

Approved at October 1, 2006 Church Member Meeting

**CONSTITUTION
of
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Medford, Wisconsin

PREAMBLE

The national United Church of Christ was formed on June 27, 1957 by the union of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and The General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States. This Medford, Wisconsin congregation, now named The United Church Of Christ, began as the “German Evangelical Congregation” with Articles of Association dated February 11, 1902 and recorded February 12, 1902 in the Taylor County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds office. In 1934, the Church’s name was changed to the “Community Evangelical and Reformed Church.” In 1957, the Church’s name was changed to the “Community United Church of Christ.” In 2001, the Church’s present name of “The United Church Of Christ” was adopted. Mindful of the Word of God; “Let all things be done decently and in order,” [1 Cor. 14:40], we adhere to the following Constitution.

**Article I
NAME**

The name of this Church shall be: **THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

**Article II
PURPOSE**

The 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 advance the Realm of God both home and abroad; to render loving service to everyone, and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

**Article III
AFFILIATION**

This Church shall be part of the national United Church of Christ and it shall sustain that relationship described in those portions of the current edition of the Constitution of the national United Church of Christ relating to local Churches. While this Church reserves the right of autonomy in making all decisions that affect the Church, the actions by, decisions of, and advice emanating from the

General Synod, a conference or an Association of the national United Church of Christ shall be held in high regard.

Article IV FAITH AND COVENANT

1. Faith - This Church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior. It acknowledges as followers in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibilities of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. The "Statement of Faith" of the Church shall be that of The United Church Of Christ. It also expresses its faith in the historic creeds: the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. All Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God as it is made known to them under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

2. Covenant - We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and Will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the World, while worshiping God, striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our ancestors, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Realm and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Article V MEMBERSHIP

1. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into a Unity, "faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races," membership is open to all.

2. A person may become a Member of the Church by:

A. Baptism and either confirmation or profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;

B. Reaffirmation or re-profession of faith; or

C. Letter of transfer or certification from another Christian church;

AND by making the pledge set forth in paragraph V.3 immediately below.

3. To become a Member of the Church, a person shall pledge themselves to:

A. Attend regular worship of the Church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper;

- B. Contribute to the support of the Church and benevolence of the Church with the person's time, talents, and resources; and
- C. Seek Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the Church Universal.

Such pledge shall be made at a Church service according to the Book of Worship in front of the congregation or by the confirmation of that person in the Church. At the next Church Council meeting, after the occurrence of the above, the Church Council shall enter the person's name in the membership role. At that point, the person shall be considered a Member of the Church with all rights and responsibilities thereof.

4. Any Member may, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer. If because of a change of faith or for other reasons a Member requests in writing to be released from membership obligations, the Church may grant the request and terminate the Member. Such a request shall be approved by the Pastor and the Church Council. The Church Council shall issue the appropriate letter of release.

5. A Member who, for a period of one (1) year, has not attended the Church's worship or contributed to its support, may, by vote of the Church Council, be removed from the roll and placed on a conditional list. The Church Council shall endeavor to contact everyone on the conditional list to determine their intentions. A person on the conditional list retains all membership rights, including the right to vote and membership responsibilities. If after the expiration of one year, the relationship remains unchanged, the name may be dropped from the conditional list by further vote of the Church Council, and that person shall no longer be a Member.

6. A Member may be designated as an Associate Member at their request. Associate Members do not have voting rights and will not be counted in the official membership roll reported to the denomination as a Member.

7. If a Member persistently breaches the covenant vows, the Church Council, after due notice has been given by the Church Council, and after a hearing before the Church Council has been afforded that person, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring that person to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ, may censure, suspend, or terminate the Member.

Article VI MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

1. **Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the Church shall be held at such time as determined by the Church Council at the Church. Notice of the time and place of the annual meeting shall be by ordinary mail, mailed to each Member's last known address, not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the date for which the meeting. The agenda for the annual meeting shall be the following:

- A. Call to order;
- B. Approval of minutes;
- C. Report of nominating committee;
- D. Election of the Church Council members;

- E. Amendments to the Articles of Association or this Constitution;
- F. Other matters placed on the agenda by the Church Council;
- G. Such matters as may be brought forward at the meeting by any Member;
- H. Annual reports;
- I. Election results; and
- J. Adjournment.

2. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Church may be held at the call of the President of the Church Council, by call of the Church Council, or by a call signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the Members. Notice of such special meeting shall be sent by regular mail to the Members at their last-known address not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the date for which the meeting is called, and said notice shall state the purpose for which said meeting is called. No other business other than that stated in the notice shall be transacted at such special meeting.

3. **Voting.** Only the persons listed on the membership roll on the record date for a Members' meeting shall be entitled to vote at a Members' meeting. The record date for determining the Members entitled to notices and to attend and vote at any meetings of the Members shall be the date when the notice of the meeting is mailed. The Church shall vote on any issue that may properly come before a meeting of the Members of the Church. At any meeting in which a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of a majority of the Members present is the act of the Members unless the Articles of Association or this Constitution establish a different voting requirement.

4. **Quorum.** Ten percent (10%) of the Members in person shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at the annual meeting or any special meeting.

5. **Proxy.** Members may not vote by proxy at the annual meeting or any special meeting.

6. **Written Ballots.** At the annual meeting or any special meeting, a written ballot must be used:

- A. To elect the Church Council;
- B. To accept the call of a Pastor;
- C. To terminate a Pastor.

Any other vote may be taken by written ballot at the discretion of the President.

Article VII CHURCH COUNCIL

1. **Church Council General Matters.**

A. The governing and administrative powers of the Church are vested in the Church Council.

B. The Church Council shall be the policy-making and executive body of the Church and shall transact the business of the Church, subject to the direction of the Members.

C. The Church Council shall have the care and custody of the property of the Church and have charge of its financial affairs.

D. The Church Council shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real estate owned by the Church without specific authority of two-third ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of Members present at an annual or special meeting.

E. The President and the Treasurer shall sign all contracts, loans, vouchers, and deeds in the name of the Church. In the event the President or Treasurer is unable to sign documents, the Church Council will designate another officer to sign the approved documents.

F. The Church Council may authorize non-budgeted expenses up to \$4,000 in each Church year.

G. The Church Council must receive approval from the Members at the annual meeting or a special meeting of the Members if funds must be borrowed.

H. All acts and deliberations of the Church Council shall be subject to revision by the Members at the annual meeting or a special meeting of the Members.

2. Terms.

A. The Church Council shall consist of nine (9) elected Members. The Pastor shall be an *ex officio* non-voting advisory Member. Members of the Church Council shall be elected for three-year terms.

B. The terms will be staggered so that three (3) will expire each year. Members will be eligible for re-election for one (1) additional term. Following a lapse of one (1) year or more, a Church Council member is again eligible for office.

C. A candidate for Church Council membership shall be a Member in good standing for two (2) or more years.

D. The Church Council shall act as the nominating committee for the annual meeting of the Members. A slate of candidates shall be presented to the Church Council at its December meeting and shall be published in the Church bulletin twice prior to the annual meeting of the Members. Nominations for Church Council members may be made from the floor at the annual meeting of the Members providing the candidate consents to serve.

E. Vacancies on the Church Council occurring during the Church year shall be filled by the Church Council for the balance of the Church year. Remaining years of the vacancy shall be filled by election at the next annual meeting.

3. Church Council Meetings.

A. Regular Meetings. The Church Council shall hold regular monthly meetings at the Church at such times as designated by the President.

B. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Church Council may be called by the President or by a call signed by three (3) members of the Church Council. Written or oral notice of special meetings shall be provided to each member of the Church Council at least twelve (12) hours before the time of such meeting. The notice shall state the business for which the special meeting has been called, and no business other than that stated in the notice shall be transacted at such special meeting.

C. Voting. At any meeting in which a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of a majority of the Church Council members present is the act of the Church Council unless the Church's Articles of Association or this Constitution establish a different voting requirement.

D. Quorum. The quorum required for the transaction of business at a Church Council meeting shall be five (5) members of the Church Council.

E. The Church Council shall reorganize itself at the first regular meeting after the annual meeting of the Members by:

(a) Electing its own officers. The officers shall be President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer. Other officers may be appointed as needed.

(b) Appointing committee Members. The permanent committees appointed by the Church Council shall be Audit, Fellowship and Hospitality, Music, Finance, Building and Grounds, Stewardship, Christian Education, 21st Century Foundation, Membership, Pastoral Relations and Ministries, and Member and Public Information and Education. The Church Council will also appoint the Sunday school superintendent and youth group leader in consultation with the education committee. The Church Council may appoint other committees for specific duties in its discretion.

4. Duties of the Church Council. The Church Council shall:

A. Supervise the establishment and periodic updates of job descriptions for the Pastor, Church Council, committees, affiliated organizations and officers.

B. Cooperate with the Pastor(s) in ministering to the spiritual interests of the Church and community and assist in administering the Sacraments.

C. Maintain a membership roll as provided in paragraph V.3 above.

D. Monitor the membership roll as described in paragraph V.4 above.

E. Provide someone to conduct services in case of the absence of the Pastor.

F. Prepare an annual operating budget (including income and expenses) for approval at the annual meeting of the Members. Report any significant deviations or changes affecting the budget to the Members. Assist the stewardship committee to develop a plan to raise the necessary funding to carry out the budget objectives.

G. Communicate with Church committees and affiliated organizations.

H. Provide for auditing of all financial accounts of the Church, including its committees and affiliated organizations and report the results of the audits to the Members at an annual or special meeting.

I. Keep a complete record of all its proceedings and be the custodian of Church records.

J. Assemble all Church Council, committees and affiliated organization financial and activity reports and prepare an annual report for the annual meeting of the Members.

K. Choose delegates to represent the Church before all groups with which the Church is in direct fellowship.

L. Establish and maintain a building fund from contributions or budgeted amounts.

M. Appoint for each service two (2) members of the Church Council to count and record the offerings made at each service and provide the money collected to one of the persons designated by the Church Council authorized to make deposits and provide the records of the contributions made to the Financial Secretary for formal recording.

N. Affirm to the Members at the annual meeting of the Members that it has faithfully adhered to this Constitution.

5. Duties of the Church Council Officers.

A. President. The President shall preside at all Member and Church Council meetings; establish meeting agendas; report to the Church Members; oversee the functions and duties of the Church Council. The President is an *ex officio* nonvoting Member of all committees and auxiliary organizations.

B. Vice President. The Vice President shall preside at all Member and Church Council meetings where the President is not available; attend or communicate with the committees or organizations at the direction of the President; and, oversee the education, training, and orientation of new Church Council members.

C. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall manage the finances of the Church under the oversight the Church Council.

D. Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary will attend all meetings of the Members and Church Council and, if unable to attend, the President shall appoint a temporary secretary for that meeting.

E. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary will keep records of contributions to the Church and report to the Members at the annual Members meeting and shall serve on the Audit Committee.

Article VIII COMMITTEES AND AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Makeup of Committees and Their Functions. The Church Council, together with each of the following committees, shall, from time to time, update the respective committee's objectives, goals, missions and functions. The following committees shall have the following general missions and duties:

A. Audit Committee - shall consist of three (3) Members including the Financial Secretary and two (2) Members who do not serve on the Church Council and annually audit the financial accounts of the Church, including its committees and affiliated organizations and shall report to the Church Council and the Church Members.

B. Fellowship and Hospitality Committee - shall plan the Church Fellowship Program and train and supervise ushers. It shall perform other duties that enhance the physical comfort and friendliness of the service of the Church.

C. Music Ministry Committee - shall consist of three (3) or more Members to provide for and organize the music program of the Church.

D. Building and Grounds Committee - shall consist of at least three (3) Members. It shall be the duty of this committee to provide for the inspection of the building and to recommend to the Church Council the need for repairs, replacements or new construction. It shall have the responsibility of contracting building jobs and the supervision of all projects authorized by the Church Council. It shall appoint and supervise a Meditations Gardens sub-Committee to maintain, improve, and beautify the grounds of the Church.

E. Stewardship Committee - shall consist of the Secretary, Treasurer, and three (3) Members to develop and maintain an orderly plan of continuous and systematic giving of time, talent, and treasury, by the congregation.

F. Christian Education Committee - shall consist of six (6) Members. It shall be the duty of this committee, in consultation with the Pastor, to develop a yearly activity plan for all education in the Church, including Sunday School, Youth Group, Confirmation, adult education, etc.

G. Twenty-first Century Foundation - shall consist of three (3) Church Members, who shall be designated trustees of the Foundation each to serve staggered six-year terms (as

determined by the Foundation). They will serve to oversee and make recommendations to the Members regarding the use of Foundation funds. (The actual use of the funds shall be approved by the Members at the annual or a special meeting of the Members.) The purpose of the Twenty-first Century Foundation is to create a significant financial resource, with the intention of using it to build a new Church facility for the congregation of The United Church Of Christ in Medford, Wisconsin.

H. Membership Committee - shall consist of three (3) Members. It is the mission of the Membership Committee to develop programs and initiatives that foster the recruitment of new Members, the retention of present Members, and maintain the Church roll.

I. Pastoral Relations and Ministries Committee - shall consist of four (4) Members with staggered four-year terms (as determined by the committee). It is the mission of the pastoral Relations and Ministries Committee to strengthen the total ministry of the congregation by acting as a liaison between the Pastor, the Church Council, Church committees and organizations and Members of the congregation.

J. Member and Public Information and Education Committee - shall consist of the Council Secretary (an employee of the Church and not an officer of the Church Council) and three (3) or more Members. Its mission is to educate and inform the Members of the congregation in particular and the community in general about the activities and missions of the Church.

K. Altar Committee - shall consist of Members appointed by the Women's Guild President. It shall be responsible for changing paraments and preparing the elements for Holy Communion.

L. Flower Committee - shall consist of Members appointed by the Women's Guild President. Its responsibility shall be the placing of the chancel flowers on Sundays and special occasions.

M. Memorial Fund Committee - shall consist of Members appointed by the Women's Guild President. It shall be responsible for oversight of the memorial fund.

2. Makeup of the Auxiliary Organizations and Their Functions. The Church Council, together with each of the following auxiliary organizations, shall, from time to time, update the respective auxiliary organization's objectives, goals, missions and functions. The following auxiliary organizations of the Church shall have the following general missions and duties:

A. Women's Guild and Candlelight Circle - The mission of the Women's Guild and Candlelight Circle shall be to invite women of the congregation to participate in projects and programs that support the Church both spiritually and financially and to promote fellowship among the Members.

B. Men's Group - The mission of the Men's Group is to enjoy fellowship and to help further the purposes of the Church.

C. Youth Group - All young people of the Church, grades 5 through 12, are invited to participate. The mission of the Youth Group is to enjoy fellowship and help further the purposes of the Church.

D. Sunday School - All young people of the Church, preschool and above, are invited to attend Sunday School services as scheduled on Sunday mornings for Christian education.

3. Each committee and auxiliary organization shall meet for organization as soon as possible following the annual meeting. They shall elect their officers or chair person, appoint committee Members under their jurisdiction, make general plans for the year and set meeting dates. The above information shall be promptly reported to the Church Council in written format. All officers and committee Members shall assume their duties at the time of appointment or election and shall continue in office until replacement officers or committee Members have been elected or appointed. An installation service for new officers planned by the Church Council and the Pastor and committee Members will be held as soon as possible following the annual meeting. Each committee and auxiliary organization shall make a written report of its finances and activities for the Church year to the Church membership at the annual meeting.

Article IX PASTOR AND SERVICES

1. The Pastor, whether one or more, shall be in charge of the Spiritual Welfare of the Church, with the assistance of the Church Council. The Pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, have under their care the Services of Worship, administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the Council, committees and auxiliary organizations and serve as Pastor to the people of the Church. The Pastor should keep a record of services performed and report to the Church Council at its regular monthly meeting or more frequently if directed by the Church Council. The Pastor shall make an annual report of the work of the Church at the annual meeting of the Members. Other duties will be listed in the Pastor's job description, which shall be updated each year by the Church Council. The Pastor shall be an *ex officio*, non-voting advisory member of the Church Council, all committees and all auxiliary organizations, except when there is a conflict of interest.

2. Selection and Removal of a Pastor.

A. It is the responsibility of the Church Council to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of the Pastor.

B. The Church Council shall seek the counsel of the Association Minister in filling a vacancy and may request the Association Minister to secure and supply the fullest possible information about any Pastor whom it wishes to consider for a vacancy.

C. The Church Council shall have the authority to hire an interim Pastor or Pastors (full or part time) whenever the Church does not have a Pastor.

D. The Church Council shall appoint a search committee that will conduct the search for a Pastor and which shall keep the Church Council informed of all aspects of the search process.

E. The Church Council shall present the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy to the Members at the annual meeting or a special meeting of the Members.

F. The Members shall determine by written ballot whether to call the Pastor recommended by the Church Council at the annual meeting or a special meeting of the Members by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Members present at said meeting. When the Pastor has accepted a call to this Church, the Church and the Pastor shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for Services of Installation.

G. When a Pastor wishes to terminate his relationship with the Church, the Pastor shall give a minimum of sixty (60) days' written notice to the Church Council.

H. With mutual consent of the Pastor and the Church Council, the relationship between the Pastor and the Church may be terminated at once. In the event of an agreed upon immediate termination, the Church Council and the Pastor may negotiate a continuation of salary and benefits for a period of up to sixty (60) days. Any other remuneration must be approved by the Members at an annual or special meeting of the Members.

I. The question of whether the Pastor should be removed may be brought to a vote at any duly-called special meeting of the Members. The Pastor may be removed at such a meeting of the Members upon a simple majority of the voting Members present at such a meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot. Upon such termination, all pastoral duties shall cease immediately. The Church will continue to pay the Pastor salary and benefits for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of the meeting.

J. Except for the above notice and voting provisions, the Pastor's employment with the Church shall be considered an at-will relationship.

3. Services.

A. Services of worship shall be held at hours set by the Church Council each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the Church Council. Any additional worship service can be authorized by the Church Council in consultation with the Pastor.

B. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least four (4) times a year, and at such times the Church Council determines.

C. The Baptism of adults, and the Baptism or dedication of children will be administered at such times as the Pastor or in the absence of the Pastor, the Church Council may designate.

D. No person other than the Pastor shall perform any religious ceremony in the Church without consent of the Pastor or, in the Pastor's absence, the Council President.

E. The use of the Church for funerals and weddings of non-Members shall be left to the judgment of the Pastor, unless otherwise instructed by the Church Council. A signed agreement listing the fees and other requirements or limitations established by the Church Council must be obtained and fees collected prior to the use. The Pastor will receive and keep for his own personal use any fees or remuneration for these services.

Article X
MISCELLANEOUS

- 1.** The Church may, in its corporate name, The United Church Of Christ, sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise own, hold, invest, reinvest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the Church may undertake and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for, transfer and convey such property for the general purpose of the Church; it may receive, and hold in trust both real and personal property, invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting objects and purposes of the Church.
- 2.** Under the direction of the Church Council, the President and Treasurer shall have custody of all records of the Church.
- 3.** Upon the dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall possess, including devise 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 Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ.
- 4.** The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.
- 5.** The Church Council may adopt rules of order to govern the procedure at Church Council meetings and Member meetings.
- 6.** Amendments to this Constitution or the Articles of Association may be made at the annual meeting of the Members or any duly called special meeting of the Members by a two-third ($\frac{2}{3}$) affirmative vote of the Members present. The text of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to the Members fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.