

**OTTAWA SCHOOL  
of  
THEOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY**

**CONSTITUTION  
(as adopted March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

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**PREAMBLE**

Whereas in the early 1960's it was determined that there was a need for religious education of the non-clerical members of the United Church of Canada, a program for lay members of the Church throughout the country was developed. These educational programs were known as Lay Schools of Theology. Accordingly, the Ottawa Lay School of Theology (OLST) was established in 1964 and expanded with subsequent inter-denominational sponsorship. In 2009 the name of the School was changed to the Ottawa School of Theology & Spirituality (OSTS). Since its founding the OSTS has acquired sponsorship by several additional denominations and recognizes the important role they have played in the School's continuing success. (For a list of the sponsoring organizations see Appendix #1.) Whereas lay education has become an increasingly important focus in most Christian denominations, the School has carved out a rather specific niche for itself in that it is run for the laity and by the laity. The School's non-denominational, ecumenical, and inter-faith approach helps students to appreciate the meaning of faith and spirituality in their lives. While encouraging dialogue among people of different beliefs, ultimately we hope that the School encourages students to develop as responsible, informed citizens.

**ARTICLE 1. Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Ottawa School of Theology & Spirituality, (the School, OSTS).

**ARTICLE II. Objects**

The objects of the School are:

- 1. to develop theologically and spiritually alert laity who are informed about what the Christian Church has believed and taught throughout the ages and is teaching at the present.
- 2. to work out carefully the meaning of faith and spirituality in our lives and for our times.
- 3. to aid and encourage dialogue with members of different faiths.

**ARTICLE III. Sponsoring denominations and organizations**

- 1. Christian denominations and organizations that support the aims and objectives of the School may be invited to become sponsors.
- 2. Sponsoring denominations may be called on to provide advice on religious and other matters.
- 3. A sponsoring denomination shall be invited to provide a Dean of the School for a one year term as requested by the School's President. The Dean shall have an honorary position.
- 4. Representatives of sponsoring denominations and organizations may attend General Meetings and may speak but do not have voting privileges.

#### **ARTICLE IV. Membership**

The membership of the School shall include any person who is registered as a student at the OSTS in the current School year or who is a member of the Executive.

#### **ARTICLE V. Privileges of Membership**

- 1. Attend classes.
- 2. Serve on committees of the school.
- 3. Attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) where they may speak and exercise voting privileges on motions.
- 4. Play an advisory role to the Executive Board of the School.

#### **ARTICLE VI. GOVERNANCE of the SCHOOL**

- 1. The School shall be governed by an Executive Board consisting of Officers (President, Past President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar) and Chairs of Standing Committees.
- 2. Officers of the Executive Board shall be elected, as required, from within the general Membership at the AGM.
- 3. The duties, responsibilities, and terms of office of the Executive Board Members shall be established in the By-Laws.
- 4. Committees and other positions shall be established by the Executive Board as needed and in accordance with the By-Laws.
- 5. Members of the Executive Board will serve without remuneration and no member shall directly or indirectly receive any profit from his or her position as such, provided that he/she may be paid reasonable expenses incurred by him/her in the performance of his/her duties.
- 6. The Executive Board shall meet a minimum of three times a year.

#### **ARTICLE VII. Committees**

- 1. Committees shall be formed by and shall report to the Executive Board.
- 2. Members of these committees shall be appointed for one year renewable periods.
- 3. The duties and responsibilities of Committee members shall be described in the By-Laws.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS**

- 1. There shall be one duly announced Annual General Meeting (AGM) held after each winter term, at which the Executive Board shall report to the Membership.
- 2. The AGM is open to the general membership.
- 3. Executive meetings shall be held at least three times per year,
  - (1) at the beginning of the Fall term
  - (2) at the end of the Fall term, and

(3) preceding the AGM.

- 4. Additional meetings may be called in accordance with the By-Laws.
- 5. Non-executive persons may be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Board.

#### **ARTICLE IX. Amending and Details Pertaining to the Amendment of the Constitution**

- 1. Amending the Constitution requires agreement of two-thirds majority of the Membership in attendance at a meeting of the full membership where the amendment is tabled.
- 2. Notice of intention to amend must be circulated to the membership by the Executive Board at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- 3. Submissions by a member for amendments to the Constitution must be made in writing and submitted to the Executive Board in a timely manner for full consideration.
- 4. The Executive Board shall respond in writing to all submissions for amendments to the Constitution of their decision on whether to table the amendment, before the meeting for which the issue might be addressed.
- 5. Amending Appendix 1 of the Constitution shall require a simple majority of the membership in attendance at a meeting of the full membership.
- 6. A quorum at the meeting of the Membership shall consist of 20 persons.

#### **ARTICLE X. By-Laws**

By-Laws shall be established to facilitate the operation of the School.

#### **ARTICLE XI. Amending and Details Pertaining to the Amendment of the By-Laws**

- 1. The Executive Board retains the authority to amend the By-Laws
- 2. The Executive Board shall report to the Membership on all activity relating to an amendment or a proposed amendment to the By-Laws at the AGM.
- 3. Submissions by members for amendments to the By-Laws must be made in writing and submitted to the Executive Board in a timely manner for full consideration.
- 4. Amending the By-Laws requires agreement by a simple majority of the Membership in attendance at the meeting where the amendment is tabled.
- 5. The Executive Board may choose to present any proposed amendment to a By-Law to the general membership in a for obtaining additional relevant information from the membership.

#### **ARTICLE XII. Non-profit Nature of the School**

The School shall be planned and operated without personal, financial or material gain for its members and any profits or other accretions to the School shall be used in promoting its objects.

#### **ARTICLE XIII. Dissolution of the School**

Should the School be dissolved, any property in possession of the School at the time shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws of Ontario. After any outstanding financial obligations

have been met any remaining assets shall be distributed equally among the sponsoring organizations.

**APPENDIX 1.**

The Current sponsoring organizations are:

The Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church of Canada

The Ottawa Diocese of the Anglican Church

The Ottawa Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church

The Ottawa Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church