

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

By-Laws June 2011



Union Congregational Church

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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 Classifications

There shall be three classifications of members:

- a. Active Members**--All members of Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Elk River, Minnesota, as certified by the Clerk, at the adoption of these By-Laws, and all baptized persons who are subsequently received by: (a) affirmation of faith, (b) confirmation, (c) letter of transfer from any other Christian Church, or (d) reaffirmation of faith, shall become members. Members shall be formally received by the congregation upon recommendation of the Minister.

- b. Children**--Unconfirmed children of members shall be non-voting members. They are not reported to the conference.
- c. In-Active Members** - 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, serve on boards, enjoy fellowship, and receive ministerial services.
- b.** The responsibilities of members shall be to attend regularly, to participate in the life and work of the church, to attend congregational meetings, to provide financial support according to one's means.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

- a.** Membership may be terminated upon the member's request.
- b.** Membership may be transferred to another church. The transfer may occur upon advice of the Minister.
- c.** The Congregational Life and Ministry Team may vote to remove a member from the rolls if that member has not attended, supported or communicated with the church for two years, after making due effort to ascertain the cause. 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
- 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, church officers and denominational delegates shall be elected for two year terms and shall be eligible for reelection 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; CE Director; Clerk; and one denominational delegate, along with a representative of the Board of Trustees, Christian Education & Spiritual Formation Ministry Team, Worship & Arts Ministry Team, Service and Mission Ministry Team, Memorial

Board, Congregational Life Ministry Team, two (2) “at large” members of the congregation and a representative of Centennial Society.

Section 4. Nominating Committee

The Church Council shall serve as the Nominating Committee. 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. The Nominating Committee shall also appoint candidates to fill interim vacancies.

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.

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 two year terms. 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 in oversight 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 two year terms. 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 two year terms. 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 semi-annual statements of contributions to contributors.

Section 5. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve two year terms. 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 two year terms. He/She shall sit as a voting member on the Board of Trustees. He/She shall be the main point of contact for any building or property issue and will be the primary supervisor for the custodial staff. He/She will be responsible for establishing the yearly budget for property expenditures and building operating costs. He/She will manage the operating costs of the facilities and expenditures associated with maintenance and repairs and keep the Trustees advised on these matters.

Section 7. Historian

The Historian shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve two year terms. 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 two year terms.

ARTICLE VI. Elected Boards and Ministry Teams

Section 1. Worship & Arts Ministry Team

The Worship & Arts Ministry Team shall be responsible for all elements of worship, altar guild and music. The team shall be comprised of up to six (6) coordinators to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Coordinators shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of their term. In the temporary absence of the Minister, the Worship & Arts Ministry Team shall provide for a replacement.

Section 2. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall consist of up to three members and the Chair of Personnel, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Property Manager to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Three at large Trustees shall be elected to serve a two year term and shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of their term. Together with the Chair of Personnel, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Property Manager, they shall constitute the Board of Trustees and elect their own Chairperson and Recording Secretary. They shall have care and custody of the property of the Church. The Board of Trustees shall study the financial needs and resources of the Church, consulting with other boards and committees to draft an annual budget for presentation to the Congregation. They shall undertake financial reviews of all cash accrual accounts of the church on an annual basis. The depth of the financial review and the date of the review shall be left to the discretion of the Trustees and/or Church Council. All financial records for any account of the Church shall be retained for seven (7) years. They shall establish: a Stewardship Committee to plan and conduct an annual pledge campaign to encourage responsible giving; and a Personnel Committee who shall negotiate salaries, establish job descriptions, and evaluate

performance of church staff members, consulting with the Minister and the appropriate board or ministry team. They shall be responsible for publicizing the Endowment Fund; educating our membership regarding the stewardship of assets through planned giving; overseeing investments in accordance with guidelines established and approved by the congregation; and approving the disbursements of funds in coordination with the Church Council.

Section 3. Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Ministry Team

The Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Ministry team shall consist of up to six coordinators to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Coordinators shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of their term. The Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Team shall be involved in the education and spiritual formation of children, youth and adults.

The Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation will be directly responsible to the Minister and work closely with the Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Team. He/She shall be a Church staff person who will work closely with the Minister to coordinate the Church calendar and educational and spiritual formation activities for all ages.

Section 4. Service and Mission Ministry Team

This Ministry Team shall consist of up to six coordinators to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Coordinators shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of their term. The Service and Mission Ministry Team will be responsible for local missions, wider church and mission trips. They shall promote the support of missions and other benevolent work of the local community and wider church including denominational activities.

Section 5. Memorial Board

The Memorial Board shall consist of up to six members 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 reelection after the expiration of their term. The Board shall select a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. They shall receive, acknowledge and record memorial donations, purchase and establish suitable memorials and keep up the Memorial Book.

Section 6. Congregational Life Ministry Team

The Congregation Life Ministry Team shall be composed of up to six coordinators to be elected at the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meeting of the Church. Coordinators shall serve a two (2) year term and shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of their term. They shall be responsible for membership care, membership rolls, hospitality, fellowship activities and BeFriender ministry (lay visitation).

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 six members who shall serve as an advisory group: to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between called ordained clergy and members of the congregation, to encourage the Minister's care of self and professional development, and to articulate congregational 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 Meeting of the Church shall be held in the first week of February or on a date the Church Council may select, at which time reports shall be presented and the final budget will be submitted for approval.

The proposed annual budget shall be presented for discussion to the congregation at an open meeting or forum held prior to the Annual Meeting.

Elections for Board, Ministry Team Members and Officers shall occur at the end of the church year at a Special Meeting of the congregation in June or on a date that the Church Council may select.

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 active 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.

Section 6. Fiscal Year

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

Section 7. 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.

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.