

Chancel Furnishings and Decorations			
Source: Chancel Committee	Authority: Standing Committee on Worship	Original Approval Date: 2002 Last Review Date: -	Next Review Date: Dec. 2012
Purpose of Policy: To provide guidelines for the placement and use of furnishings, flowers, banners and other visual enhancements to the sanctuary for services of worship.			
Theological Rationale: Worship is a community experience that should engage the worshipper on many levels, including intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. The experience may be shaped by the arrangement of the physical space in which it occurs and by the use of decorations, art and other visual enhancements. The organization of the physical space and the use of visual enhancements should support the act of worship in ways which are consistent with the congregation's understanding of worship as a function of community gathered around the table of the Lord. While the space and furnishings used for worship are not in themselves sacred, they should be treated in ways which honour and respect the sacredness of the purpose for which they are used.			

- 1.0** The responsibility for soliciting, approving and arranging furnishings and visual enhancements to the sanctuary for services of worship rests with the Chancel Committee in accordance with these guidelines and other policies of the Official Board of Eastminster United Church. In the exercise of this responsibility, the Chancel Committee is accountable to the Worship Committee.
- 2.0** These guidelines are intended to describe the norm. Where exceptions are made, approval should be given by the minister in charge of the day's service(s).
- 3.0** The sanctuary furnishings will be arranged so that the visual focus is on the communion table.
- 4.0** The placing of flowers, art and other visual enhancements should always reflect the following considerations:
 - 4.a the 'action' of worship (the placement and movement of readers, singers and others who are leading worship) as determined by the minister in charge of the service;
 - 4.b sight lines for people sitting in all areas of the sanctuary;
 - 4.c the aesthetics, including colour, clutter, and tastefulness;
 - 4.d the message communicated by the piece, including its relation with the theme of the service.
- 5.0** In the placement and arrangement of furnishings and enhancements, great care will always be taken to minimize risks and safety hazards, including but not limited to the following considerations:
 - 5.a all designated aisles must be kept clear of obstruction;
 - 5.b exit signs must be visible at all times;
 - 5.c if candles are used, they must be placed a safe distance from all combustibles, an approved fire extinguisher must be available within easy reach and in clear sight, and at least one person must be designated to monitor the candles throughout the time when they are lit.

- 6.0** Decorations for particular seasons and festivals, including Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Thanksgiving, will be planned by the Chancel Committee in consultation with the minister(s) in charge of the services. Volunteers may be recruited to implement the plan.
- 7.0** The only items which will be placed on the communion table are the cross, the offering plates and items used in the sacraments. For marriage services, the candles and floral arrangement used for the Unity Candle ceremony may be placed on the table. When there is a desire to place a floral arrangement on the table, an alternative is to place it on a flower stand immediately behind the table.
- 8.0** Flowers and other decorations are normally placed in the designated locations; namely, the oak plant stands on the back wall of the chancel, the flower stand in the middle of that wall, the floor in front of the communion table, and the floor beside the pulpit. For marriage, funeral, memorial and other special services, the placement of flowers and decorations will be at the discretion of the minister in charge. Due to the risk of water damage, flowers and live plants should not be placed on the organ or pianos.
- 9.0** Members and adherents of the congregation are encouraged to donate flowers as memorials and other tributes. If there are more arrangements than can be reasonably used in the sanctuary, they may be placed in the narthex or parlour so long as at least one piece is placed in the sanctuary for each person remembered or honoured. Whenever possible, the church bulletin will provide written notice of the source and purpose of floral tributes. In every case, notice will be given to the minister in charge of the service so that the details may be announced.
- 10.0** The Canadian and Ontario flags are placed in the sanctuary so that they are visible but do not detract from the liturgical furnishings and enhancements. Flags are placed in accordance with appropriate protocols (eg. the Canadian flag is normally at 'stage right' in relation to other flags).
- 11.0** The use of banners is encouraged. Their style and colour should be appropriate to the liturgical season. Their message should complement the theme of the service or season. Their size should be visually appropriate to their locations.
- 12.0** Care will be taken to avoid using flowers, candles and other items which are heavily scented.