BEACON UNITARIAN CHURCH SHARING THE PLATE POLICY

One half of the open collection taken at each Sunday service is to be donated to local registered charities. This will be known as *Sharing the Plate.*

Scope

This policy will apply to the open collection taken on Sunday. It will not apply to, nor limit, any of the special collections (e.g. Partner Church) taken during the church year. Although the congregation should be reminded from time to time of the charitable work to which half of the open collection is being donated, the intent is that *Sharing the Plate* be a transparent and seamless part of the regular collection.

Oversight

The Board will appoint a 2-3 member committee (the *Sharing the Plate* Committee) for a period of 3 years to oversee the donation process. To provide continuity, the member terms should be staggered such that one member is replaced annually.

Eligibility

The intent of this policy is to support work done locally by smaller charitable organizations. The selected charity or charities must be registered with the Canadian Revenue Agency and have their principal activities in the Lower Mainland. The selected charity or charities will receive the *Sharing the Plate* donations for a period of 1 year (May to April) and will be eligible to receive the donations no more than every 3rd year.

Selection

The *Sharing the Plate* Committee will annually research smaller charitable organizations operating in the Lower Mainland and prepare a short list of 2 or 3 potential recipients using selection criteria developed by the Committee and approved by the Board. The Beacon membership will select 1 *Sharing the Plate* recipient for the following church year by a vote at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee will provide a brief description (1/2 page or less) of the work done by each of the 2 or 3 short-listed charities to the members of the congregation via the *Beacon* or through the Beacon this Week email list two weeks in advance of the AGM.

Members of the congregation may submit recommendations for a charity to be selected up to 2 months in advance of the AGM, along with justification. A request for *Sharing the Plate* submissions will be made annually in January through either the *Beacon* or Beacon This Week. Direct solicitations from charities will not be accepted.

The charity or charities selected annually will be invited to participate in a Sunday service at the start of the church year to inform the congregation of the work being done by the charity and garner support. At appropriate times during the year, the membership will be reminded of the *Sharing the Plate* policy and the work being done by the selected charity or charities.

Disbursement

The selected charity or charities will receive the *Sharing the Plate* donations in a single installment at the end of the church year.

Criteria for Charity Selection

The *Sharing the Plate* Committee will be guided by the following criteria when developing the short list of potential *Sharing the Plate* recipients. Each charity:

- must be registered with the Canadian Revenue Agency (i.e. have a charitable tax number);
- have its principal activities in the Lower Mainland;
- be a "smaller" charitable organization – one which will be positively impacted by the amount of the *Sharing the Plate* contribution;
- must do work which furthers the realization of Beacon's mission to "strive for justice, equity, and compassion among all peoples, and harmony with our environment".
- must be willing to come to Beacon to share who they are;
- must not have a formal affiliation with a religious organization.

Approved by the Beacon Board June 18, 2026.