

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Adopted May 5, 2002

Amended Jan. 28, 2007; Amended Jan. 31, 2010; Amended Jan. 27, 2013;  
Amended Jan. 25, 2015; Amended July 20, 2016; Amended Jan. 26, 2020;  
Amended Jan. 29, 2023

## CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

### ARTICLE II – COVENANT

#### Section 1. Bond of Union

In keeping with the spirit of the Bond of Union, the covenant of this church is: *We accept the religion of love and service which Jesus lived and taught, and declare it our purpose to strive to do the will of God, and to make the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives, and in all human relations.* Originally adopted on May 9, 1899

#### Section 2. Open and Affirming Congregation

Union Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. We are a Christian fellowship where diverse perspectives may live together in the Spirit of Christ, and where all persons are precious children of God without qualification or discrimination because of ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Adopted on October 24, 1999; Amended January 25,  
2015

### ARTICLE III – POLITY

#### Section 1. Government

In the confidence that...*there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...*(I Corinthians 12:4-7), the government of this church is

vested in its members who exercise the right of full and final control in all its affairs, always depending on the wisdom and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

## **Section 2. Affiliations**

This church accepts the mutual counsel and cooperation in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ through the Northeast Wisconsin Association and the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ.

# **ARTICLE IV – FAITH, WORSHIP, SACRAMENTS, RITES**

## **Section 1. Faith**

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are recognized as the Word of God and the normative rule of Christian faith and practice.

In its relation to other religious communions, Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Green Bay, Wisconsin, shall constantly endeavor to promote *the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*. (Ephesians 4:3)

## **Section 2. Worship**

This church practices freedom of worship. The forms and orders of worship that are set forth in the Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor documents are a normative resource for this church's worship. The Lord's Day and the festivals of the church year shall be observed with appropriate services in the church's life.

## **Section 3. Sacraments**

In the tradition of evangelical Christians, this church observes the two sacraments instituted by Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **Section 4. Rites**

This church observes the rites of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Commitment/Same Gender Covenant, and Burial.

# **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

## **Section 1. Requirements and Methods of Reception**

Any person who is in accord with the spirit and aims of this church as set forth in the Bond of Union and whose request for membership is received by the Common Ministry (or its representative) may become a member of the church by confession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or letter of transfer from another Christian communion. The acceptance of any sacrament, creed or statement of faith shall never be compulsory upon any member.

## **Section 2. Termination of Membership**

Any member may cease to be a member of this church by:

- A. resigning therefrom.
- B. requesting a letter of transfer to another Christian communion.
- C. being transferred to the Inactive Membership Roll.

Whenever the whereabouts of a member is unknown, he/she has not worshipped, communed or communicated with the church, or he/she has not contributed to the church's support for a period of three years as certified by the Moderator and Pastor, said member may by a vote of the Common Ministry be transferred from the Active Membership Roll to the Inactive Membership Roll. Any member on the Inactive Membership Roll may be restored to the Active Membership Roll by a vote of the Common Ministry.

## **Section 3. Duties of Members**

Members of this church are to live ever increasingly the Christian life, to attend regularly the services of the church, to give systematically for its support and benevolences, to share in its organized work, and to seek the spiritual welfare of fellow members.

## **ARTICLE VI – BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The annual business meeting of this church shall be held each year in the first month of the fiscal year. Notice of the annual business meeting shall be given from the pulpit and in the church newsletter no later than the Sunday before said meeting.

All members of the church shall have the right to vote at the annual meeting and all special meetings of the church. A quorum shall consist of six percent of the active membership of the church.

At the annual business meeting reports shall be presented by the Moderator, the Pastor, the Church Officers, the Ministries and Committees, and the various organizations affiliated with the church. This meeting shall also elect Officers, Ministry Chairs and Vice-Chairs; approve the annual budget for the coming fiscal year; and transact any other business which shall properly come before the church.

Special meetings of the church may be called by the Common Ministry, by the Pastor, or by the Moderator. Notice of any special meeting, including the subject and purpose of the meeting, shall be announced from the pulpit and in the church newsletter no later than the Sunday before said meeting is to be held.

*Robert's Rules of Order Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by the constitution.

## **ARTICLE VII – PROPERTY**

### **Section 1. General Powers**

The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise; and own, hold, invest, re-invest, 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, 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 both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.

### **Section 2. Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any 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 one or more organizations qualified as exempt under Internal Revenue regulations and in accordance with these regulations and the laws of the State, and none of such assets and property shall be transferred or distributed to any members of the Church.

## **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of members present at any regular or special meeting, provided that a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the intent of the proposed amendment(s) shall have been given from the pulpit and in the church newsletter no later than the Sunday before such meeting.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of this church begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

### **ARTICLE II – OFFICERS, MINISTRIES AND COMMITTEES**

#### **Section 1. Pastor**

The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. He/she shall seek to enlist members as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and

rites of the church, have under his/her care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the various Ministries and Committees. He/she shall be an ex-officio member, with vote and quorum representation, of all Ministries and Committees.

The Pastor, with consultation with the Personnel Committee and with privilege of consultation with any appropriate Officer, Ministry, or the Common Ministry, will engage or discharge, when necessary, all paid church personnel including (but not limited to) all Assistant Pastors, pastoral, program, music, administrative, financial and secretarial staff, sextons and housekeepers, with the exception of Associate Pastors; subject to Section 21 (Common Ministry approves salaries).

When a vacancy occurs in the office of Pastor or Associate Pastor, a candidate for that office, duly authorized by the United Church of Christ, shall be recommended to the church by a Pastoral Search Committee appointed by the Common Ministry. The Pastor or Associate Pastor shall be called by a two-thirds vote of the members voting at a business meeting called for that purpose. The term of the office of Pastor or Associate Pastor is indefinite. It may be terminated with three months' notice either by the Pastor or Associate Pastor, or by a two-thirds vote of the members of the church voting at a business meeting called for that purpose.

## **Section 2. Other Pastoral Staff**

The congregation will decide on the need for additional pastoral staff personnel by two-thirds majority vote at any annual or special meeting of the church.

Determining and assigning the specific duties of such pastoral staff members will be the responsibility of the Pastor.

## **Section 3. Moderator**

The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church and shall chair the Common Ministry. The Moderator, at his/her discretion, may appoint a Parliamentarian for any meeting. He/she shall be considered as the lay head of the church. He/she is to be kept informed of the work, concerns, and problems of all Ministries and is to receive copies of minutes of all Ministry meetings. Any Ministry of the church may seek his/her presence and counsel. During a vacancy in the pastorate, he/she shall be the active, executive head of the church.

## **Section 4. Vice-Moderator**

The Vice-Moderator shall be a member of the Common Ministry and attend to those duties assigned by the Moderator. The Vice-Moderator shall preside at any business meeting of the church over which the Moderator is unable to preside.

## **Section 5. Clerk**

The Clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the business meetings of the church and the Common Ministry.

**Section 6. Church Office**

The staff of the Church Office shall receive all payments on pledges, take charge of all offerings and special collections, deposit funds received in such depository as the Common Ministry shall order, and give bond as the Common Ministry shall prescribe. The staff shall keep an accurate account with each financial supporter and furnish financial supporters with quarterly statements of their accounts. The staff shall keep a register with addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their membership, and certify same to the Common Ministry, notifying the churches to which they are addressed; preserve on file all communications, important documents and written official reports; give legal notices of all meetings when such notices are necessary; conduct all correspondence; and perform such other duties as directed by the Pastor, or as prescribed by law and these articles.

**Section 7. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall maintain accurate financial records and pay the bills of the church on order from the Common Ministry or its properly appointed agent. He/she shall prepare monthly financial statements and give such bond as the Common Ministry shall prescribe. He/she shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Stewardship and Gifts and Memorials Ministries.

**Section 8. Auditor**

The Common Ministry shall select an auditor who shall be a Certified Public Accountant to examine the financial records of the Treasurer and Church Office annually and report thereon to the Common Ministry which Ministry shall report the same to the next regular or special business meeting of the church. The Auditor shall also make additional audits when requested to do so by the Common Ministry.

**Section 9. Director of the Every Member Canvass**

The Stewardship Ministry shall select the Director of the Every Member Canvass annually. Under its direction he/she shall arrange for the canvass of members whereby the budget of the church shall be underwritten.

**Section 10. Historian**

The Historian shall be appointed by the Common Ministry and shall keep a journal of all activities of historical significance to the church.

**Section 11. Communications Coordinator**

The Communications Coordinator shall be appointed by the Common Ministry and shall oversee the various communications activities of the church, including advertisements, publicity releases, newsletters, telephone contact systems, and Internet sites.

**Section 12. Talents and Gifts Coordinator**

The Talents and Gifts Coordinator shall be appointed by the Common Ministry and shall maintain a record of gifts, interests, and talents of church members; assist church leaders

in matching volunteers with needs; and help the church nurture and express appreciation for volunteers as we fulfill our call to practice the religion of love and service taught by Jesus.

### **Section 13. Pastoral Relations Committee**

The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Committee is to actively promote a healthy relationship between and among the Pastor(s) and the congregation, and to act as an advisor and support for the Pastor(s). The Committee shall meet at least quarterly, and if there is more than one Pastor, each scheduled meeting shall provide opportunity for each Pastor to meet separately with the Committee, as well as an opportunity for both or all Pastors to meet together with the Committee. The Committee shall be appointed by the mutual agreement of the Nominating Committee and the Pastor(s).

### **Section 14. Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee shall consist of the Moderator, the Pastor, and three members of the congregation who shall be elected for staggered 3-year terms, except for the first year in which the three members of the congregation shall be elected to terms of 1, 2 and 3 years, respectively. The Personnel Committee shall (1) recommend policies regarding employment and/or dismissal of all Church employees for the approval of the Common Ministry, (2) recommend the salary and other compensation of the Pastor for the approval of the Common Ministry, provided that the Personnel Committee shall consult with the Church Treasurer regarding all financial recommendations, (3) consult with the Pastor regarding the salaries or other compensation of all other Church employees, (4) conduct annual performance appraisals of the Pastor, (5) consult with the Pastor regarding annual performance appraisals of all other Church employees, (6) be accessible to any Church employee for grievances in accordance with policies and procedures of the Church, and (7) carry out duties as may be requested from time to time by the Common Ministry. The Pastor shall not participate in the Personnel Committee's deliberation regarding his/her salary, other compensation or performance appraisal. In the event the Pastor or any member of the Personnel Committee is in any way involved in a grievance brought to the Committee, that individual shall not participate in the Personnel Committee's deliberation regarding such matter.

### **Section 15. Worship Ministry**

The purpose of the Worship Ministry is to provide support, coordination, and visionkeeping in the planning and administration of worship, rites and sacraments, and music. It shall ensure that related activities are appropriately staffed by developing ongoing committees, task forces, or other mechanisms to further its work.

Special services such as are held during Lent or on weekdays, and fellowship services shall be the special care of this Ministry, acting under the direction of the Pastor. Unless already provided for by the Pastor, it shall provide for the temporary supply of the pulpit in his/her absence.

In consultation with the Pastor, it shall select all personnel to fulfill the music requirements of the church, subject to approval of all agreements for compensation by the Common Ministry. It shall submit an annual budget to the Common Ministry.

#### **Section 16. Education Ministry**

The purpose of the Education Ministry is to provide support, coordination, and visionkeeping in the planning and administration of Christian Education. It shall ensure that related activities are appropriately staffed by developing ongoing committees, task forces, or other mechanisms to further its work.

It shall enlist and encourage leaders, prescribe curricula, and measure and evaluate results. It shall build and administer an educational program for all organizations under its direction such as Church School, library, adult study, scouting groups, and other organizations and programs of educational nature. It shall direct and encourage promotion of appropriate publications that will benefit members, organizations, and educational groups. It shall submit an annual budget to the Common Ministry.

#### **Section 17. Stewardship Ministry**

The purpose of the Stewardship Ministry is to provide support, coordination, and visionkeeping in the planning and administration of the stewardship of our church resources. It shall ensure that related activities are appropriately staffed by developing ongoing committees, task forces, or other mechanisms to further its work.

It shall select the Director of the Every Member Canvass and support his/her work to annually conduct said canvass for the financial resources necessary for the annual budget of the church. It shall oversee the investment of financial assets. In cooperation with the Pastor and other church staff, it shall ensure that the church's buildings and grounds are appropriately maintained. It shall develop and oversee capital improvement programs and fund-raising. It shall determine for what purposes the church property shall be used and recommend for Common Ministry approval any use by non-members.

#### **Section 18. Outreach Ministry**

The purpose of the Outreach Ministry is to provide support, coordination, and visionkeeping in the planning and administration of all mission and outreach beyond our church

into the larger community and world. It shall ensure that related activities are appropriately staffed by developing ongoing committees, task forces, or other mechanisms to further its work.

It shall promote and correlate the benevolences of the church with special concern for the church's support of the life and ministries of the United Church of Christ. With approval of the Common Ministry and coordinative review in cooperation with the Stewardship Ministry, it shall conduct special activities as appropriate to solicit funds to support outreach programs. It shall study and discuss current and continuing social needs and issues from the local to the international level and shall review and study the work and recommendations of the United Church of Christ in the areas of outreach and social



involvement. It shall seek to provide church organizations with programs, information, and literature on social issues to promote a deeper sense of Christian obligation and responsibility for active Christian participation in society. It shall submit an annual budget to the Common Ministry.

#### **Section 19. Membership and Inreach Ministry**

The purpose of the Membership and Inreach Ministry is to provide support, coordination, and vision-keeping in the planning and administration of membership growth and retention, new member assimilation, membership roll review, and our care for one another and our fellowship together. It shall ensure that related activities are appropriately staffed by developing ongoing committees, task forces, or other mechanisms to further its work.

In cooperation with the Pastor and the Common Ministry, it shall lead church-wide efforts in evangelism and fulfilling our Christian commitment to share the good news of Jesus Christ. It shall ensure that the fellowship activities of the youth of the church are appropriately supported. It shall assist the Pastor when requested in making visitations on members and assume direction of visitations when the Pastor is absent. It shall submit an annual budget to the Common Ministry.

#### **Section 20. Gifts and Memorials Ministry**

The purpose of the Gifts and Memorials Ministry is to extend the ministries of Union Congregational United Church of Christ by providing oversight of the receipt, management and use of gifts of money, securities, legacies, or other assets that the church receives for purposes other than tithes and offerings for its current operation and ministries. It shall steward these Gifts and Memorials funds by developing and maintaining a planned giving program for the church, soliciting gifts, asset management, and review and recommendations concerning proposals for the use of the Gifts and Memorials funds to the Common Ministry. It shall consist of two committees: the Asset Management Committee and The Distribution Recommendation and Review Committee. The two committees shall meet together at least twice each year to coordinate principles of vision, management and need. The two Committees shall each be chaired by one of the co-chairs of the Gifts and Memorials Ministry, as elected by the church. The Ministry shall select one of its co-chairs to serve on the Common Ministry.

##### **A. Asset Management Committee**

The Asset Management Committee shall develop and maintain a planned giving program for the church to attract gifts and memorials, manage and oversee the assets of the Gifts and Memorials funds, recommend annual spending parameters for the Gifts and Memorial funds to the Common Ministry that both maintain the strength of the funds and respond to the church's vision, and recognize contributions and contributors to the Gifts and Memorial funds.

**B. Distribution Recommendation and Review Committee**

The Distribution Recommendation and Review Committee shall encourage, receive and review requests for use of the Gifts and Memorials funds for the ministries of Union Congregational United Church of Christ and make recommendations to the Common Ministry concerning their use.

**Section 21. Common Ministry**

The Common Ministry shall consist of the Pastors, other members of the pastoral staff, the Chairpersons of each Ministry or in their absence the Vice-Chair of such Ministry, the Moderator (who chairs the Ministry), the Vice Moderator, the Clerk and the Treasurer. The purpose of the Common Ministry is to represent the congregation and care for its life between congregational meetings. It shall oversee the Active and Inactive Membership Rolls of the church. It shall review and update the church's vision at least every three years and communicate with Ministries to ensure the vision elements in their particular areas are appropriately addressed.

It shall review Ministry goals annually and assist in coordination and communication among the Ministries and church members. It will resolve any disagreements between or among other Ministries and overlapping ministry issues and will assign to a Ministry, Committee, or Task Force any issue not clearly defined in the Constitution. It may refer issues in dispute with recommendations to the congregation for vote and resolution.

It shall assure effective administration of such church processes as identifying and soliciting talents and gifts of members and friends of the church, communications, nominations, personnel policies, pastoral relations, ministerial review, and church history.

It shall represent the church legally and shall have charge of the financial affairs of the church including annual budget preparation and presentation and the approving of all salaries and other agreements obligating the church. It will always be guided in this regard by Internal Revenue regulations pertaining to Exempt Organizations to maintain tax-exempt status of the church and be subject to the laws and regulations of the State. It shall not buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real estate without specific authority by vote of the church. It shall meet at least six times per year at the call of the Pastor or the Moderator.

**Section 22. Nominating Committee**

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to submit nominations to fill vacancies that occur in the elected position of Chair and Vice Chair of committees or ministries established by the Bylaws of the Church, except as noted in the description of each ministry or committee in the Bylaws. Such nominees shall stand for election by the congregation at its annual meeting. Other members of each ministry or committee shall be recruited by that Ministry or committee's Chair and Vice Chair with the assistance of the Talents and Gifts Committee. The Nominating Committee shall recommend for approval of Common Ministry, individuals for Chair, Vice Chair, or Officer vacancies that occur at times other than the expiration of a term. The immediate past Moderator shall be the Chair of the Nominating Committee and open positions in the Nominating

Committee including the Vice Chair shall be recruited by the remaining members of the Nominating Committee.

**Section 23. Annual Delegates**

Quotas of delegates requested by outside organizations of the church shall be appointed by the Moderator in consultation with the Pastor.

**Section 24. Ministry and Committee Quorum**

At meetings of the Common Ministry and all other Ministries and Committees, the presence of a majority of their respective members shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE III – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

**Section 1. Women's Fellowship**

The Women's Fellowship shall be organized by the women of the church under its own constitution and by-laws, up-to-date copies and amendments of which shall be filed by the Fellowship Secretary in the Church Office. Subject to agreements to be approved by both the Women's Fellowship and the Stewardship Ministry, certain facilities of the church, such as the kitchen and equipment, may be assigned to the supervision and care of the Fellowship by the Stewardship Ministry. Such agreements will always be open to review by the Fellowship, the Stewardship Ministry, and the Pastor.

**Section 2. Other Organizations**

All organizations connected with the church or using its property or equipment shall be regarded as integral parts of the church, shall be under its general supervision, and shall be subject to control by the Stewardship Ministry in their use of church facilities.

**ARTICLE IV – ELECTION AND SUCCESSION**

**Section 1. General**

The following officers and positions in the church shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church:

Two-year terms, no term limit

Treasurer, Clerk

Two-year terms, two term limit

Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Nominating Committee Chair and Vice-Chair,  
Ministry Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Four-year terms, one term limit

Pastoral Relations Committee

## **Section 2. Ministries**

The Ministries shall consist of two elected officers, the chair and the vice-chair, and as many such other members as deemed necessary and appropriate to conduct the planning work of the Ministry. The two elected officers of the Gifts and Memorials Ministry shall serve as co-chairs, with the Ministry selecting one of its co-chairs to serve on the Common Ministry.

Active non-members may be appointed to serve on Ministries and Committees but may not be elected as Chairpersons or serve on the Common Ministry.

As to each of these Ministries and offices, such additional members as may be necessary to fill vacancies not filled by appointment by the Nominating Committee shall be elected annually for completion of the terms represented by such vacancies.

## **ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be altered or amended by a simple majority vote of members present at any regular or special meeting, provided that a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the intent of the proposed amendment(s) shall have been given from the pulpit and in the church newsletter no later than the Sunday before such meeting.