

**Northern Spirit Regional Council  
Meeting and Business Procedures**

**A WHOLE PEOPLE'S COVENANT**

Each of us comes as a pilgrim to this gathering of siblings in Christ. Each of us comes with our own cultural values, assumptions, and world views. Each one of us, and the cultures we represent, are God's living letters of faith, hope, love, and beauty. Therefore, we embrace the following Christian virtues that honour God and promote right relationship between us as we gather together and learn from one another:

**We promise to relate to one another with**

- respect;
- humility;
- patience;
- open-mindedness;
- courage; and
- the spirit of grace and forgiveness we have received in Christ Jesus.

**We acknowledge the land that we stand upon by**

- remembering that Indigenous peoples have walked these paths;
- understanding that we are one part of God's creation; and
- honouring future generations by preserving this land as they find their own paths.

**In our Christian love for one another we will**

- invite the Spirit into both our worship and business;
- attend to others with our whole selves: our physical senses, intuition, imagination, and intellect;
- speak for ourselves in the spirit of truth and gentleness, avoiding unhelpful generalizations and racial stereotypes;
- not interrupt when others are speaking;
- be mindful of language that is not inclusive;
- affirm the deep wisdom of silence and pause, as necessary, to ponder what others have said;
- seek to understand rather than win arguments and assume best intentions;
- hold our beliefs and opinions lightly; and
- hold one another in prayer.

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**HOLY MANNERS**

The Very Reverend Marion Pardy introduced Holy Manners as a resource for the 38th General Council 2003. Holy Manners has been used as resource for the conduct of meetings by subsequent General Councils and their executives. It has been adapted here for use as a resource by all councils and church bodies.

**We will**

- keep God at the centre of everything we do;
- each speak for ourselves;
- speak for a purpose;
- separate people from problems;
- allow for full and equitable participation;
- attend to others carefully without interruption;
- welcome the conflict of ideas;
- take a future orientation;
- demonstrate appreciation;
- honour the decisions of the body;
- commit to holding one another to account when we do not keep our holy manners;
- keep the discussion at the table;
- be mindful of our body language;
- check in about good use of time;
- allow the quiet people to speak, with an invitation to speak; and
- sincerely say what we really feel.

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**MEETING PROCEDURES**

*(Numbering in this section is from The Manual 2021 Appendix, Pg. 190-194, and only includes sections relevant to this meeting)*

**3.1 The Chair**

The chair keeps a meeting of the council on track and may make rulings on procedure and the conduct of the meeting.

All members must be able to participate fully and comfortably.

Every voting member makes decisions on the basis of their own understanding of scripture and of the ethos of the United Church, in the light of Christian experience, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit at work in the meeting of the council.

Any member of the council may bring to the attention of the chair any concerns about how a motion is being dealt with.

When an agenda has been adopted that specifies the time for particular items, such time shall be strictly adhered to, unless the council decides otherwise by a 2/3 majority of those voting.

The chair does not participate in the discussion or vote except in the case of a tie. If the chair wants to express an opinion, then they move aside from the role and ask another member to chair until the matter is disposed of.

**3.2 How to Conduct a Meeting**

**3.2.1 Process**

A council may set its own process for conducting business. If the council has not set its own process, it follows the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot's Rules).

**3.2.2 Motions**

A council may only pass motions for which it has the authority and which do not contradict the decision of a higher council.

A motion contradicting a motion already passed at the same meeting is out of order, unless it is a motion to reconsider.

**3.2.3 Challenging Rulings**

A voting member may challenge a ruling of the chair at the time the ruling is made. The chair restates the ruling and may give reasons. The secretary then calls the vote without any discussion on whether the chair's ruling is sustained.

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**3.3 How to Amend a Motion**

When a motion has been made and is open for discussion, any motion to amend must be dealt with before dealing with the original motion.

When all motions to amend have been dealt with, the council may deal with the final form of the original motion.

Any voting member, except the mover and seconder of the original motion, may make a motion to amend the original motion.

A motion to amend fails if there is no seconder.

A motion to amend may not change the intention of the original motion.

A separate vote must be taken for each motion to amend.

**3.5 Motions That Interrupt the Meeting**

At any time during a meeting, any voting member may make a motion to

- a) close discussion without a vote on the motion;
- b) fix the time to adjourn;
- c) adjourn;
- d) take an immediate vote (2/3 vote required);
- e) limit or extend limits of discussion (2/3 vote required);
- f) postpone discussion and decision on the motion to a definite time;
- g) refer the motion to another body or commission;
- h) amend/change the motion; or
- i) postpone discussion and decision on the motion indefinitely (without a specified time).

An original motion may be interrupted by any of the above motions.

While these motions are being dealt with, they may only be interrupted by a motion above it in the list.

**3.6 How to Reconsider a Motion**

A motion to reconsider a motion already passed may be made if no motion is under consideration. A motion to reconsider has the same priority as the motion to be reconsidered.

Only a voting member who voted “yes” for the original motion may move the motion to reconsider. This motion must be seconded by a voting member.

A motion to reconsider in an ongoing meeting must be approved by 2/3 of the voting members present.

The revised motion may be reconsidered if a motion is changed on reconsideration and passed. A motion on which action has been taken may not be reconsidered.

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**3.7 Additional Procedures**

In any point not covered in The Manual, the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot's Rules) will be followed.

**OTHER:**

Divide a Motion (seriatim)	This is a request to vote on a motion in parts rather than in total. A seconder is required. If two persons ask, the chairperson <u>must</u> grant the request.
Point of Information	Any person can go to a microphone, interrupt debate and ask for information. For example, "What page is this on?" or "Who is speaking?".
Point of Order	Any person can interrupt to challenge or question procedures. For example, "We didn't vote", or "President, we are debating this motion to table and we shouldn't be."
Point of Privilege	Any person can interrupt debate to raise point of privilege. For example, "Our table group doesn't have copies of this motion" or "Could you please repeat the motion, I didn't hear it."

**BASIC RULES for DEBATE on PROPOSALS**

1. Prior to the Regional Council Meeting, proposals are received for information and consultation by the Regional Council Meeting Planning Committee. The Committee may make editorial suggestions to the proposing body to promote accurate understanding of the proposal by the people at the Regional Council Meeting. The Committee will communicate these suggestions to the proposing body and the proposing body may, or may not, take the suggestions.

Proposals that are received and edited prior to the Workbook deadline will be included in the Workbook (ROP Volume I). Proposals that have not been received and edited prior to the Workbook deadline will be provided in written form at the Regional Council Meeting.

The proposals will be available in a variety of ways: typed hard copy, via screen sharing, and read aloud at the time of decision-making.

Due to limitations of electronic online meetings any proposals received during the meeting or prior to the listening session prior to the meeting will be automatically referred to the Regional Council Executive.

2. All proposals will be presented in the following manner:
  - i. The Convenor will indicate which proposal is being dealt with.
  - ii. A representative from the proposing body will be given 3 minutes to present the 'issue' described in the proposal and their proposed action to address the issue (Listening).
  - iii. Questions for clarification only may be asked at this time.

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- iv. All proposals will be 'Listened to' before discussion happens.
- v. If technology allows group discussion time will be given (Discussion).
- vi. After Discussion, written responses will be submitted and received up until the stated deadline. A motion will be brought forth in the decision making time based on the feedback and according to the following:

*If the Regional Council is the Council of action, it makes a decision on the proposal.*

*If the General Council is the court of action:*

- a. The Regional Council decides if it agrees with the proposal.
- b. *If it agrees*, it passes the proposal to the General Council.
- c. *If it does not agree*, it decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the General Council.
- d. The Regional Council may include its own recommendations when passing the proposal on to the General Council.

*If the Regional Council does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to General Council only if there is a compelling reason. (The Manual 2021, F.1.3.1 (Regional Council a-d))*