

# By-Laws

June 2021



**Union Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
1875 – 2021**

Union Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
1118 Fourth Street Northwest  
Elk River, Minnesota



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## **ARTICLE I. Name and Denominational Affiliation**

### **Section 1. Name**

The name of this corporation shall be UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Elk River, Minnesota.

### **Section 2. Denominational Affiliation**

Union Church shall be a local church of the United Church of Christ as described in Article IV of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

## **ARTICLE II. Affirmation and Covenant**

### **Section 1. Affirmation of Faith**

Union Church affirms the Christian faith as expressed in the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith. It acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

### **Section 2. Our Covenant**

We are a diverse community built on the foundation of God's love as shown to us in the life, teachings, and promises of Jesus Christ. Relying on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to deepen our love of God and our neighbors. We welcome all and exclude none as we commit ourselves to being active and

compassionate witnesses to God's mission in this world, especially to those people that society has neglected.

As faith members, we agree to offer one another mutual support, patience and respect as we pray, worship, gather for fellowship and on-going educational activities. As we covenant with each other by declaring our faith, we accept the responsibility of initiating the spiritual journeys of children and youth through engaging programs that preach messages of God's love, grace, forgiveness and acceptance. All members are called to minister to each other in the spirit of God's hope.

### **Section 3. Mission Statement**

Union Church exists to create a celebrating, covenanting, affirming and justice seeking faith community that inspires people to unite and create a peaceful, loving world.

## **ARTICLE III. Membership**

### **Section 1. Membership**

- a. Members** of Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ at the adoption of these By-Laws, shall be baptized persons received by: (a) affirmation of faith, (b) letter of transfer from another church, (c) confirmation, or (d) reaffirmation of faith. Members shall be formally received by the congregation during worship upon recommendation of the Minister.
- b. All regularly active participants** in the life of the church, whether received through membership or not, shall also be approved for all membership privileges.
- c. In-Active Members** are non-voting members, are not reported to the conference and have not been removed from the rolls. They are members who have not attended, supported or communicated with

the church for two years. An in-active member can be reinstated to active upon request to the Minister.

## **Section 2. Privileges and Responsibilities of Members**

- a. Members shall have the privileges to vote, to serve on ministry teams and boards and other church groups, enjoy fellowship, and receive ministerial services.
- b. Members shall be responsible for regular worship attendance, participation in the life and work of the church, attend congregational meetings, and provide financial support.

## **Section 3. Termination of Membership**

- a. Membership may be terminated upon the member's request.
- b. Membership may be transferred to another church upon request from the member transferring.
- c. Members will be removed from the rolls due to death.
- d. Members will be removed from the rolls due to no communication for five years.
- e. A former member may be reinstated upon request to the minister.

## **ARTICLE IV. Government and Organization**

### **Section 1. Authority of Local Church**

The government of the church shall be vested in its members. The congregation shall have the highest decision-making authority. This shall include the authority to:

- a. Govern affairs of the church; for legal and financial purposes, including the signing of documents to buy, sell, borrow or lend, outside normal



operating budget expenses. The church will be represented and committed through the signatures of any two of the persons serving as church Moderator, Clerk, or Treasurer upon congregation approval.

- b. Call ministers and hire other professional staff as deemed appropriate
- c. Elect officers, board members and ministry team members.
- d. Acquire and maintain property
- e. Establish and revise By-Laws
- f. Withdraw from the United Church of Christ

Although controlling its own affairs, this Church shall cultivate the fellowship of other churches and cooperate in the larger work of the United Church of Christ as a member of the Association, the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

## **Section 2. Church Officers, Boards and Ministry Teams**

- a. **Authority**--Between the annual meeting and special meetings of the congregation, the work and ministry of the church shall be conducted through its officers, boards and ministry teams.
- b. **Eligibility**--All elected officers, board and ministry team members shall be members or active participants in the life of the Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.
- c. **Terms of Office**--All board and ministry team members and church officers shall be elected for two (2) year terms and shall be eligible for reelection for up to two (2) additional terms after the expiration of their term.
- d. **Authority**-- All boards and ministry teams shall have the authority to organize themselves, including the election of chairpersons and the creation and staffing of committees as deemed necessary. They shall prepare annual budget requests. They shall offer direction, mentor, document and practice fiscal responsibility.

### Section 3. Church Council

- a. **Leadership**--The Church Council shall meet regularly. The Moderator shall chair the meetings. The meetings shall be open to any member of the congregation.
- b. **Responsibility**--The Church Council speaks for the congregation between Annual and Special Meetings. The business of the Church Council shall be to coordinate and prioritize the work and activities of the church, plan for the future, articulate policies and vision, and support the Church's overall mission.
- c. **Membership**--Members of the Church Council shall include the Moderator; Minister; Director of Faith Formation; Clerk; and one denominational delegate, along with a representative of the Board of Trustees, Formation Ministry Team, Worship & Arts Ministry Team, Outreach and Justice Ministry Team, Memorial Board, Congregational Life Ministry Team, two (2) at-large members of the congregation and a representative of Centennial Society.
- d. **Voting and Consensus**-- Rule by consensus shall be the effort whenever possible. Consensus will be considered valid with at least 3 voting teams represented for decisions without significant or expected controversy. In the event that consensus is not obvious, with the agreement of at least 2 out of 3 of the minister, moderator or clerk, the issue will be tabled for more discussion, further investigation or a vote will be held. Voting privilege shall be followed as defined in the Ministry Grid. This Ministry Grid shall be reviewed at least annually, with additional changes possible as agreed by Council at least one meeting in advance of any vote. No member shall have more than one vote. Any member of a ministry team may represent their ministry team at Council for one vote per team. An ex-officio Council member may not represent a ministry team they attend. As voting is expected in only certain circumstances when consensus is not clear, motions will carry with a simple majority providing at least 50% of the voting teams

are represented. Following the Ministry Grid, the Moderator will have a vote in the event of a tie.

- |           |                             |              |                                      |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>TB</b> | Moderator                   | <b>V</b>     | Liturgical Arts                      |
| <b>XO</b> | Pastor                      | <b>V</b>     | Outreach and Justice                 |
| <b>XO</b> | Director of Faith Formation | <b>V</b>     | Congregational Life                  |
| <b>NV</b> | Clerk                       | <b>NV</b>    | Denominational Delegate              |
| <b>V</b>  | Board of Trustees           | <b>V x 2</b> | At large members of the congregation |
| <b>V</b>  | Personnel                   |              |                                      |
| <b>V</b>  | Faith Formation             | <b>V</b>     | Centennial Society                   |
| <b>V</b>  | Diaconate                   |              |                                      |

#### **Section 4. Nominating Committee**

The Church Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee from the Church Council. The responsibilities of the Nominating Committee shall be to develop lay leadership in the congregation; identify and foster good use of member's gifts and talents; and nominate officers, delegates, board and ministry team members.

#### **Section 5. Terms of Office**

Newly elected officers, delegates, and ministry team members will assume office immediately following their election at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the congregation.

### **ARTICLE V. Church Officers and Duties**

#### **Section 1. Minister**

The Minister shall be called for an indefinite term of service. The duties of the Minister shall be those which usually pertain to that office, namely the preaching

of the gospel, the administering of the sacraments, the conducting of public worship, the general oversight of the departments of the Church and the care of the spiritual welfare of the whole congregation. He or she shall be an ex-officio member of all committees' representative of the whole Church and coordinate the day-to-day work of other clergy and staff members. The minister shall be involved in wider church events and activities as time, energy and interest allow.

Additional minister(s) may be called as deemed necessary by the congregation to support particular areas of specialization as well as supplementary ministerial services.

## **Section 2. Moderator**

The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Moderator shall preside over the business meetings of the Church and Church Council and, as senior lay officer, shall work closely with the Minister to oversee of all departments of the Church, and be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees representative of the whole Church. In the absence of the Moderator, the Chair of the Trustees shall act pro tempore.

## **Section 3. Clerk**

The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. He/She shall record the proceedings of the Church and the Church Council. The clerk shall keep a register of the church members with the dates of their reception and removal and a record of all baptisms. Upon request, he/she shall issue letters of transfer to all other Churches. His/Her annual report shall include such items as are given in the annual report to the Minnesota Conference.

#### **Section 4. Financial Secretary**

The Financial Secretary shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. He/She shall sit as a voting member on the Board of Trustees. He/She shall keep a record of all financial pledges toward the support of the Church and its benevolences. He/She shall receive and deposit all funds of the Church including benevolences. He/She shall present an income statement for the annual report. He/She shall serve as a consulting member of the Stewardship Committee. He/She is responsible for sending quarterly statements of contributions to contributors.

#### **Section 5. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. He/She shall sit as a voting member on the Board of Trustees. He/She shall disburse all funds of the Church at the direction of the Trustees. He/She shall issue an annual statement to the Church and monthly statements to the Trustees.

#### **Section 6. Property Manager**

The Property Manager shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. He/She shall sit as a voting member on the Board of Trustees. He/She shall be the main point of contact for coordination of outdoor building or property issues. He/she may be asked to coordinate special indoor projects as needed. He/She will be responsible for recommending the yearly budget for outdoor property expenditures and operating costs of outdoor projects and maintenance, and will keep the trustees informed about projects planned and completed. In the event this position is not filled, the Trustees may choose to divide these responsibilities among themselves.

## **Section 7. Historian**

The Historian shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Historian shall collect and arrange the records of the Church, see to their preservation and summarize the Church's life to give identity to the Church. He/She will be responsible for conveying an accurate and understandable picture of the Church to future generations.

## **Section 8. Denominational Delegates**

The number of delegates apportioned by the Conference shall be nominated to represent the Church at the Minnesota Conference Annual Meetings and other ecumenical and denominational gatherings. They shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election.

## **Section 9. At-Large Members**

The nominating committee will select two at-large members of the Church to serve on the Church Council and they shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. They will be members of the Church unless an exception is specifically approved by the Church Council and the fact of non-church membership is noted at the time of election.

# **ARTICLE VI. Elected Boards and Ministry Teams**

## **Section 1. Diaconate Ministry Team**

- a. The Diaconate Ministry Team shall be comprised of up to eight (8) members to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Diaconate shall be responsible for all logistics related to worship services. Duties include opening and closing the

building, planning and coordinating communion, and overseeing all other logistics of the service. When pulpit supply is necessary due to the absence of the minister, the Diaconate shall work with the minister to provide worship leadership.

## **Section 2. Liturgical Arts Ministry Team**

- a. The Liturgical Arts Ministry Team shall be responsible for the decorating of worship space and Fellowship Hall. Liturgical Arts shall coordinate with the minister and the Diaconate Ministry Team the decorating of worship space and Fellowship Hall. Liturgical Arts shall be comprised of up to six (6) members to be elected at the annual meeting and/or special meeting of the church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for re-election for up to two (2) additional terms.

## **Section 3. Board of Trustees and Personnel**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of up to nine (9) persons: the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Property Manager and the chair of Personnel, all of whom are elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church, as well as up to five (5) at large members who shall be elected to serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. One of the five (5) at large members will be elected annually to be the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The Chairperson is a member of the Church Council.

- a. The Board of Trustees shall oversee and maintain the church property and manage the financial resources of the church. The board shall study the church's financial needs and resources, consulting with other boards and committees, to draft an annual budget for presentation to the congregation. The trustees shall undertake financial reviews of all cash accrual accounts on an annual basis, the depth and date of which shall be left to the discretion of the trustees and/or church council. There will be a \$400 limit on all work

done without a bid or quote. All financial records for any account of the church shall be retained for seven (7) years. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for publicizing the endowment fund, educating membership regarding the stewardship of assets through planned giving, oversee investments in accordance with guidelines established and approved by the congregation, and approve disbursement of funds in coordination with the church council. In addition, and in coordination with the minister, the trustees shall establish a stewardship committee to plan and conduct an annual pledge campaign to encourage responsible giving. The trustees shall follow the document retention policy established for the church to maintain contracts for personnel and vendors.

- b. The Personnel Committee, consisting of three (3) members to be elected at the annual meeting and/or special meeting of the church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for re-election for up to two (2) additional terms. The committee will establish job descriptions and evaluate performances of church staff members, consulting with the minister and the appropriate board or ministry team. The Personnel Committee will report to the trustees.

#### **Section 4. Faith Formation Ministry Team**

The Faith Formation Ministry team shall consist of up to five (5) members to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or special Meeting of the Church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Faith Formation Ministry Team shall be involved in the Faith and spiritual formation of children, youth and adults. The Director of Faith Formation will be directly responsible to the minister and work closely with the Faith Formation Team to coordinate the Church calendar and Faith and spiritual formation activities for all ages.



## **Section 5. Outreach and Justice Ministry Team**

This Ministry Team shall consist of up to eight (8) members to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Members shall a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Outreach and Justice Ministry Team will be responsible for local and global outreach, addressing issues of justice through; education, activities, actions, events, mission trips, service projects, special offerings and more.

## **Section 6. Memorial Board**

The Memorial Board shall consist of three (3) to six (6) members elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. The Board shall select a Council representative, a Treasurer, a corresponding secretary and a recording secretary. They shall receive, acknowledge and record memorial donations, establish suitable memorials according to family wishes and oversee the maintenance of the Memorial Register.

## **Section 7. Congregational Life Ministry Team**

The Congregation Life Ministry Team shall be composed of up to six members to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Members shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. They shall be responsible for membership care, lay visitation, hospitality and fellowship activities.

## **ARTICLE VII. Other Church Organizations**

### **Section 1. Centennial Society**

The Centennial Society of Union Church is an independent, but closely related fellowship that serves the church and the wider community. The Society is

responsible for its own organization including election of officers and the management of its own projects and finances.

## **ARTICLE VIII.                    Calling of Ordained Clergy**

### **Section 1. Search Process**

Whenever the office of Minister becomes vacant, the Church Council shall appoint an Interim Search Committee who shall recommend a candidate for approval by the Church Council. A Permanent Search Committee, representing a broad cross section of the Church, shall be nominated by the Church Council and elected by the congregation to select a permanent candidate. The Permanent Search Committee will work with the appropriate Minnesota Conference Minister to facilitate the search process. The selected candidate shall be approved by the Church Council for presentation to the congregation. A two-thirds vote of a meeting of the Church called to elect a new Minister shall be necessary for the call to be extended. As soon as practical after accepting the call, he or she shall become a member of the Church, and be installed as Minister by the Church in cooperation with the Association of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

A similar call procedure may be followed whenever a staff position is filled by an ordained Minister.

### **Section 2. Pastoral Relations Committee**

There shall be a Pastoral Relations Committee composed of five (5) or six (6) members who shall serve a two (2) year term for up to two (2) additional terms and be eligible for re-election. They shall serve as a support and advisory group: to maintain an open and healthy relationship between called minister and members of the congregation. They shall listen to and articulate and discuss with the minister the congregation's expectations and concerns.

### **Section 3. Termination of Services**

Termination of ordained ministerial services may be made by a sixty-day notice on the part of the Minister or by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular or special church meeting with a sixty-day notice to the Minister.

## **ARTICLE IX. Meetings and Business**

### **Section 1. Worship**

Public services for worship shall be held on Sundays and on weekdays as the Church or Worship and Arts Ministry Team may determine.

### **Section 2. Sacraments and Rites**

Communion shall be celebrated at such times as the Church or Worship and Arts Ministry Team determines. Baptisms, Confirmation, Marriage and Funerals shall be performed as agreed upon by the Minister and those receiving these services.

### **Section 3. Regular Meetings**

The Annual Financial Meeting of the Church shall be held on the second Sunday in January or on a date the Church Council may select, at which time the proposed annual budget will be submitted for discussion and approval by the congregation.

The Annual Church Life Meeting will be held the first Sunday in June or on a date the Church Council may select, at which time annual Church Life reports from all boards and elected ministry team/church officers shall be presented along with elections for Board, Ministry Team Members and Officers shall occur.

All meetings shall be conducted according to the Robert's Rules of Order.

#### **Section 4. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Minister, the Church Council, or any five members of the congregation. Notice of the meeting must be given at least three days preceding the meeting. The notice of special meetings shall state the purpose of the meeting.

#### **Section 5. Quorum and Voting**

Twenty percent (20%) of the members of the Church shall constitute a quorum for transaction of all business at any regular or special meeting of the Church. Decisions of the congregation shall be made by a simple majority of those attending unless the Church Council sets a higher percentage. Absentee ballots are not recognized with the exception of homebound votes.

#### **Section 6. Homebound Voting**

As a church we recognize and value the opinions of all our congregants. We also recognize that some of our members are unable to attend congregational meetings due to being homebound. These members may request and/or be offered a vote through the pastor in advance of a congregational meeting so that their voice may be heard. The pastor will carry the homebound member's vote forward (held in confidence) and it shall be counted. In the event the vote would have bearing on the pastor's position, the Moderator or Head of Trustees would record the vote and carry that vote forward.

#### **Section 7. Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year of the Church shall close on December 31.

## **Section 8. By-Laws**

These By-Laws shall be reviewed every three years. The By-Laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the Church, provided that a statement is included in the notice of the meeting.

## **Section 9. Organization Anniversary**

The anniversary of the organization of the Church will be the first Sunday in February.

## **ARTICLE X. Property**

Upon dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interests which it then possesses, including any bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.