

Constitution of First Congregational Church of Moline, Illinois
United Church of Christ

Preamble The document that follows is the Constitution of First Congregational Church of Moline, Illinois, United Church of Christ.

I. Name The name of our church is First Congregational Church of Moline, Illinois, United Church of Christ.

II. Purpose

The purpose of our church is to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the sacraments, to realize and recognize Christian unity and fellowship within our church and within the Church Universal, to render loving service toward all of God's creation and to work for righteousness, truth, justice, and peace within God's creation.

III. Form of Church Government

The government of our church is vested in the members who comprise our church. Our church is an autonomous and ecclesiastical body in matters of doctrine, order, and discipline that possesses, under its Head, Jesus Christ, full power of self-government. Our church is a member of the United Church of Christ and accepts the counsel and cooperation that is appropriate by such membership. In order to carry out the goals and charges set out in our Constitution, our church shall and will establish a Church Council and various Boards and Committees, as further described in our Constitution.

All meetings of our church and its Council, Boards, and Committees shall be carried out in the form and manner described in the most recently published edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

IV. Faith and Covenant

A. Faith

Our church acknowledges Jesus Christ to be the leader of our church. In accordance with our faith, tradition, and the Scriptures, our church celebrates two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ is the expression of Christian Faith of the members of our church.

B. Covenant

We covenant with God and with one another to live together in the ways of the Lord, as such ways are made known and to be made known to us. The mission of our church is to witness to the gospel in the world while worshiping God and striving for knowledge, justice, and peace. As our ancestors did, our church depends on the Holy Spirit to lead us to truth and to work and pray for the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

V. Membership

A. Qualifications

Any person who expresses a desire to lead a Christian life and assents to the Covenant may become a member of our church. In order to become a member of our church, a candidate may present a letter of transfer from another church or openly affirm his or her faith.

B. Status of Membership

An active member of our church endeavors to attend worship services of our church, to lead a Christian life, to share in the life and work of the church, to contribute to the support and benevolences of the church, and to seek the spiritual welfare of our church.

A member may request that a letter of transfer of membership be sent to another church. A member may request termination of his or her membership.

The Church Council shall remove a member from membership if he or she demonstrates a lack of interest or support of the church. A member whose membership is terminated may be restored to membership by request. The Spiritual Engagement Board shall maintain the membership rolls of the church and report changes in the membership as they occur to the Church Council.

VI. Ordained Leadership and Program Staff

A. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be called by the church and shall hold his or her office without limitation of time; become a member of the church as soon as practicable; arrange for services of public worship, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, and promote the spiritual welfare of the church, all as directed by the Church Council. The Senior Pastor shall be teacher, counselor, and general administrator, and have general supervision of the activities of the church, minister in the church and the community, take part in denominational and ecumenical affairs, and report at the annual meeting. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Church Council, all Boards, and Committees.

In filling a vacancy in the pastorate, the Church Council shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee from among the church members. The Committee shall seek and recommend a Senior Pastor who, in its judgment, should be called to the pastorate. This recommendation shall be presented to the church membership for its consideration and action at a special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose. A favorable vote of the congregation constitutes a call.

To terminate his or her pastorate, the Senior Pastor shall notify the Church Council in writing. The Church Council with the Senior Pastor shall at once notify the membership. The resignation shall become effective immediately, but the Senior Pastor will serve ninety days from submission of his or her resignation unless otherwise agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and the Church Council.

If the church wants to terminate the Senior Pastor's pastorate, the Church Council, following a ten-day written notice, shall meet and consider termination of the Senior Pastor. By a two-thirds vote of all members of the Church Council, the council shall request the Senior Pastor's

resignation. If the Senior Pastor does not resign, the Church Council shall call a congregational meeting to consider termination of the pastorate. If the congregation approves the action of the Church Council by a majority vote of those voting, the Church Clerk shall notify the Senior Pastor in writing, and the pastorate shall be terminated immediately unless the Church Council deems otherwise.

Notice of any termination of pastorate shall be given to the Association of which the church is a member.

B. Additional Ordained Staff

The church may, at its discretion, call additional ordained staff, to be called or released in the same manner as the senior pastor. Duties of additional ordained staff will be established in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Church Council.

C. Program Staff

All church staff shall report to the Senior Pastor. The church may, at its discretion, hire other staff persons to carry out desired programs as deemed necessary to implement the mission of the church. Duties of program staff will be established in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Church Council. Program staff may be ex-officio, non-voting members of appropriate Boards and Committees as established by the Senior Pastor and the Church Council.

VII. Church Governance

The Council, Boards, and Committees shall be staffed in accordance with the diagram attached to this document.

A. Church Council

1. The overall direction and management of the church shall rest with the Church Council using the input of our professional clergy and of the four Boards created by this Constitution.
2. The Church Council is the single governing board of the church and consists of nine members, including four at-large members (elected by the congregation), four board chairs (elected by their respective boards) and the Church Clerk (elected by the congregation). The moderator (Chair) and vice-moderator (Vice-Chair) are elected from at-large members of the council by the Church Council.
3. Members-at-Large shall be elected for 3-year terms and may be elected for one subsequent 3-year term. Thereafter, such members shall be ineligible for election to the Church Council for one year.
4. Vacancies on the Council of its at-large members shall be appointed by the Church Council. The appointee shall serve until the next election.
5. The Church Council is responsible for the following activities:
 - a. Church Policies and Governance - The Church Council oversees the development of any new, and revision of any existing, policies that affect the church. They are also responsible for seeing that those policies are followed.

b. Long Range Planning and Execution - The Church Council sponsors initiatives that utilize congregational input to identify goals and objectives. These goals and objectives with their associated milestones ensure coordination and execution by all boards and committees of the church. The Church Council shall communicate the goals and objectives to the congregation and is responsible for monitoring and tracking the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and milestones.

c. Budget Planning and Tracking - Budgets will be submitted to the Church Council by Boards and Standing Committees based on the goals and objectives established by the church. Although it is the responsibility of each Board and Standing Committee chair to ensure its focus area stays within budget, the Church Council will track the overall budget. If a Board or Standing Committee requires an out-of-budget expenditure, they will submit a plan to the Church Council for review and approval. The chair of the Building and Finance Board will report monthly on the budget.

d. Church Administration - The Church Council provides oversight for processes to nominate church lay leaders, personnel administration, communication and technology, and year-round stewardship. The Church Council also oversees the recruiting, hiring, and termination of paid staff and the formation of search committees.

e. Standing Committees - The Council shall appoint members for and maintain the following standing committees: 1) Nominating Committee, 2) Personnel Committee, 3) Communications and Technology Committee, and 4) Stewardship Committee. The Church Council can also establish additional standing or *ad hoc* committees to carry out specific objectives.

B. Church Boards

The members of the church shall staff Boards as follows:

1. Building and Finance Board

The Building and Finance Board's focus is on the growth and maintenance of church funds, the maintenance and renovation of church building and grounds, and the security and protection of church employees and property. This board consists of seven members elected by the congregation with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary elected by the members of the Board.

The Building and Finance Board is responsible for the following activities:

a. Church Fund Management - The Building and Finance board will receive, recommend, and supervise the investment of funds and bequests and their appropriate disbursement as requested by the Church Council. They will work closely with appropriate financial institutions to ensure security and growth of these funds.

b. Building and Grounds Management - The Building and Finance Board will oversee general cleaning and maintenance activities for the building and grounds. They will develop a prioritized list of renovation and large scale maintenance projects that will be submitted to the Church Council for approval and overseen by the Board.

c. Financial Oversight and Reporting - The Building and Finance Board will ensure financial records and monthly tracking of expenses are created and reported to the Church Council.

d. Security and Risk Management - The Building and Finance Board will ensure adequate precautions are taken to ensure a safe and secure environment is in place for the members and employees. They shall secure insurance against various hazards, and procure appropriate workman's compensation and health insurance where applicable.

2. Christian Education Board

The Christian Education Board's focus is on programs and activities for children, youth, and adults that develop a greater understanding of Christian principles and provide a solid foundation for both their spiritual and personal growth. This board consists of seven members elected by the congregation with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary elected by the members of the Board.

The Christian Education Board is responsible for the following activities:

a. Nursery Administration – The Board works closely with the Director of Family Ministry this board oversees and coordinates the recruitment of staff and volunteers for the nursery. They ensure that a safe and healthy environment is in place for all children who use the nursery.

b. Children and Youth Christian Education – The Board works with the Director of Family Ministry to plan and select programs and events for children and youth. They oversee the recruitment and training of volunteers for the church school, Confirmation, and other events. They ensure that a safe and healthy environment is in place for all children and youth who attend classes and activities.

c. Adult Education - The Board selects programs and enlists speakers that strengthen the understanding and spiritual growth of our adult members.

d. Leadership Development – The Board is responsible for developing programs to target our present and future lay leaders and to assist them as they fill various leadership roles in the church.

3. Spiritual Engagement Board

The Spiritual Engagement Board creates experiences for both existing and new members of the congregation to actively participate in worship, fellowship, and the caring for all members the congregation. This board consists of seven members elected by the congregation with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary elected by the members of the Board.

The Spiritual Engagement Board is responsible for the following activities:

a. Worship Planning - The Spiritual Engagement Board with the Senior Pastor oversees the general planning and guidance of all regular and special services of Word and Sacrament.

b. Worship Service Support - The Board oversees the selection and training of lay persons to assist with worship as ushers, liturgists, lectors, and communion preparers, servers, and assistants. It also coordinates the training and performance of the children, youth and adult choirs, and other musical groups to support the worship service and special events. The Board will also oversee the care of all music, instruments, and related equipment. When an open, paid music staff position exists, the Board will identify and recommend a candidate to the pastor to fill the position.

c. Fellowship and Hospitality - The board will oversee the planning and coordination of activities that allows church members to interact with each other, form new friendships, meet and welcome new members, and encourage active participation in the life of the church.

d. Congregational Caring - The Board will maintain a roster of church membership and activity. The Board will promote activities within the church that encourage health and wellness. The Board will also identify those members of the congregation who are homebound or require congregational support.

4. Outreach and Mission Board

The Outreach and Mission Board creates opportunities for members of the congregation to grow in their spirituality by sharing their time, talents, and treasure with both the external local and global community. It is through these experiences that the church can reach out, market itself, and invite those who may be looking for a church to join our congregation. This board consists of seven members elected by the congregation with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary elected by the members of the Board.

The Outreach and Mission Board is responsible for the following activities:

a. Mission Projects and Trips - The Board shall oversee the planning and coordination of various mission projects and trips to be conducted throughout the year. The Board will sponsor initiatives to raise funds for these projects and trips.

b. Red Wagon Day Care Center - The Board will oversee the operations and funds along with the appointment of personnel for the Red Wagon Day Care Center. The Board will seek out ways to invite people using the center to attend and possibly become members of our church.

c. Marketing - The Board will identify aspects of our church in the areas of Christian Education, Spiritual Engagement, and Mission and Outreach that may be attractive to people who are looking for a church. They will oversee the identification and development of ideas that will promote these activities to the Quad Cities community.

5. Elections

Members of church boards shall be elected for 3-year terms and may be elected for one subsequent 3-year term. Thereafter, such member shall be ineligible to be elected on the Board for one year. Terms shall be staggered.

VIII. Budget Process

The following process shall be used to prepare the church budget and manage the church's financial needs and expenses.

- A. Annually, the Church Council will meet and agree upon the goals and objectives for the ensuing year.
- B. Applying the goals and objectives developed by the Church Council, each church board shall submit to the Church Council an estimate of that board's financial needs for the ensuing year.
- C. Each Board shall prepare a budgetary request and identify each particular item for which funding is sought: A) An item required to carry out the Board's objectives, B) An item that is not required to carry out the Board's objectives, but would make it more likely to meet its objectives, and C) An item that would enhance the achievement of the Board's goals, but is not required to meet its goals.
- D. The Building and Finance Board shall report to the church council an estimate of the amount of money that can be raised by pledges from the congregation and shall report the anticipated necessary repairs for the church building and the estimated cost of such repairs.
- E. The Building and Finance Board shall recommend the amount of money taken from the church endowment fund, which shall never exceed 5% of the endowment fund, determined as of September 30 of the year preceding the year for which the funds are being budgeted, unless there is a congregational vote taken which approves a greater percentage.
- F. The Church Council shall endeavor to prepare from the information submitted, a budget that will have no more expenses than the estimated income of the church.

IX. Chair Succession and Vacancies

Each church board shall annually elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair. The Chair shall serve for one year. The Vice-Chair shall be the Chair in the next succeeding year. If there is a vacancy on a Board, the Church Council shall appoint a replacement who shall serve until the next election.

X. Committees

Each church board has the power to create both standing and *ad hoc* committees. A member of a committee does not have to be a member of the board that the committee serves. *Ad hoc* committees shall be given specific objectives and time limitations, and be responsible to the board who created it.

XI. Board Membership

Members of the Church Council, the Boards, and the Standing Committees shall be members of the church. Those serving on *ad hoc* committees are not required to be church members.

XII. Board and Committee Meetings**A. Quorum**

A quorum for Church Council, Board and Committee meetings shall consist of one more than fifty percent of the elected, appointed, or designated members.

B. Voting and Action

The Church Council, Boards and Committees may conduct meetings and/or take action by a vote conducted by any electronic means. Any action taken by electronic means shall be made a part of the minutes for the most recently scheduled meeting of the Church Council, Board or Committee as the case may be.

C. Delegation

If a Chair of a Board cannot attend a Church Council meeting, the Chair shall designate the Vice-Chair of the board to represent the board in question at the Church Council meeting. If the Vice-Chair cannot attend the meeting, the Chair shall designate another member of the Board to represent the Board in question at the Church Council meeting. The person designated shall attend the Church Council meeting and vote for or against any action, as would the Chair of the Board.

XIII. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk is the secretary of the church and secretary of the Church Council and shall be a full voting member of the Church Council.

The Church Clerk shall keep a record of all business meetings of the church, shall notify officers, members, committees, and delegates of their election or appointment, and shall give notice of all meetings as required by the rules of the church. The Church Clerk shall supervise the custody of all valuable records of the church, shall supervise the issuance of letters of transfer, and make a statistical report on membership at each annual meeting.

The Church Clerk shall be elected to serve for a term of three years, may be re-elected for a second term, and then shall be ineligible for one year for re-election. The Church Clerk shall be a member of the church.

XIV. Meetings of the Congregation**A. Annual Meetings**

The annual business meeting of the church shall take place on the last Sunday in January of each year, except when otherwise designated by the Church Council. The reports of all staff, officers, boards, standing committees, and the Church Clerk shall be made in writing, a copy being filed with the Church Clerk. The Church Council shall present its plans for the coming year and present a budget for the coming year for approval by the congregation. Church Council, Church Clerk, and board members shall be elected at this meeting. The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31. Board and Church Council terms commence February 1 in the year elected.

B. Special Meetings

The Church Council shall call a special meeting of the congregation upon its own initiative or if fifty or more members of the congregation request in writing that the Church Council call a meeting. Such request shall include the action to be taken at such meeting. At a special meeting, the congregation shall consider only the business announced in the notice of the special meeting.

C. Notice

Not less than seven days prior to the date on which an annual or special meeting is to be held, the Church Clerk shall give notice of the meeting by written and/or electronic means to each member of the church. The notice shall state the time, date, and place of the meeting and the business to be transacted at such meeting. Notice shall be deemed sent when posted or transmitted.

D. Conduct of Meetings

All meetings of the congregation shall be conducted by the Church Moderator, or if he or she is absent from the meeting, by the Vice-Moderator.

E. Voting

All members currently on the church membership roles present at a meeting of the congregation shall be entitled to vote on any action brought before the congregation.

F. Quorum

A quorum for any meeting of the congregation shall consist of fifty or more members of the church as shown on the membership roles.

XV. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of the church, all assets remaining after the payment of all obligations shall be distributed to such religious organization or organizations organized and operated for an exempt purpose described in the then current Internal Revenue Code, as may be determined by a majority vote of the members at a special meeting of the membership.

XVI. Amendment

The Constitution may be amended by action of the congregation at a special meeting called for such purpose or at the annual meeting. The notice of said meeting shall be sent out in the manner prescribed at subparagraph C of article XIV and shall contain the text of any proposed amendment.

The Constitution of First Congregational Church of Moline, Illinois, United Church of Christ as stated herein is adopted by resolution of the Congregation on _____, _____, 2015.

Wesley Llewellyn,
Church Moderator

Attest: _____
Church Clerk

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