

Thornhill United Church Policy (2020)

Privacy and Personal Information

Thornhill United Church accepts and supports the policy of the United Church of Canada which states that it “is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, accuracy, and security of personal information that is collected, used, retained, and disclosed in compliance with applicable federal, provincial and territorial privacy legislation. This includes, but is not limited to, the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) (2000, c.5). For more detailed information, please refer to the [PIPEDA in Brief page](#) on the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada website.

Privacy legislation, including the federal PIPEDA legislation and provincial and territorial legislation, establishes rules for the collection, use and disclosure of “personal information.” It addresses two issues:

- the way an organization collects, uses, discloses, and protects personal information; and
- the right of individuals to access personal information about themselves.

The 10 Principles

The United Church of Canada is committed to following the 10 principles for handling personal information as set out in Schedule 1 of PIPEDA. These principles are:

- accountability
- consent
- limiting use, disclosure, and retention
- safeguards
- individual access provision of recourse
- identifying purposes
- limiting collection
- accuracy
- openness
- challenging compliance

Personal Information

Personal information includes any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual—that is, it is information which can, directly or indirectly, identify an individual. Personal information does not include the name, title, business address, or business telephone number of an employee of an organization.

Personal information includes information in any form (e.g., printed/electronic) including home address, home phone number, age, personal e-mail address, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, mental or physical disability, family members’ names, employee files, identification numbers, evaluations, disciplinary actions, the existence of a dispute and related opinions, comments, social status, income, credit and bank records, donation information, loan records, or medical records.

All personal information obtained, compiled, maintained, and disclosed for The United Church of Canada by third-party agents and contractors must comply with standards comparable to The United Church of Canada Privacy Information Policy and applicable federal/provincial/territorial privacy legislation. Contractual provisions requiring such compliance must be incorporated into all third-party agent and contractor agreements.”

Collection of Information

Thornhill United Church collects personal information for the following intended purposes:

- administering compensation of ministry personnel /lay employees
- administering pension and benefits of ministry personnel and lay employees
- Maintaining church membership records, including to facilitate the provision of services to congregants
- Promoting stewardship and maintaining donor information including for tax reporting
- Maintaining records of persons elected to leadership positions.

Personal information may only be used for the purposes for which it is collected. Specific permission must be sought if personal information is to be used for any other purpose than that for which it was initially collected.

Congregant Information

Thornhill United Church uses REALM (software program) as its place of record for congregant information, information required for church records, elected member information, stewardship and donor information, and pastoral care notes. Information pertaining to current members and adherents is entered and stored in REALM. It is the Administrator’s responsibility to keep personal information current. This information will include but not be limited to:

- Name
- Address
- Contact information
- Emergency contact information
- Volunteer role(s)
- Vulnerability screening
- Elected member information

Weekly donations are counted by a small group of volunteers but are not entered in REALM by this group. The stewardship development and donor information are kept current in REALM by the Envelope Steward. The Treasurer also has access to this section of REALM.

Pastoral care information may be entered and accessed by members of the Pastoral Care Team.

Safeguards

The Administrator and two back-up volunteers have overall access to the system. It is the responsibility of the Administrator to enter, delete and alter information pertaining to congregants and produce necessary reports.

For all others, the responsibilities of the individual dictate the level of access to REALM. For example, donor information can only be accessed only by the Treasurer and those dealing with donations. Pastoral care notes are only accessible to members of the Pastoral Care team.

It is possible to audit who has entered parts of the system should a concern arise.

Human Resource Files

A confidential personnel file is kept for each ministerial and lay staff person. These files are kept in a locked drawer in a filing cabinet in the Administrator's office. Only the Chair of the Ministry and Personnel Committee and Chair of Council have a key to access to the files. All information in personnel files is the property of Thornhill United Church and employees have controlled access to their own personal information.

Pension and Benefits Records

The United Church of Canada manages pension and benefits records for ministerial and lay staff. The Treasurer and Chair of the Ministry and Personnel Committee may access the information.

Salary Information

Compensation of employees is managed through a third party (ADP) and the Treasurer has access as required to produce pay slips for staff and to generate the required accounting entries.

Record Retention

Financial and employee compensation information is retained as long as it is required to meet any potential obligations or legal or government requirements. Once this information is no longer required, it will be destroyed in compliance with federal and/or provincial retention rules. Information (eg. date of becoming a member or adherent, date of marriage, baptism, death, dates of employment) is retained as part of the permanent historical records of the church.