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HOLY TRINITY THORNHILL

OUR CODE OF CONDUCT IS BASED ON CHRIST'S COMMAND "LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU." JOHN 15:12

INTRODUCTION

This proposed Code of Conduct is being piloted from September 2022 through to February 2023 Vestry Meeting. At the meeting we will determine if the Code requires any changes, agree to and make those changes, and adopt the Code as part of our parish community.

In discerning and enacting a Code of Conduct for Holy Trinity Church, Thornhill, let us first be mindful of scripture:

"*My command is this:*
***Love one another as I have loved you*." John 15:12**

We believe that all people are created in God's image. Hence, let us be guided always by the Christian virtues, the "fruit of the spirit" that Paul lists in his letter to the Galatian Church: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We seek to create a Christian environment that is welcoming, respectful, and safe for each and every member of our community. Whether in worship, in ministry, in service, or as an employee, we are all protected by the human rights enshrined in the laws of this country, as well as by our shared sense of fairness and decency.

WE ARE A VIBRANT, WELCOMING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FLOURISHING IN GOD'S LOVE THROUGH FELLOWSHIP, OUTREACH, WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH, IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF COMPASSION AND MUTUAL RESPECT.

We must ask continuously if our words and actions reflect the love of God to our neighbours and amongst ourselves. We are committed to work through obstacles seek opportunities to heal and further grow and connect with our Christian community.

Differences of opinion and disagreements are human and inevitable. We must commit to being respectful and to listening to one another in love.

We must not make disparaging comments about others, whether direct or veiled, in their presence or with others.

Demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour and speech will not be tolerated. We each have a moral obligation to speak up if we hear or witness words or actions that are discriminatory, unkind, or disrespectful.

APPLICATION

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, clergy, and congregation members at Holy Trinity Church, Thornhill. As members of the Holy Trinity community, we are expected to read, accept and abide by the provisions of the Code. As such, we uphold the following statements:

- **I will treat others as I would like to be treated, while understanding that all individuals are unique and have different needs.**
- **I will listen actively and communicate (verbally and non-verbally) in a courteous, respectful, and/or professional manner.**
- **I will support a safe, positive, healthy and respectful community which is free of violence and all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination.**
- **I will be nonjudgmental toward others and strive to behave in a manner that is free from bias, false assumptions and stereotypes.**
- **I understand that all work has value and will consider my colleagues and those I serve, and who serve me, as worthy of honesty and respect.**

CONDUCT FOR ALL MEETINGS, SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

IN PERSON, VIRTUAL OR BY PHONE

Discussions should be focused on the meeting topic at hand. All participants must be able and welcome to participate equitably and effectively.

It is not a violation of this Code of Conduct to express an opinion, raise research or describe an experience that is at odds with the opinions of others (an "articulation")—if it is part of an on-point discussion of the meeting topic at hand, and is offered in a manner that does not interfere with others' reasonable ability and welcome to participate fully. That means expressing differing positions with respect and consideration for all, in a manner that reflects Christian values and is demonstrably mindful of minimizing, as reasonably possible, its potential adverse effect on others. (Offering an advance warning of the potential for impact on others is one way to demonstrate such respect and consideration for all.)

No one should make an articulation that is reasonably expected to cause offense gratuitously (i.e., unrelated or unnecessary for the work on that topic).

No one should make the articulation as a personal attack or put-down of an individual.

No one should dominate the discussion.

We all should demonstrate consideration for anyone who appears to be in distress by promptly stopping the meeting and demonstrating caring, and pursuing a more helpful way to share pertinent information.

ETIQUETTE FOR ONLINE OR VIRTUAL WORSHIP AND MEETINGS

Mute your audio when you are not speaking during virtual meetings or services.

Minimize distractions and be present by turning off phones, paying attention to the topic being discussed and refraining from side bar conversations during services or meetings. Turn off your camera when eating, making noise, moving around, or changing location. Minimize background noise.

Raise your hand or use the "hand" signal to speak.

Do not disrupt the Service, meeting, or event (e.g., "zoom-bombing") or engage in harm or threats of harm of any kind. Do not create or contribute to a safety threat or unsafe or exclusionary situation.

Use care in your language. Meaning and tone are often lost in translation during on line sessions, and capitals can mean yelling. Humour can easily be misinterpreted online. Make sure you're not trying to veil offensive comments in humour.

Do not take or distribute pictures of, or copy, presentation materials unless explicit permission is granted.

When a meeting chair or participant is of the opinion that another participant's behaviour violates these norms of behaviour, the participant is expected to change their behaviour to immediately comply with the established norms of behaviour.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

"If your brother or sister sins go and point out their fault,
just between the two of you.
If they listen to you, you have won them over.
But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.
If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church."

Matthew 18: 15-17

A violation/breach consists of one or more of the following (See definition of terms below):

- **Persistent uncharitable behaviour, nonverbal or otherwise**
- **Microaggression**
- **Verbal harassment**
- **Physical harassment (Note: in the case of assault, the police may be notified)**

STEPS FOR RESOLUTION

Speak to the person directly if you feel comfortable, and say they are violating the code. You can bring a trusted friend with you and may ask them to take notes. The respondent may also bring a trusted friend or witness to the meeting, and this person may also be asked to take notes.

If there is no change, you may meet with the Wardens and present the offense in writing. At this stage the Priest can be involved at your discretion.

Next all involved parties (complainant, respondent, and support persons where applicable) meet with the Wardens and Priest for a full discussion.

Depending on the severity of the violation of the Code of Conduct, the Wardens and/or the Priest may resort to reporting to the Bishop and/or to the authorities. They may also recommend external counselling for either or both parties.

One month after the meeting, the Wardens will check in to see if the behaviour has changed or improved.

If unacceptable behaviour continues, further corrective action may be considered.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Ontario Human Rights Code:

- **Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome**

- **Discrimination refers to an action or a decision that treats a person or a group unfairly on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.**

Adapted from the United Church of Canada Code of Conduct:

Racial harassment can include name calling, racial slurs, racist jokes, ridicule, insults, or different treatment because of racial identity; degrading a person of a particular group; or negative comments made because of a person's race.

Systemic or institutional racism consists of patterns of behaviour, policies, and practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization and that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized people. These behaviours, policies, and practices often seem neutral but effectively exclude racialized individuals.

Microaggressions are the everyday putdowns and slights marginalized groups face every day from other people who sometimes do not know they're being offensive or patronizing. Microaggressions can be overt or subtle, and include discriminatory comments disguised as compliments.

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