

A Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support
between
_____ **(name of the community of faith)**
and
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

Preamble:

The communities of faith and Regional Council of Western Ontario Waterways share ministry in mutual respect as part of The United Church of Canada. Together we celebrate God's presence, seek justice, and love and serve others. A covenantal relationship, intentionally and willingly entered into between a community of faith and the Regional Council, is an important symbol of our commitment to one another.

"Covenant" is a term with deep roots in the Christian tradition. In scripture it is frequently used to describe a relationship. For example the covenant at Sinai joined God and the people together in an expression of gratitude and mutual commitment with the Ten Commandments serving as the foundation for their relationship with God and one another. In Jesus, we are given a "new covenant" to love one another as we are loved by Christ. And in our personal relationships, marriage is a covenant that draws two people together into a partnership based on love, mutual respect and promises to care for one another.

This covenant between _____ and Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, is an expression of our gratitude and commitment to one another, promises to share the ministry entrusted to us as members of the United Church of Canada, and our gratitude for the gifts we have been given by God for this work.

Regional Council

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a regional council as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks with a vision toward connecting, supporting, and transforming. In so doing the regional council will:

- *make decisions concerning communities of faith with, not for, the community of faith*
- *offer staff resources to assist communities of faith in strengthening their understanding of themselves and to equip them to be partners in God's mission;*
- *support the community of faith through prayer and encouragement*

Community of Faith

_____ (name of community of faith) covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a community of faith as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks.

_____ *(name of community of faith)* will...

- *respect and follow the policies set out by the region*
- *participate in the work of Western Ontario Waterways Region by electing representatives to the Region,*
- *share information about the Region with their community*

- *support the Region through prayer and engagement in Regional ministries.*

Symbols:

Just as the bread and cup, or a wedding ring, are familiar symbols of covenant, our relationship is also represented with tangible symbols of our promises to one another.

The following symbols represent the spirit with which the regional council enters this covenantal relationship and represent our desire to connect, support and transform:

- Connecting: chain symbolizing how we are linked together
- Supporting: walking stick to show that we walk with each other
- Transforming: flame (candle) representing the ability to imagine possibilities through the Spirit

_____ names these symbols that represent the spirit with which they enter this relationship:

- *Name symbol and what it represents*
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Care for the Covenantal Relationship

Both _____ (*name of community of faith*) and Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council are committed to working together in positive ways.

We commit to a code of conduct that is uplifting and supportive and all take responsibility to stand against bullying and harassment.

We all recognize that there may be times when through misunderstanding, inattention, or poor judgement we may cause harm to the covenant between us. In such moments, we commit to drawing closer even when tempted to create distance and to seeking ways to restore our relationship using whatever resources might help with that until we reach agreement on the way forward.

Dated at {insert place and date}

_____ On behalf of (*name of community of faith*)

Dated at {insert place and date}

_____ On behalf of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council