

# Constitution and By-Laws:

Adopted September 24, 1989  
Revision September 18, 2005

We, the members of Christian Union Church, Metamora, Illinois, called by God to form this Church do subscribe to and establish these articles for our Constitution for the purpose of governing ourselves with the help of God.

## Article I. Name

The name of this Church shall be "Christian Union Church" located in the town of Metamora in the State of Illinois.

## Article II. Purpose

The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward all people; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

## Article III. Policy

1. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of Illinois relating to corporations not for profit.

## Article IV. Membership

1. New members shall be admitted on: public confession of faith and Baptism, church letter of transfer, or reaffirmation of faith, followed by the Formula of Admission as prescribed in the **Book of Worship**.
2. Release of Members
  1. Letters of transfer shall be granted by the Minister(s) to those who desire to unite elsewhere.
  2. If any member of the congregation shall unite with another congregation without a letter of transfer, the Church Council shall remove his/her name from the church membership rolls. Efforts shall be made to contact the member in writing to determine his/her intentions and desires.
3. The reserved Right of Membership shall be as follows:
  1. Voting privileges are reserved for declared members of the Congregation.
  2. All baptized youth shall have the right to vote upon completion of a confirmation course or at the age of 16 or older, having joined the church. The Church Council and the Minister(s) shall exert every effort possible to insure that such youth are properly prepared for the responsibilities of voting as church members.

## Article V. Sacraments

1. The Sacraments of the Congregation shall be Baptism and Holy Communion.
2. The Sacrament of Baptism, by sprinkling or immersion, shall be administered in the manner the candidate desires after consultation with the Minister(s).
3. The Sacrament of Holy Communion, which shall be open to all, shall be administered at least monthly and on other special days such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve.

## Article VI. Congregation Meetings

1. The supreme legislative and administrative power of the congregation is vested in the congregation itself assembled in meeting, duly and legally called.
2. It shall be the prerogative of the congregation in a duly called congregational meeting to decide such questions as the buying and selling of real property, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the calling and retaining of a minister, the direction of the work of the congregation, and such other powers and prerogatives as may be herein set forth. For the transaction of all other business the administration of the church is entrusted to the Church Council chosen and composed as provided for in Article VII.
3. The Annual Meeting of the congregation shall be held during the month of January.
4. A quorum shall consist of those members who are present and voting.
5. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Church Council or by petition to the Church Council signed by a minimum of 10 percent of the membership of the congregation. The President of the Church Council may call special meetings of the congregation at his/her discretion, or on the request to the President of at least three members of the Council. It shall be the duty of the Church Council to call said special meeting within 30 days from receipt of said petition, and timely notice of such meeting shall be sent to the membership by the secretary of the church. Meetings shall be announced to the congregation in writing and at all Sunday services prior to the meeting by a person authorized by the Church Council. Only that business for which the special meeting has been called shall be transacted.
6. The manner of voting shall be determined by the presiding officer except as otherwise ordered by the assembly.
7. When questions arise as to the conduct of the Congregational Meeting, Robert's Rules of Order (revised) shall prevail.

## **Article VII. Church Council**

1. The executive control shall be vested in the Church Council of 13 members. This Church Council shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer; three Trustees, and six members, all entitled to vote with the President voting only to break tie votes. The members of the professional ministerial staff may attend meetings of the Church Council but have no vote. Seven Church Council members shall be present to conduct a business meeting.
2. All members of the Church Council shall be members of the Christian Union Church. Church Council meetings shall be open. The calling of executive sessions shall be determined solely by the criteria outlined by the State of Illinois for discussion of personnel and the purchase/selling of property.
3. Council members, except for the Treasurer, shall be elected for a term of three years and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. Each year, four Church Council members' terms shall expire, including one trustee, and the congregation shall elect or re-elect four members in their stead at the annual meeting. The Treasurer shall be elected by the congregation on an annual basis and shall not serve more than four consecutive terms.
4. New council members will be seated and the council will elect new officers at the February meeting each year.
5. A council member will be allowed to miss no more than three of the twelve regular council meetings during each calendar year of his/her term in office. If more than three regular meetings are missed, that member may be sent a dismissal notice from the Council and another church member will be appointed by the Council to serve until the next regularly scheduled election.
6. The Council shall annually elect one of its members as President whose duties shall be to preside at all regular meetings of the Church Council and Congregation and to call monthly Church Council meetings and one annual congregational meeting. The President may call

- special meetings of the Church Council at his/her discretion, or on request to the President of at least three members of the Council.
7. One member of the Church Council shall be elected annually, by the Council as Vice President. Duties shall be to fill in for the President in his/her absence. The Vice President shall succeed the President in the event the President resigns or is unable to serve.
  8. One member of the Church Council shall be elected annually, by the Council as Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Church Council and Congregational meetings and shall serve as official correspondent of the Church Council.
  9. The Treasurer shall coordinate the finances of the church and make complete financial reports to the Church Council at its regular meetings. The Treasurer shall pay out all monies authorized by the Church Council. The Treasurer shall prepare copies of the financial report and a Council approved budget for the coming year to be presented at the Annual Meeting.
  10. A Church Secretary, supervised by the minister, shall be employed to support the entire church in general administrative/secretarial functions, to keep records of all funds pledged and contributed to the Church, and to issue statements to the contributors annually. Access to the records of all funds pledged and contributed by members will be restricted solely to the Church Secretary and must be protected in the most confidential manner possible.
  11. The council shall establish an Executive Committee that will function as the Church Council in matters of emergency when needed.
    1. It shall consist of the Church Council president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer
    2. It shall exercise the authority of the Church Council provided its actions do not circumvent the authority and responsibilities vested in the Church Council.
    3. It shall present any actions taken to the Church Council at its next meeting for ratification.
  12. Vacancies that occur on the Church Council must be filled by the Church Council by appointment within 60 days of notification, with the term of office to last until the next regularly scheduled annual meeting. The person appointed by the Church Council to serve the unexpired term does not have to be the runner-up candidate in the last council election.
  13. During annual elections, if unexpired terms are being filled, all candidates will run equally for full terms. The short terms will be filled by the candidates with the fewest votes.
  14. The Council shall be responsible for maintaining job descriptions for all paid staff.
  15. The Council will form committees as indicated in Article VIII. Additional committees may be formed if needed but must be responsible to one of the designated committees.

### **Article VIII. Committees**

The following committees are established to function as the main working body of the church. The success of the church is dependent upon an organized committee structure that knows its goals and has the support of the Church Council and congregation.

#### **Trustee Committee**

1. Three Trustees shall be elected by the congregation. Each Trustee shall serve a three year term with the terms staggered so that one Trustee's term expires each year. A Head Trustee will be appointed annually by the President of the Church Council.
2. The Trustee Committee shall have the care, custody and control of all real or personal property of the church.
3. They may, within a budget prescribed by the Church Council, execute all needed repairs and improvements to church property.
4. They may, with the approval of the congregation, mortgage, encumber, and sell any real or personal property of the church.

5. They shall have the power, when authorized and directed by vote of the Church Council, to borrow up to \$5,000 on behalf of the church, to obligate the church for repayment thereof and, as evidence of such obligation, execute and deliver a note therefore in the name and on behalf of the church.
6. They shall have the power, when authorized and directed by vote of the congregation, to borrow sums of money greater than \$5,000 on behalf of the church, to obligate the church for repayment thereof and, as evidence of such obligation, execute and deliver a note therefore in the name and on behalf of the church.
7. They shall provide and supervise the custodial staff.
8. They shall supervise all trusts and investments of the church by giving direction to the Investment Subcommittee.

### **Investment Subcommittee**

1. The Investment Subcommittee shall consist of one Trustee, who shall act as its chairperson, and 3 members of the congregation.
2. It shall invest and manage the funds, including the Program Enhancement Fund, to collect the income therefrom and pay the ordinary expenses in conjunction therewith.
3. It shall maintain deposits at banking or savings institutions where deposits are insured by the F.D.I.C. or F.S.L.I.C.
4. It shall manage any farm or commercial real estate which is or becomes an asset of the Program Enhancement Fund and enter into leases of the property and collect the income therefrom and take all steps necessary for the proper management thereof.
5. It shall exercise in person or by proxy all voting or other rights, powers and privileges of stocks and other securities.
6. It shall accumulate income or distribute it as designed by the Church Council.

### **Finance Committee**

1. The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer of the Church and at least 5 members of the congregation.
2. It shall assist the Treasurer in coordinating the finances of the church into an annual budget.
3. It shall obtain, with the advice and consent of the Church Council, the funds devoted to realizing the objectives of the church.
4. It shall plan and supervise the annual securing of pledges for the church.
5. It shall perform an annual audit of the assets and liabilities of the church.
6. It shall supervise the procedures used to handle the day to day accounting practices of the church.

### **Worship Committee**

1. The worship committee shall consist of one member of the Church Council and at least 5 members of the congregation.
2. It shall be responsible for communion services, flowers, seasonal decorations, acolytes, liturgists, ushers and greeters at all regular and special church services.
3. It shall be responsible for any special music and shall provide and supervise the choir director(s) and organist.
4. It shall provide and supervise regular nursery services during worship services and special events.

### **Coordination Committee**

1. The Coordination Committee shall consist of one member of the Church council, and the

- president or chairperson of all organized clubs, committees, groups and professional staff.
2. It shall coordinate the actions and events of all clubs or groups of the Church. This includes scheduling activities, resolving scheduling conflicts, approving projects, etc.

### **Membership Committee**

1. The Membership Committee shall consist of one member of the Church Council and at least 10 members of the congregation. The committee shall be subdivided into two subcommittees: The Shepherding Subcommittee, which is responsible for current members and the New Member Subcommittee, which is responsible for recruiting new members.
2. In coordination with the minister(s), the Shepherding Subcommittee shall actively communicate with the members of the church. All members of the church should be contacted on at least an annual basis.
3. In coordination with the minister(s), the New Member Subcommittee shall actively seek out new members for the church.

### **Fellowship Committee**

1. The Fellowship Committee shall consist of one member of the Church Council and at least 5 members of the congregation.
2. It shall organize and supervise the "coffee hour" between services.
3. It shall organize social gatherings at Camp Wildwood and at the Church.

### **Christian Education Committee**

1. The Christian Education Committee shall consist of one member of the church council and at least 7 members of the congregation including the Sunday School Superintendent.
2. It shall assume responsibility for the Christian nurture of all church members and create an intelligent understanding of the Christian Faith within all members of the congregation.
3. It shall be the duty of the Christian Education Committee to supervise and direct all phases of the work of the church which are of a distinctly educational character. Specifically this will include the work of the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Youth Groups, Leadership Training, promotion of Summer Camps and Conferences, and such other educational activities as may be organized. This committee shall formulate a constructive program of Christian Education, choose the Superintendent and teachers and courses of study, and formulate rules and regulations for the Sunday School and all other organizations of children and young people.
4. The Minister/Director of Christian Education shall be the staff person assigned to the committee and shall render professional skills and leadership to the enhancement of the sound Christian Education program.

### **Mission Committee**

1. The Missions Committee shall consist of one member of the Church Council, and at least five members of the congregation.
2. It shall be responsible for the ministries which extend beyond the congregation such as discipleship, church planting, theological training and the meeting of human needs.
3. It shall educate and inspire the congregation in the field of local and world missions.
4. It shall recommend to the Church Council additions or deletions from the missions support list and recommend amounts of financial support to be given to each mission project.

### **Church and Ministry Committee**

1. The Church and Ministry Committee shall consist of the President of the Church Council and at least five members of the congregation, three of whom have served as church council members.

2. The committee shall function as a supportive, trustworthy line of communication between the Minister(s), the Church Council, and the congregation, for the purpose of achieving and maintaining a creative, valid, and effective ministry of Jesus Christ in the congregation.
3. It shall act as a support group for the Minister(s), as a facilitator of communication between the congregation and the Minister, as an interpreter of the work of the Minister(s), evaluate the relationship between the Minister(s) and the congregation, and be knowledgeable of the purpose and function of the ministerial office.
4. The secretary of this committee shall keep a record of the actions taken at meetings. This record shall be kept confidential except as the committee itself agrees that the sharing of it, in all or part, will be appropriate and beneficial.
5. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of Minister(s), who ordinarily will be expected to attend its meetings, except when the committee chooses to meet without the Minister(s) present. When the Minister(s) is excluded from any meeting, the chairperson shall consult with the Minister(s) in advance and within one week after the meeting regarding the agenda and results of the meeting.
6. It may consult the Association Minister when appropriate.
7. It shall cultivate an equitable Minister-parish relationship regarding the Minister's use of time and skills according to the job description and the goals established by the congregation.
8. It shall make recommendations to the appropriate committee of the congregation regarding the support needed for an effective ministry.
9. It shall make recommendations to maintain all programs which are related to the development of mutually satisfactory employment practices, such as, but not limited to, salary, vacation time, continuing education, travel expense, spiritual growth, career development, pension, insurance, and housing.

### **Nominating Committee**

1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least one member of the Church Council and at least four members of the congregation appointed by the President of the Church Council.
2. It shall be responsible for presenting a slate of nominees for the positions needed on the Church Council for the Annual Congregational Meeting.

### **Article IX. Property**

1. The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise and own, hold, invest, reinvest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake and may purchase, own, revive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purposes of the church; it may receive and hold in trust real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make and contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.
2. In the event of dissolution of the congregation, the assets of the congregation are to be distributed to non-profit organizations organized and operated exclusively for educational, charitable, or religious purposes, to be decided upon by a majority vote of the remaining members present at a duly constituted meeting of the congregation.
3. A Program Enhancement Fund shall be maintained by the Church. The fund shall serve as a repository for money and other assets given to or acquired by the Church and designated either by the Church Council or by the donor thereof to be added to the Fund. The assets placed in the Fund shall be invested with the income generated thereof to be utilized for the purpose of enhancing the program of the Church. The principal of the Fund shall be disposed of as follows:

1. If originally added to the Fund by designation of the Church Council or by gift or bequest from some other donor and no restriction has been placed on the application or disposition of the principal, then the principal may be used or disposed of as directed by the Congregational Meeting.
2. If originally added to the Fund by some donor who has placed restrictions on the disposition of the principal, then the principal may be used or disposed of only in accordance with those restrictions.

Income from the Fund shall be utilized for the enhancement of the program of the church as directed by the Church Council.

#### **Article X. Pastoral Staff**

1. The ordained ministers of this church shall have been granted Ministerial Standing by an accrediting body. An ordained minister has been called by God to preach and teach the Word of God, administer the Sacraments and Rites of the Church and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.
2. In the event that a new ordained minister is needed, the Church Council shall appoint a Search Committee of Council members and Laypersons representing a cross-section of the views of the congregation. The majority of the Search Committee shall be Laypersons. The Search Committee shall investigate, interview, audition and recommend to the Church Council the applicant most qualified to serve the Church. Upon acceptance by the Church Council, the applicant shall be presented to the church membership at a specially called or regularly scheduled congregational meeting and upon approval by an 80 percent vote of those members present, the Council shall send a call to the minister.
3. Termination of the call of a minister
  1. Voluntary Resignation  
The Council may accept a voluntary resignation of a minister. A minimum of ninety days notice will be requested unless both parties agree otherwise. The Council and the Minister shall negotiate an equitable separation agreement concerning unpaid vacation, etc.
  2. Involuntary Resignation  
An involuntary resignation will be enacted when the minister does not maintain a 70 percent vote of confidence as determined by vote of the congregation at a regular or specially called meeting. The council shall negotiate an equitable separation agreement concerning unpaid vacation, etc. but termination shall be within 60 days of the congregational vote.

#### **Article XI. Non-Pastoral Staff**

1. Certain working committees will have responsibility for other paid staff members of the Church, i.e., custodians, choir director, etc. The Council shall establish procedures and policies for performance review, pay increases, employment and retention practices, and such other personnel matters in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees.

#### **Article XII. Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended at any Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present. Congregation members may propose amendments and submit them to the Church Council within a minimum of 60 days prior to the Congregational Meeting. Church Council will publish recommended changes 30 days prior to the Congregational Meeting. Proposed amendments submitted, after this time may be presented in writing at the Congregational Meeting but

will not be acted upon at that meeting.