

### **ARTICLE IX: VOTING**

Section 1 A simple majority of votes cast is sufficient for all regular business decisions including elections. A majority of two-thirds of votes cast is required for decisions on calling or dismissal of a Minister, purchasing or selling land, building a church, selling or alienating the immovable property of the Church, amending the By-Laws, merging the Congregation with another, or disbanding the Congregation.

Section 2 Each member shall have one vote and votes shall be cast in person or by written proxy. No person present may cast more than one proxy vote and no person shall be entitled to vote as a proxy unless that person is entitled to vote in his or her own right at the meeting for which he or she acts as proxy.

Section 3 Voting in regular business meetings, including the annual General Meeting, shall be by show of hands unless a member moves for a secret ballot on a particular vote. Such a motion is not debatable and the chair shall immediately call a vote to determine the group's wishes. A positive vote will lead to the use of paper ballots for the vote under debate. A negative vote will lead to a vote by show of hands.

Section 4 Voting to consider calling or dismissal of a Minister, purchasing or selling land, building a church, selling or alienating the immovable property of the Church, amending the By-

Laws, merging the Congregation with another, or disbanding the Congregation shall be by secret vote using paper ballots.

## **ARTICLE X: ELECTIONS**

Section 1 At each annual general meeting there shall be chosen:

A President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. These officers shall constitute the Executive Committee.

Nine (9) persons to serve as members of the Board of Management.

One (1) Warden to serve a term of four (4) years.

Ratification of Chaplain(s) if needed.

Section 2 All elected persons shall hold their offices until the next annual general meeting and their successors have been elected. Each elected person shall perform the duties usually pertaining to these offices.

Section 3 No person may serve as an elected member of the Board of Management/Executive Committee for more than six (6) consecutive years. Within the six-year limit, no one may serve as President or Vice-president for more than two (2) consecutive years, and no one may serve as Treasurer, Secretary, or member of the Board for more than four (4) consecutive years.

Section 4 The Vice-President shall assume the office of President if that office becomes open. If the offices of President and Vice-President both become open, the Secretary shall assume the office of President until a Congregational meeting can be properly called to elect a new President and Vice-President. With these exceptions, the Board of Management shall, with the advice of the Nominating Committee, fill vacancies for all offices and committees which occur between annual general meetings.

## **ARTICLE XI: COMMITTEES**

Section 1 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

[Modified 2 June 2008]

A The Board of Management shall consist of the elected Board members, members of the Executive Committee, the Minister, the Past-President, and a Warden who shall be chosen by the Wardens to serve for one year.

B Subject to the By-Laws, the Board of Management shall have general control and management of the Church and its departments. It shall have power to invest money belonging to the Church and to change investments. The Board shall employ the services of an established financial investment advisor group with a proven track record, pursuing conservative, low risk strategies. It shall also have authority to borrow money for Church purposes.

C The Board shall fill any vacancies in any office (other than that of Minister and the double vacancy of both President and Vice-President) occurring through death, disability or resignation.

D Board Members, Officers and Staff of the Unitarian Church of Montreal will be indemnified against actions against them resulting from their exercising their mandate in good faith and to the best of their abilities on behalf of the Church. An appropriate insurance policy will be maintained by the Church in order to ensure adequate indemnification if necessary.

## Section 2 EXECUTIVE

A The Executive Committee shall meet regularly to consider the overall operations of the Congregation. They shall establish the agenda for Board of Management meetings. They shall serve as the responsible committee to act on financial and personnel matters.

B The Executive Committee shall maintain an overview of all financial activities including, but not limited to, investments, audits, and all Church funds. They shall consider and make recommendations to the Board of Management before any significant deviations are made from the annual budget when it was approved. They shall screen all requests for funds to be used outside normal activities and shall recommend appropriate action to the Board of Management in relation to such requests. Any two members of the Executive Committee are authorized to sign contracts, cheques, and other formal papers on behalf of the Church.

C The Executive Committee shall appoint a Personnel Committee which shall be responsible for the overall co-ordination of the working conditions and duties of all Church staff. They shall make recommendations about hiring or dismissal of staff to the Executive Committee. They shall work with the Church staff to set goals and shall be responsible for regular personnel evaluations. They shall prepare contracts and salary recommendations for the Church staff and shall submit them to the Executive Committee. Any staff member having ongoing concerns about job description or working conditions may request a meeting with this Committee.

## Section 3 NOMINATING

A The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Past President, who shall chair the Committee, the Board member with the Membership portfolio, a Warden to be named from among themselves, and at least two (2) other Church members.

B The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for election at the annual general meeting and will suggest to the Board of Management possible candidates for positions arising between annual general meetings. The Nominating Committee will verify the eligibility of all candidates, will discuss with each person the responsibilities of the office proposed, and verify the willingness of each candidate.

#### Section 4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A The Religious Education Committee shall consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, the Director of Religious Education, the Minister (or Minister of Religious Education, if one exists), and at least two (2) other Church members. This Committee shall elect its own chairperson.

B The Religious Education Committee shall be responsible for curriculum selection and general operation of the Church School.

Section 5 The Board of Management may establish such other committees as will aid in the operation of the Church.

### ARTICLE XII: THE TREASURER

Section 1 The Treasurer shall keep account of the finances of the Church. All moneys (other than those excluded by Board of Management action) which may be collected for Church purposes shall pass through and be recorded in appropriate accounts supervised by the Treasurer. Disbursements shall be made only as authorized by the Board of Management.

Section 2 The Treasurer shall submit a report prepared by an independent chartered accountant covering the preceding financial year at the annual general meeting.

Section 3 The Treasurer, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the Board of Management, shall prepare the annual operating budget for presentation at the Congregational meeting called to approve the budget.

### ARTICLE XIII: THE BUDGET [modified 2 June 2008]

Section 1 The Congregation shall approve an operating budget at a meeting called for that purpose (or follow-up meetings, if necessary). It is understood that this would be a working budget subject to modification as the fiscal year progresses and various situations arise and that the Board of Management is responsible for the expenditure of moneys for the Church.

Section 2. Annual withdrawals from the endowment fund shall not exceed 4.5% of its market value calculated as the average of the year-end value for the last three years.

Section 3. During any fiscal year, should the Board of Management find it necessary to spend moneys in excess of 10% over the approved operating budget, approval of the Congregation shall be required. Any such increase shall respect the condition in section 2 above.

Section 4. The Board of Management shall not lend moneys without Congregational approval.

## **ARTICLE XIV: THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD**

The Secretary shall keep the Minutes of all Congregational business meetings and of the meetings of the Board of Management. The Secretary shall preserve an account of whatever may be of general interest in the history of the Church and shall perform such other duties as may be directed by the Board of Management.

## **ARTICLE XV: THE MINISTER**

Section 1 The Minister shall be responsible for the conduct of religious services within the Congregation and for the Congregation's spiritual interests and affairs. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express personal opinions outside the pulpit.

Section 2 The Minister shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Management and of such other committees as the Board of Management shall designate.

Section 3 In the event of the Minister's dismissal, salary and benefits will be continued for three (3) months from the date of dismissal. If the Minister resigns, three months' notice must be given unless the Board of Management allows an interval of less time.

## **ARTICLE XVI: WARDENS**

Section 1 There shall be four (4) Wardens one of whom shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting of the Congregation for a period of four (4) years. The new Warden shall be nominated by the current Wardens for ratification by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting. The Wardens serve on a rotating four-year term from Junior to Senior Warden.

Section 2 The duties of the Wardens shall be as follows:

- a) to preside over the welcoming of new members including the signing of the Membership Book;
- b) to receive, administer, and disburse charitable funds of the Church;
- c) to be entrusted with the care, retention, or disposal of Church Memorials;
- d) to choose one of themselves to serve on the Nominating Committee;
- e) to choose one of themselves to serve as a member of the Board of Management with both voice and vote for the full Church year;
- f) to appoint Life Members after consultation with the member involved, if that is possible.

## **ARTICLE XVII: CHAPLAINS**

Section 1 Chaplains shall be appointed by the Board of Management on the recommendation of the Minister in consultation with the chaplaincy committee. Appointment of Chaplains is subject to ratification at the next annual general meeting at which time the Congregation will be asked to confirm the appointment for an initial period of three years from the date of that annual general meeting. Chaplains may subsequently be reappointed for one additional period of three

years. A Chaplainship may be revoked at any time by the Board of Management for a valid reason.

Section 2 Chaplains may perform Acts of Civil Status, use the Register of such Acts, and perform such other duties as may be delegated to them jointly by the Board and the Minister. Their remuneration and terms of employment shall be as determined by the Board of Management.

#### **ARTICLE XVIII: FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Church shall run from 1 January through 31 December.

#### **ARTICLE XIX: STANDING RULES**

The Secretary shall maintain a set of *Standing Rules* which form an integral supplement to the By-Laws. The *Standing Rules* will list operating policies which supplement the By-Laws as approved by the Congregation and/or the Board of Management.

#### **ARTICLE XX: DISSOLUTION**

Should this Congregation cease to function and the membership vote to disband, all assets of the Congregation shall be transferred to the Canadian Unitarian Council. Should the Canadian Unitarian Council not exist, then all assets shall be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association, such transfer to be made in full compliance with all applicable laws.

# STANDING RULES

## A. GOVERNANCE

### 1. BY-LAWS AND STANDING RULES

Our By-Laws contain only the most basic regulations and are intentionally difficult to change (see Article III, Section 3 and Article IX, Sections 1 & 4). The Standing Rules are easier to modify to reflect changing needs and desires of the Congregation; they may be changed by the Congregation and/or the Board of Management. *Understanding Our Church*, a document comprising the By-Laws and the Standing Rules, shall be given to each Church member and to prospective members before they sign the Membership Book. A copy of this document shall be available for inspection in the Church Office and at the Membership Information Table.

### 2. REVIEW OF BY-LAWS AND STANDING RULES

By-Laws shall be reviewed by the Board of Management in every year divisible by five so that they may be adapted to changing conditions. However, so far as allowed by appropriate laws, they may be amended or replaced at any time at a meeting properly called and constituted for that purpose.

The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for a review of the Standing Rules in every year divisible by two. She/he may delegate review of particular sections to other members of the Board of Management.

## B. MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS

### 1. MEMBERSHIP LIST

Membership is defined in Article III of the By-Laws. The Church membership list shall be treated as confidential in accordance with "right to privacy" concerns. The Church directory is a list of members and adherents.

### 2. NEW MEMBERS

New members shall be received into the Church at brief ceremonies, at regular intervals as the need arises, but new members may also be received at any time by signing the Membership Book in the presence of the Minister or a Warden.

Before signing the Membership Book, a copy of *Understanding Our Church* shall be given to each prospective member who will also be given time to question and discuss information in the booklet with a member of the Board of Management

### 3. ADHERENTS

Adherents (also known as Friends) are people who are not Church members, but who show continuing interest in Church activities, receive the UCM Newsletter, and who have made identifiable financial contributions to the operating funds of the Church. Adherents may serve on committees and attend Congregational meetings as observers.

## C. CONGREGATIONAL AND BOARD MEETINGS

### 1. NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee consisting of the Past President, Membership Chair, a Warden and two members-at-large [Article XI, Section 3 of the By-Laws], shall prepare a slate of one or more names of members for each position open for election at the Annual General Meeting. When seeking candidates for Board positions, each position will be related to a specific office or portfolio, and each candidate shall agree to serve if elected.

Members of the Congregation are encouraged to submit to the Nominating Committee, in writing, names of persons recommended for specific offices and/or portfolios, provided the person recommended agrees to serve if elected. Such recommendations must be in writing, signed, and submitted no later than the second Sunday in March.

The slate, including any nominations properly received before the posting date, shall be posted in the Church on the second Sunday in April and printed in the May newsletter.

In addition, after the slate has been posted and at least two weeks before the start of the Annual General Meeting, any eight (8) Church members may submit to the Nominating Committee, as additions to the slate, the names of members and the offices and/or portfolios for which they are standing. Persons nominated must have agreed to serve if elected.

The Nominating Committee is also responsible for the nomination of the “Unsung Hero” which is then approved by the Board. The award is presented at the Annual General Meeting but not necessarily every year. The award goes to a member or long-time friend of the Church who has a history of being helpful to others, both in and out of the Congregation, and who is not already recognized for such activities by most of the Congregation. The chair of the committee will then assume responsibility for having the name engraved on the Unsung Hero plaque.

## 2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year in the month of June in accordance with Article VII of the By-Laws. If the date is changed after the May newsletter has been distributed, each member shall be officially notified.

The agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall normally contain at least the following items:

- approval of the minutes of the previous AGM and any Congregational meetings of the past year, as required;
- receipt of the annual financial report of the Treasurer;
- receipt of reports from the Board, each standing committee, and such additional reports as the Board may authorize;
- receipt of the reports of the Minister and Chaplains;
- election of nominated members of the Executive Committee and the Board for the ensuing year;
- election of Wardens, as required;
- approval of Lay Chaplains, as required;
- appointment of chairpersons of standing committees of the Board ;
- appointment of an independent Chartered Accountant to prepare a report covering the financial year;
- consideration of any other matter which may properly be brought before the meeting.

## 3. LIST OF VOTING MEMBERS

At least two weeks before any Congregational meeting, a list of Church members eligible to vote will be prepared and posted in the Church. Any Church member may contest the omission of a name on the list by submitting a written request to the Church Office at least seven (7) working days before the meeting. Requests will be reviewed and names added, or not, as determined by the office staff and at least one member of the Board of Management.

## 4. BOARD MEETINGS

The meetings of the Executive and Board of Management are customarily held monthly, except in July and August. The June meeting will be a joint meetings of the outgoing and incoming members, but outgoing members will not have a vote.

## 5. READING OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Management should be approved at the next meeting of the Board and posted on the notice board within two weeks.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting should be reviewed by the Board of Management at its June meeting, and posted on the notice board within two weeks. These minutes should be formally approved at the next AGM.

Minutes of all other Congregational meetings should be reviewed by the Board of Management at its next meeting, and posted on the notice board within two weeks. These minutes should be formally approved by the Congregation at the next meeting of the Congregation.

## **D. FINANCES**

### **1. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

#### **Income**

The yearly operating costs of our Church activities and building are funded from four basic sources:

- donations (pledged and casual) from members, adherents and visitors;
- wedding and infant dedication fees;
- space rental fees;
- Endowment Fund (in accordance with Article XIII, Section 2).

#### **Expenses**

The principal operating costs are for program portfolios, employee salaries, building maintenance (repairs, insurance, utilities), and office supplies and equipment. The Church also contributes an Annual Program Contribution per member to the Canadian Unitarian Council.

#### **Annual Canvass**

A Canvass Committee is constituted at the June Board meeting to organize a pledge campaign starting in September, during which each member and adherent is contacted in order to assess the funds likely to be pledged in the coming year. The Church administrator then tracks contributions so that the Treasurer can monitor actual vs. expected income in preparing reports to the Board.

#### **Budget Process**

Each portfolio/committee chair is responsible for submitting a budget request to the Treasurer who presents the aggregated result to the Board of Management for discussion and approval. Based on this information, the Treasurer prepares a detailed budget including all projected income and operating expenses for the coming calendar year. This budget is submitted to the Congregation for approval at a meeting, usually in November, and called for that purpose.

#### **Annual Financial Statements**

At the Church's Annual General Meeting, a financial statement from the previous calendar year, prepared by an independent Chartered Accountant and reviewed by the Executive and the Board, is presented to members for their approval.

## 2. WAIVER OF FEES FOR RITES OF PASSAGE

Costs for rites of passage normally include fees for the officiant and space rental. Those fees obtained from weddings, child dedications, memorial services, services of union, and other such events shall be waived for persons who are Special Voting Members and Life Members [Article III, Sections 3 & 2]. Spouses, partners, parents and dependent children of Special Voting Members are also covered by this waiver. However, items such as musician(s), flowers, food, etc., will be paid by the person(s) requesting the rite of passage no matter their membership status.

There will be no charge for the rental of the Sanctuary for any memorial service conducted by our Chaplains or Minister.

## 3. GUIDELINES FOR GIFTS OF MATERIAL ITEMS

When a gift to the Church consists of stocks, bonds, artwork or the like, these items must be sold by the Church, on the open market, as soon as practical after receipt of the donation. This is the only way in which the tax authorities recognize “fair market value” and, therefore, the associated tax receipt.

**Note:** There are special rules for the gifts of publicly-traded securities and other specific types of items which are of considerable advantage (tax deductions, capital gains payments, carry forward, etc.) to the donor. However, the tax advantages for making such gifts change nearly every year. When considering such gifts, individuals should check with their financial advisor or tax consultant.

## 4. GUIDELINES FOR ISSUING TAX RECEIPTS

The following guidelines, based on current legislation governing such matters, are intended to assist the Treasurer and Administrator in issuing and approving receipts for use by individuals for tax purposes. Exceptions must be approved by the Treasurer.

### a. **Minimum donations and time limits**

Receipts in any given year will be issued for donations of cash, cheques or money orders totaling fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more either delivered to the Church or in an envelope clearly postmarked not later than December 31<sup>st</sup> of that year. A letter dated December 31<sup>st</sup> or earlier is not in itself proof of delivery. Receipts will be issued before February 28<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

### b. **Stocks and bonds in lieu of cash**

Receipts will be issued for the net value after the stocks or bonds have been liquidated and the proceeds deposited in the Church bank account or Endowment Fund.

### c. **Donating personal time**

Receipts will not be issued for donations of personal time or professional consulting by members and adherents.

### d. **Donations in kind**

- When used or new equipment is donated to the Church, a receipt will be issued only if there was an evident need and the Church would have had to buy it. Written proof of cost or value must be submitted by the donor (works of art are not normally in this category).

- When used equipment or household items are donated by members or adherents for the purpose of fund-raising by garage sale, Church bazaar, Bid-Nite or similar event, no receipt will be issued.
- When works of art or specially made items are donated by outsiders for purposes of fund-raising through resale, and where the profits go to the Church, then a receipt may be issued. The donor must submit a bill of sale marked “donation” which shows a value not higher than the sale price.

**e. Pass-through donations**

Receipts for a pass-through donation to another organization or individual will be issued, provided that the Church recognizes such as a legitimate charitable end use which it supports.

**f. Cheque exchanges**

A cheque exchange means a donation is made to the Church (your cheque) and a cheque is issued by the Church to you (repayment of your approved expenses). You have spent the money and get a tax receipt. This allows: 1) the Church to hold properly receipted expenses; 2) the Church to show a cheque from the individual as a donation to the operating fund; and 3) to issue a valid tax receipt. Individuals thus pay for the item or conference expenses [their gift to the Church], but this process allows them to have a tax receipt for their donation.

In order to qualify under Canadian tax laws as “a donation eligible for the issuance of a tax receipt by a registered, charitable, non-profit organization,” there must be clear value to the goals of the organization. Whether the donation is of material or of costs associated with participation in conferences or training, the general rule is that the organization must receive a definite benefit consistent with its aims and needs.

To meet both government and Church goals, cheque exchanges are only possible when proper receipts for the item, travel costs, or registration fees are submitted. To ensure that only donations of clear value to the Church are compensated, permission for the cheque exchange must be obtained from the Treasurer (or, in the absence of the Treasurer, the President).

Each individual must submit receipts to support the request along with a cheque to the Church for the amount to be covered. (A properly issued receipt must be submitted – except for automobile kilometrage where a hand-written note is adequate.) A cheque is then issued by the Church to the individual for the claimed amount.

**5. JOHN CORDNER FUND**

In 1955, under the terms of the will of the late Caroline Cordner, daughter of the Rev. John Cordner, a sum of about one hundred and thirty thousand dollars (\$130,000) was given to the Board of the Church of the Messiah [now the Unitarian Church of Montreal] as trustee of a fund in perpetuity, to be spent for the benefit of women in reduced circumstances. There are certain stipulations attached to this fund, including:

- The Minister of the Church shall have responsibility for deciding how the income from the fund shall be spent.
- The principal amount of the fund shall not be spent but shall remain in perpetuity.
- Any interest not spent in any year shall be added to the principal, and may not be spent in subsequent years.

In keeping with the above, the following guidelines shall be followed by the Minister, the Investment Committee and the Treasurer acting for the Board.

- In any one year, withdrawals from the fund shall not exceed 4.5% of the average fund value from the prior three years.
- The fund should be invested in a conservative manner so as to minimize the risk to the capital, yet invested in the market so as to produce an increase in capital value. The ratio of these two shall be determined by the Investment Committee, subject to keeping the Board informed.
- The Minister shall inform the Board from time to time, and the Congregation annually, how the money has been spent.
- The Treasurer, in consultation with the Minister, shall arrange for periodic transfers from the Investment Fund to the bank account of the Corder Fund. In addition, special amounts, when available, may be transferred at the Minister's request.
- During the month of December each year, the Minister and Treasurer shall meet to determine how much additional money may be withdrawn from the Investment Fund before the year end, in keeping with the above guidelines.

## **E. PROPERTY**

### **1. ACQUISITION & FURNISHING OF BUILDING & PROPERTY ITEMS**

Items should reflect as many as possible of the following criteria, and not be inconsistent with any.

- Be consistent with one or more of the seven Unitarian principles.
- Reflect enduring symbols and ideals.
- Connect with programs and activities of the Unitarian community, rather than outside organizations and groups.
- Be aesthetically appropriate to the space.
- Be free of unacceptable donor restrictions.
- Honour our heritage and nurture our present.
- Express our message of hope.

Items should be accepted by a two thirds vote of the deciding body, whether the Executive, the Board, or the Congregation.

## **F. BUILDING ACCESS**

### **1. EVENTS IN THE CHURCH**

There must be an authorized key/code holder in the building when it is in use. The key/code holder must meet the requirements as a Special Voting Member of the Church and may be required to provide a verbal reference from a known member of the Congregation. To sponsor use of space in the Church building, the key/code holder will be personally responsible for:

- allowing access to the space (unlocking doors and turning off the alarm);
- making sure the group is using the correct space at the correct time;
- making sure the space is returned to its proper condition – chairs and tables put away, windows closed, thermostats turned down, etc.;

- if no other activity is being held in the building, closing and locking the doors and turning on the alarm.

### **Use of space**

Once approved, all the physical facilities are available to the organizers of the event, provided the policies and rules governing the use of various rooms and facilities in the Church building (e.g., supervision of children in the nursery) are followed. This includes use of the Sanctuary – where food and drink are not permitted – and other rooms, with the understanding that furniture and furnishings in all areas are returned to their normal state of cleanliness and readiness.

### **Children and infants**

Child care is not generally available for Congregational programs and events, unless specified. Caregivers may be requested on the basis of 48 hours' notice. The caregiver is paid a standard rate by those requesting the service. The Church has a list of caregivers who are qualified to provide this service and only they should be used. Those in charge should know about the location of the First Aid Kit.

Further, *where children are present, the Safety and Health Policy adopted by R.E. will apply* regarding child care, drop-offs and pick-ups, diaper changing, types of snacks, and presence of an adult in the room. Persons using the R.E. section of the building should be aware that there is a nut-free policy enforced in this area.

Where applicable, an attempt should be made to identify potential allergens by providing a clear list of ingredients in any foods, and by asking participants about any food allergies. Moreover, any medical conditions that may potentially require emergency action should be identified to the organizer of the program

### **Fire drills**

Drills should not be held during the activities described, but those in charge should be made aware of exit routes and proper procedures in the case of fire.

## **2. CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAMS**

**Existing programs:** Scheduling of space use will take place twice a year during a Council Meeting called by the Vice-President of the Board and Congregational Programs Chair and publicized in the UCM Newsletter and 'Week at a Glance'. The meetings take place at the beginning of June for the September-December session, and the beginning of December for the January-June session. A program representative must attend to assure space reservation. He/she should also have the name of the key/code holder who will sponsor use of the space and have an estimate of the number of participants. The size of the group is important in reserving appropriate space and in evaluating the popularity of the activity. If a group representative cannot attend the council meeting, he/she should send advance notice to the Congregational Programs Chair, requesting the use of the space and providing details as above. Note, however, that if there is a conflict over a particular space at the meeting, the representative in attendance will take precedence.

**New programs:** A written proposal seeking preliminary approval must be submitted to the Congregational Programs Chair during the first week of September or the first week of December. (Proposals for new programs can be submitted at any time but the approval process may take longer.) In some cases, the person proposing the activity may be asked to place a notice in the UCM Newsletter to determine if there is sufficient interest, either by scheduling a preliminary planning meeting or by asking interested parties to call. If the program attracts fewer than eight people, they may be asked to move the time and/or location. Once approved, the program can be publicized in the “What’s Going On” pamphlet, which will be distributed electronically, with a few hard copies made available in the foyer. The program may also be listed in the UCM Newsletter and in ‘Week at a Glance’

**Custodial services and expenses:**

Custodial costs are paid through the Church office, not directly to the custodian.

For Congregational programs, custodians are provided at Church expense unless there are fewer than five participants, in which case they may be asked to schedule their program for times when staff is in the building. For special and outside events, custodial staff are available to help set up tables and chairs as needed in time for the event, to carry out necessary tasks in collaboration with the volunteers during the event, and to participate in the clean-up after the event. The organizing committee must work in collaboration with the Church staff while respecting other staff responsibilities. If additional custodial time is needed (over and above regular custodial schedule), the cost of such additional time may be paid, at the discretion of the Board, from the operating budget or by the event’s organizing group(s).

3. SPECIAL EVENTS

Outreach events (e.g., Empty Bowls, Fair Trade Fair, Concert for Peace) should fit with our mission statement and must be organized under the auspices of a Board member and his/her committee, approved by that committee, and quickly brought to the Board for approval and endorsement. Even when events are held annually, or at any time in previous years, they must still obtain both Committee and Board approval each time.

Events are scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis. The organizer should check with the Church administrator regarding available time and space and complete the required form.

4. OTHER PROGRAMS

Any group that wishes to rent Church space may do so provided they meet the following requirements:

- they are willing to pay the rental rate;
- the space is available for the time needed;
- the activity of the group should be consistent with the UCM mission statement.

**Special rate reduction requests:** When a rate reduction is requested from an outside group, a delay of up to three months may be required in order to evaluate the request. The Vice-President of the Board, together with optional input from the Minister, Executive or the Board, will decide if a rate reduction is warranted. Favourable consideration will be given to groups whose mission is in line with the UCM and where use of the space does not disrupt other activities taking place in the

building. The Church administrator does not have authority to offer special rates until after consultation with the Vice-President.

**Priority of Congregational use:** The use of space by Congregational programs will take priority over rental of space by outside groups.

## 5. FRANCOPHONE GROUP

Thanks to the long and dedicated work of the *Mouvement unitarien universaliste au Québec* (MUUQ), and the energetic work of the *Regroupement francophone unitarien universaliste* (RFUU) on the Canadian and international level, the Francophone Group at the Unitarian Church of Montreal has come together to celebrate Unitarianism in French.

Since the great majority of the Francophone Group are members of the Congregation and a few are longstanding friends of the Unitarian Church of Montreal, the Francophone Group became part of Congregational Programs as of 17 May 2006 with the following mandate:

*Le groupe francophone de l'église unitarienne de Montréal assume le mandat d'assurer des célébrations en français et de promouvoir et organiser des activités en français.*

## G. SAFETY & HEALTH POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### 1. IN THE CHURCH

#### **Ratio of caregivers to infants/children**

- No more than three infants/toddlers (up to age 3) per caregiver;
- No more than five small children (ages 3 through 5) for each caregiver;
- No more than twelve children aged six or over for each caregiver/teacher;
- All R.E. classes must have two adults present at all times for insurance/safety reasons. In unforeseen circumstances, when only one adult is available, the classroom door must be kept open.

#### **Drop-offs and pick-ups**

- A sign-in/sign-out sheet on a clipboard is kept near the entrance of the nursery/preschool area. It will be monitored by caregivers and teachers.
- The person signing a child in will be asked if he/she will be picking up the child. If not, the person to pick up the child should be identified to the caregiver/teacher.
- In case of an emergency exit (e.g., fire drill), the sign-up and attendance sheets for all the infants/children go with the group/class;
- Children on the Nursery/Garden Room level will not be permitted to leave the area with anyone except teachers, recruited adult volunteers, or caregivers.

**Diapers:** At registration each week, parents of nursery/preschool children should be encouraged to bring a change of clothes and diapers. The door of the changing room is to be left open when changing a diaper. Diaper changers must wash their hands afterwards.

**Allergies:** All R.E. rooms are nut-free on both levels. Ask about possible allergies and other medical conditions at registration. A list of children with food allergies should be posted in each classroom.

**Snacks:** Let parents know what kind of snacks will be served and, if they wish to bring some, ask them to bring fruit. If home-baked goods are served, get a list of ingredients. Note also the provisions under ‘Allergies.’

**First Aid:** All teachers and sitters should be aware of the location of first aid supplies, and parents should be notified of any injury treated while a child is in our care. Efforts should be made to identify members of the Congregation qualified in First Aid.

**Fire Drills (Building Evacuation):** Fire Drills will be conducted at least twice yearly so teachers and caregivers should be made aware of exit routes and the rally spot.

**Toys and Furniture:** Toys and furniture will be chosen to be age-appropriate as deemed by the D.R.E. Those in the nursery/preschool area will be washed twice a year. The crib sheet in the nursery will be washed, as needed, by the nursery/preschool coordinator. Any donations of books and toys will be checked by the D.R.E. for content and appropriateness.

**Security Checks:** Volunteers, and paid caregivers and teachers will be asked to agree to a police check.

## 2. ON CHURCH OUTINGS

- When children are driven in private cars by people other than their parents or legal guardian, the car must be no more than six years old and the driver should have a minimum liability insurance of one million dollars (\$1,000,000.) Collision insurance is the responsibility of the driver.
- When children are driven by persons other than their parents or guardian, whether in rental or private vehicles, the driver (whether volunteer or staff) must be 25 or older, must show a valid driver’s license to the D.R.E. and must not drink alcoholic beverages within 24 hours before taking the wheel.
- If the vehicle is rented, liability and collision insurance should be purchased with no deductible.
- The ratio of adults to children per vehicle should be at least one to four for children aged 11 or younger, and at least one to five for youths aged 12 or older.
- Children weighing less than 100 lbs. (45 kilos) should not ride in the front seat.
- Car seats should be used for infants and children weighing 40 lbs. (18 kilos) or less.
- All passengers should use seat belts at all times.
- In hazardous weather conditions, the driver should exercise caution in deciding whether to postpone the trip, pull off the road, or carry on.
- When attending a conference or similar events, volunteer drivers using their own cars are entitled to reimbursement for the cost of fuel, provided receipts are submitted. Alternatively, the driver may request a ‘cheque exchange’ as per the Standing Rules (see Paragraph f under Guidelines for Issuing Tax Receipts) for an amount calculated on the basis of kilometres driven, this rate to be set by the Executive Committee.

Parents will be asked to sign a waiver, as follows:

I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
to attend \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
on \_\_\_\_\_ with the full understanding that: (a) transportation may be provided by  
private vehicles (drivers will have personal liability insurance); and (b) while the Church and its  
representatives will take every reasonable precaution, the Church cannot be held responsible for  
unforeseen events, illness, accident, or injury during the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_ Printed name of parent or guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of parent or guardian

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The following guidelines are not binding; but should be followed when financial and human resources allow:**

For a large group of youths attending a conference, multiple vehicles are preferable to one large vehicle (e.g., a bus or van). When planning a trip, there should be a designated back-up driver or drivers in case complications are encountered.

**At the discretion of the parent(s) or guardian.**

For trips outside Quebec, it is recommended that parents check their medical insurance coverage and/or apply for additional medical coverage for their child(ren).

## **H. COMMITTEES AND THEIR MANDATES**

Committees are open to all Church Members and adherents. Persons who are neither Church Members nor adherents may participate by invitation of the committee chairperson. Some committees are specified in Article XI of the By-Laws (Board of Management, Executive Committee, Nominating Committee and Religious Education Committee). The Wardens are covered under Article XVI. Article XI, Section 5, allows for other committees as needed.

The following committees have representation on the Board of Management and the chairs are elected at the Annual General Meeting.

### **CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The Congregational Program Committee shall

- consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, who shall chair the Committee, and at least two (2) other Church members;
- provide opportunities for contact between members of the Congregation (other than Sunday mornings) through recreational, cultural, and instructional activities;

- review program schedules in June and December;
- issue the booklet “What’s Going On” each autumn and winter.

#### ASSOCIATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Associational Affairs Committee shall consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, who shall chair the Committee, and at least two (2) other Church members. The Associational Affairs Committee shall

- serve as the major liaison between the Canadian Unitarian Council, other Unitarian Universalist congregations, and UU international organizations;
- publicize within our Congregation associational activities going on outside our own Church; and
- encourage our members to participate in associational activities.

#### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee shall consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, who shall chair the Committee, a representative from the Caring Network, and at least two (2) other Church members. The Membership Committee shall:

- maintain the Information Table; order pamphlets and sermons as required;
- seek out, welcome and invite visitors to sign the guest card or book and to look at Church literature;
- maintain an up-to-date visitors’ list in conjunction with the Church Administrator;
- send letters of welcome to visitors;
- twice a year send letters to prospective members inviting them to attend information sessions on Unitarian Universalism and to consider joining the Church;
- encourage new members to participate in Church committees and activities;
- assist in long-range membership growth with other concerned persons.

#### **Caring Network**

A subcommittee of the Membership Committee shall be the Caring Network composed of at least six Church members, who select the coordinators, each of whom manages the Network for two months during the year. The Caring Network shall recruit volunteers from the Congregation who are willing to help others during times of transition – loss of a job, moving to a new neighbourhood or city, the arrival of a new baby or unexpected illness, family problems, separation or divorce, or bereavement. Volunteers may be asked to do telephone check-ups, make hospital and home visits, prepare and deliver food, help with shopping, or act as chauffeur. The Network will also endeavour to keep in touch with those members who are no longer able to attend Church services or activities.

#### BUILDING & PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

The Building & Property Maintenance Committee shall consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, who shall chair the Committee, and at least two (2) other Church members. The Committee shall:

- look after maintenance and repairs of the physical plant, both inside and out;
- ensure the physical safety of Church premises; supervise the work of the Church custodian(s) and
- seek Board of Management approval for alterations and repairs to Church property where such costs are beyond budgeted amounts.

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee consists of a chair, who will report to the Board, a committee secretary, and members representing the newsletter, website and Church beautification teams, as well as any friend or member interested in being part of the committee. Although this committee has the mandate to publicize and promote activities and events taking place in the Church, or sponsored by the Church, no individual may conduct himself/herself in a manner that implies that she/he represents the views of the Unitarian Church of Montreal as a whole, unless he/she has been empowered to do so by agreement of the Board.

### 1. **The UCM Newsletter**

The UCM newsletter will promote the image and message of our liberal religious community, communicate the activities and programs of the UCM, and be an official information organ for the Congregation. The newsletter will communicate Church activities organized by members or friends and taking place in the Church. Exceptions involving other events of relevance to the UCM community will be made only with the approval of the Minister or the President of the Board.

The Newsletter shall

- be published monthly from September to June, plus a single July/August issue;
- adhere to a copy deadline of 8:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month;
- be distributed on the Friday of the following week by email, Sunday pick-up, and post;
- consist of no more than 8 pages, except in exceptional circumstances;

reserve space of one page (approx. 700 words) for each of the Minister, the President of the Board, the Religious Education program, and half a page (approx. 300 words) for the Social & Environmental Concerns Committee. (The Minister and President may take turns writing for the newsletter, if they so choose.)

- allot 250-300 words for all other items;
- be copy edited for grammar, spelling and factual details.

If more substantive editing is deemed necessary (either for length or content), the edited version must be approved by the writer.

If the editor(s) has/have questions about the suitability of the content of a submission then two members of the newsletter team and the chair of the Communications Committee will discuss the matter. Then if the matter is still considered unsuitable for publication, the editor(s) will contact the author and seek a resolution of the matter. If a decision is not reached by the newsletter deadline, the submission will be held for possible publication in the next issue of the newsletter. Between times a resolution will be sought. If no resolution is found, the submission will not be published.

### 2. **Website**

### 3. **Bulletin Boards**

(TO COME)

### 4. **Indoor and Outdoor Signage**

### 5. **Media List and Distribution of Press Releases**

## SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The Social & Environmental Concerns Committee shall consist of the Board member holding that portfolio, who shall chair the Committee, and at least two (2) other Church members. The Social & Environmental Concerns Committee shall stimulate and coordinate Congregational action on issues of social concern which are of significance to our members; when appropriate, sponsor and organize meetings designed to advance understanding and action on issues of social concern. Where appropriate, this committee will work with the Communications Committee to publicize, via e-mail to anyone interested, social justice events, news and information that they find potentially relevant.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee consists of the Minister, the Chair of the committee and other members who may take on specific roles or assist generally and take on specific tasks on an as-needed basis. The committee's mission is to assist the Minister in providing meaningful, organized worship experiences for members, friends and visitors. The Sunday Service is the main focus for those experiences. The committee is responsible for

- training and providing liturgists for each Sunday service;
- supervising the organization of greeters and flowers;
- arranging guest speakers when the Minister is to be absent and guest musicians when the Church Musician is to be absent;
- organization of services during July and August.

To ensure the quality of worship services offered, the committee seeks feedback regarding all aspects of worship (including music, which is an integral part of our worship experience) from members, friends and visitors. This information will be discussed and changes made as appropriate.

***NOTE: The following committees do not have representation on the Board of Management and the chairs are not elected at the Annual General Meeting, but are approved by the Board.***

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee should be constituted in September, be composed of the President or Vice-President and two members, and report to the Board or Executive [Article XI, Section 2C].

The responsibilities of the Personnel Committee are:

- to function as liaison between the Board and the Executive Committee of the Church, on the one hand, and the paid employees of the Church on the other;
- to represent the Board and the Executive in employer/employee matters;
- to negotiate new contracts and contract renewals, as approved by the Executive, on behalf of the Board and the Executive;
- to respond to requests for adjustments in salaries or schedules;
- to perform regular performance evaluations and goal-setting with employees;
- to provide a positive forum for conflict resolution for employees.

## LAY CHAPLAINCY

The Lay Chaplains' Committee shall consist of a Chair (appointed by the Executive Committee), the Minister, a Warden, and two other members-at-large. The two members at large and the

Warden will each sit for a three year term. The terms will be staggered so that only one person goes off the committee each year. The lay chaplain(s) sit on the committee except when discussing specific issues related to performance, or choosing another lay chaplain. The goal of the Lay Chaplaincy Committee is to oversee the CUC lay chaplaincy program in the name of the Unitarian Church of Montreal, as recommended by the CUC.

The specific responsibilities are:

- To function as a search committee in finding candidates for the role of lay chaplain, and to screen and recommend a selected candidate to the Board for final approval by the Congregation;
- To review the contract with the candidate duly appointed regarding the terms of the appointment;
- To recommend procedures for the public recognition of incoming, continuing, and retiring lay chaplains;
- To ensure that lay chaplains receive adequate training and to encourage ongoing training opportunities;
- To support the lay chaplain(s);
- To provide the personnel committee with an evaluation of the lay chaplains' performance when requested;
- To deal with grievances and to seek resolution;
- To make recommendations to the Personnel Committee with regard to renewal or termination of the contract with a lay chaplain with appropriate rationale for the recommended action;
- To recommend and review fees charged to non-members for rites of passage, as well as other financial guidelines;
- To establish policy with regard to equipment and resource materials for lay chaplains;
- To develop such resources as appropriate;
- To meet on a regular basis as needed; circulate minutes of their meetings to committee members; report to the Congregation at the annual meeting; and forward a yearly report to the CUC Ministry and Chaplaincy Committee.

#### COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The members of the Committee on Ministry, chosen by the Nominating Committee and endorsed by the Executive, are appointed or re-appointed at the Annual General Meeting. The committee shall consist of the Minister and at least three Church members who are actively involved in the life of the Congregation and who attend activities regularly. Committee members should have the confidence of both the Minister and the Congregation and should represent as many aspects of the life of the Congregation as possible (i.e., gender, age, years of participation, interest groups, etc.) The Committee shall make every effort to make itself known to the Congregation (i.e., announcements in the Congregational newsletter, having the names of its members listed in Church publications, etc.).

To fill a vacancy, the Minister, in consultation with existing committee members, will submit to the Executive Committee, the name of a suggested replacement. If approved, the name chosen will be submitted to the next AGM. Terms of office will be three years, not normally renewable, and staggered so as to assure both continuity and renewal. All matters discussed by the committee are confidential and meetings are closed to non-members of the Committee unless the Committee decides otherwise.

Goals of the committee:

- To strengthen the quality of ministry within the Congregation by providing a place for reflection on the overall status of the Congregation;

- To provide a place where the Minister can discuss sensitive matters relating to his/her work in a confidential and supportive environment;
- To provide a place where its members may discuss, confidentially with the Minister, matters relating to his/her work.

## HERITAGE COMMITTEE

This committee is to ensure the maintenance, use, and development of the Heritage Library and the Archives, and shall consist of the librarian(s), the archivist(s), the Minister Emeritus, and at least two other members of the Church. The Chair shall be appointed by the Executive every June, and should not hold the position more than three consecutive years.

The responsibilities of this committee are:

- to manage the funds of the Unitarian Universalist Heritage Library Fund;
- to appoint an archivist when necessary;
- to work with the archivist to establish policies about retention and disposal, and to ensure that these policies are carried out;
- to assist the archivist when requested;
- to appoint a librarian when necessary;
- to maintain the Heritage Library as a specialized research collection with emphasis on Unitarianism in Canada;
- to investigate, propose, and select appropriate materials for the Heritage Library, with the aid of the Minister, of scholars, and of Unitarian and Universalist historical societies, journals, and theological schools;
- to make known to interested groups the resources of the Heritage Library and the Archives, and to manage the access of books, documents, and other materials when requests are received.

## I. POLICIES RELATING TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

### 1. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted touching; repeated sexual comments or questions; the use of crude, sexually-oriented language which is offensive, demeaning, and inappropriate; or any other behaviour in which someone uses sexual language, behaviour, or threats in unwanted and intimidating ways.

There are clear criminal cases of sexual assault which demand immediate involvement of the civil authorities (police, Quebec Human Rights Commission, etc.). Moreover, all instances of child abuse are required, by law, to be reported to the youth protection agency (*Commission de protection des droits de la jeunesse*).

There are also less clear situations of sexual harassment, sometimes caused by miscommunication rather than misconduct, but unacceptable whether intentional or not. It is this area of harassment and discomfort that is covered by this policy.

The Church does not tolerate sexual harassment. It must be both reasonable and safe to make a complaint, and all complaints must be treated swiftly and confidentially. The goal is to provide support and information both to the person who feels that s/he is being harassed and to the person who is thought to have been the harasser.

**Procedures:**

Complaints may be registered with a member of the Sexual Harassment Advisory Group, with the Minister or with the President of the Board.

The Advisory Group consists of Church members who are able to maintain an objective, non-judgmental position, and to be empathetic without becoming emotionally involved. Members of the Advisory Group are not expected to provide counselling, judging, application of sanctions, or face-to-face mediation.

Members of the Advisory Group are appointed by the Executive and may be reappointed. At all times, two members of the Group shall be of one sex and one of the other. The names and of the Sexual Harassment Advisory Group will be published in the newsletter and posted on the kiosk by the Secretary of the Board.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the contact (i.e., an Advisory Group member or the Minister or the President of the Board) will offer to meet with the person making the complaint. Specific invitation shall be made for the complainant to bring a friend.

At this first meeting, the emphasis shall be to explore the complainant's feelings and to offer support while noting what is alleged to have happened, together with the relevant dates, names, places, etc. If the complaint involves sexual harassment and falls within the Congregation's area of responsibility, the contact person shall

- explain the services and support that are available from public and private agencies and those available within the Congregation;
- emphasize that the complainant will be able to carry the matter further or drop it at any time;
- explain that no action (other than that required by law for children or for assault) will be taken without the express consent of the complainant;
- assure the complainant that all statements and incidents will be kept confidential unless the complainant authorizes release, and that the purpose is to support, not to judge.

In addition, the contact person will offer:

- to assist in the preparation of a written statement of the actions that are causing concern and to have another member of the Advisory Group take a copy of the statement to the alleged perpetrator, to discuss it with that person, to explain that the behaviour is causing distress to the complainant, and to request that it be stopped. Should that interview not resolve the situation satisfactorily,
- to have the two members of the Advisory Group meet separately with the complainant and, on separate occasions, meet the alleged perpetrator -- several times if necessary -- to attempt to bring about a mutually acceptable resolution. If these efforts are not successful,
- to refer the matter to a support centre or a lawyer who is conversant with sexual harassment matters.

If the complaint involves sexual assault, as well as assisting in reporting the incident to proper civil authorities, the contact person shall find out if the complainant is afraid for her/his personal safety. The contact person shall immediately contact a shelter and, if necessary, provide transportation to a shelter. If a shelter space is not available, the contact person shall arrange for alternate accommodation for one day.

If the complaint concerns a person in authority in the Congregation, the contact person shall try to help the complainant prepare a brief written statement of the incidents involved, with dates, names,

places, and will get the complainant's signature on the statement. One copy shall be given to the complainant and one copy shall be kept by the contact person.

If the alleged perpetrator is other than the Minister or the President, the contact person shall immediately deliver a copy of the statement to both of those individuals.

If the alleged perpetrator is either the Minister or the President, the contact person shall immediately deliver a copy of the statement to the other of those individuals and to another member of the Advisory Group, the two of whom shall seek legal counsel.

Depending upon the advice received from legal counsel, the contact person may deliver a copy of the statement to another member of the Advisory Group, who will deliver it to, and discuss it with, the alleged perpetrator.

## 2. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOURS

Situations involving disruptive behaviour shall be referred to a committee consisting of the Vice-President of the Board as chair, *ex officio*, and two members of the Congregation. The names of these two members will be presented to the Board by the Executive and the Nominating Committee. No member may serve more than three years on this committee. If the complaint/conflict should involve one of the committee members, this person shall step aside and be replaced by a third person until such time as the conflict/complaint is resolved.

Tolerance of diversity is a central value of our religious principles, but the Church must maintain an atmosphere where such tolerance can exist. To the extent that anyone's freedom of belief, expression, opinion, personal physical and/or emotional well-being is intimidated or threatened by another or others, the source or cause should be met firmly, forthrightly and expeditiously, even if it means expulsion. Disruptive behaviour may be defined as involving

- potential threats to the safety of members or of members' children;
- disruption of essential Church activities; or
- diminution of the appeal of the Church to its potential and existing membership

The committee will:

- respond to problems as they arise with no attempt to define "acceptable" behaviour;
- deal with persons identified as disruptive as individuals (i.e., avoiding stereotypes);
- systematically collect information from the complainant(s) concerning the incident(s) before action is taken;
- contact the person named as the source of the problem and take notes of the situation both from the point of view of the individual and from a committee member's point of view.

If the problem is established, clearly communicate this to the offending individual, then draw up a contract stipulating clearly defined behavioural changes and have him/her sign. If this is not possible and the behaviour continues, the offending individual should be excluded from the Church for a limited period of time – with reasons for the exclusion clearly explained, as well as the conditions required for the individual's reinstatement.

If suspension of Church privileges is ineffective, the committee will then consult with the Board regarding:

- any danger posed by the offending individual to persons and/or property;
- the degree of disruption caused to essential Church activities;
- the likelihood of prospective or existing members being driven away;
- the reasons for the disruption (e.g., conflict between the individual and others in the Church or a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness);
- the likelihood that the problem behaviour will diminish in the future;
- the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past.

After consideration of these aspects, the offending individual may be permanently excluded from the Church and Church premises and, where warranted, membership in the Church revoked. [See Article III, Section 5 of the By-Laws and Robert's Rules of Order, 75:6]

