

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ARTICLE I - NAME & DENOMINATION

The name of this church is "First Congregational Church of _____, " a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Congregational Church _____ is a gathered fellowship of believers in Christ. Our purpose is:

- To gather people together to worship God regularly, on the Lord's Day.
- To spread the Word of God as revealed through Jesus Christ in the Bible.
- To equip members to share their faith and to do good works.
- To provide an environment, which encourages spiritual growth and development
- To teach the traditions of the Congregational Churches.
- To provide opportunities for Christian fellowship.

ARTICLE III - COVENANT

The Covenant is as follows: **"In the presence of God and Man we heartily acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and solemnly consecrate ourselves as His disciples in the service of the Almighty Father whom He has revealed and, trusting in God's Spirit to confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, to strive to do His Holy Will, walking in all His ways, whatever it shall cost, according to our best endeavor."**

ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT

This Church is a free and autonomous religious body, governed by its membership according to this Constitution.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Eligibility for membership. Any person may become a member of this Church who makes application to the Spiritual Nurture Board, based upon the candidate's having made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and who publicly intends to live according to the Covenant.

Section 2 Classes of membership.

- Active members shall be those who give faithfully of their time, talent, and treasure, and shall have voting privileges.
- Inactive members shall be those who do not give of their time, talent, and treasure for a period of one year. They may be assigned to an inactive membership roll by the Membership Outreach Board and denied voting privileges. Inactive members can be reinstated to active membership upon request to the Membership Outreach Board.
- Life members shall be those considered active members though they are unable to participate fully in the normal requirements of active membership. They may be assigned to the Life membership roll by the Membership Outreach Board and retain voting privileges.
- Dropped. Inactive members, after a period of three (3) years, shall be dropped from the roll and permanently recorded in the Historian's files.

ARTICLE VI - BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1 **The congregational meeting, duly assembled, is the highest human authority of the Church.**

- A. Regular. The membership shall meet a minimum of four (4) times a year, once in each quarter of the calendar year. The second quarterly meeting shall be held the first Sunday of June.
- B. Special. Special meetings of the membership may be called with the approval of the Leadership Board. Requests may be made to the Leadership Board by the Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Board, Trustee/Administrative Board, Membership Outreach Board, Trust Fund Board, or by written request of twenty (20) or more active members. The request shall include **the stated** purpose of the meeting.

Section 2 Time and Place. The time, place and agenda of all meetings of the membership shall be determined by the Leadership Board. Fourteen (14) days written notice shall be published to the membership. **In an emergency situation a congregational meeting may be called with at least seven (7) days written notice with the approval of the Leadership Board.*

Section 3 Election and Time of Taking Office. The second quarterly meeting of the membership, also known as the Annual Meeting, shall include electing Officers, and members of Boards. Their terms of office shall begin at the time of election

Section 4 Adoption of Budget. The fourth quarterly meeting of the membership shall include adoption of the annual budget.

Section 5 Quorum. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

Section 6 Voting. Each active member shall be entitled to one (1) vote at all meetings of the membership,

ARTICLE VII - PASTOR

Section 1 Calling. The candidate for Pastor (or Pastors) shall be a graduate of a regionally accredited seminary and a regularly ordained minister of the gospel, and shall be called by a two-thirds vote of the active membership present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose. The terms of the contract shall be stated in the Call.

Section 2 Duties. The Pastor shall become a member of Congregational Church of _____ and shall serve as its Pastor, Teacher, Staff Administrator and be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Day Care. He/She shall be responsive to church meetings and work in concert with the Officers, Boards, and Teams of the Church and shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, on all Boards with the exception of the Trust Fund Board according to its Constitution.

Section 3. Term of office. The term of the Pastor shall be indefinite. It may be ended at any time with sixty (60) days notice by:

A. A two-thirds vote of the active membership present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, having previously published 14 days notice, or

B. A letter of resignation from the Pastor.

ARTICLE VIII - HIRED PERSONNEL

- Section 1** Hired personnel may be Youth Director, Choir Director, Organist, Administrative Assistant, Custodian, Pastoral Assistant, Day Care Director, and Assistant Pastor. Any Board may suggest additional hired personnel.
- Section 2** **Selection.** Candidates shall be proposed to Trustee/Administrative Board by:
- A. Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Board - Youth Director, Choir Director and Organist.
 - B. Trustee/Administrative Board - Administrative Assistant and Custodian.
 - C. The task of proposing personnel to the positions of Pastoral Assistant, Day Care Director, and Assistant Pastor will be delegated appropriately by the Leadership Board.
 - D. Any Board - Additional hired personnel.
- Section 3** **Hiring.** After receiving and reviewing job descriptions, candidate recommendations, and salary and wage suggestions from the related Boards, the Trustee/Administrative Board shall approve all job descriptions, all salaries and wages, and sign all contracts for hired personnel.
- Section 4** The Trustee/Administrative Board shall authorize the termination of employment of all hired personnel, upon recommendation of the appropriate Board and the Pastor.

ARTICLE IX - OFFICERS

- Section 1** The Church Officers shall be Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent. All must be active members.
- Section 2** **Election.** A slate of Officers shall be proposed by the Leadership Board. Other nominations may be made from the floor. The Officers shall be elected annually at the second quarter business meeting, also known as the annual meeting, to be held the first Sunday in June. Newly elected Officers shall assume the duties of office upon election.
- Section 3** **Terms of Office.** Officers shall be elected to serve a term of three years and may succeed themselves.
- Section 4** **Vacancies.** Vacancies occurring between elections shall be filled by the Leadership Board until ratified by the congregation at the next business meeting. Additional nominations may also be made from the floor, Section 5 **Duties**
- A. **Moderator.** The Moderator (or in his/her absence the Chairperson of the Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Board) shall preside at all business meetings. The Moderator shall not hold any other Office. The Moderator is a voting member of the Leadership Board.
 - B. **Clerk.** The Clerk shall be the recording officer of the church and shall:
 1. Record minutes at all called congregational meetings (or in his/her absence a member of the Spiritual Nurture Board).
 2. Is a voting member of the Leadership Board and will record minutes of all called meetings of that Board.
 3. Give notice of congregational meetings to the membership.
 - C. **Treasurer**
 1. Shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Trustee/Administrative Board and shall be under their supervision.
 2. Shall receive, record and disperse funds of the church in compliance with the direction of the Trustee/Administrative Board.
 3. Shall invest funds at the direction of the Trustee/Administrative Board.
 4. Shall be bonded and shall at the request of the Trustee/Administrative

Board, not to exceed a three-year period, provide an independent audit of church financial practices by a Certified Public Account.

D. Sunday School Superintendent

1. Shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Board and a voting member on both Leadership and Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Boards.
2. Shall organize the Sunday School program of the church for youth and adults.
3. Shall recruit and supervise Sunday School teachers.
4. Shall be the leader of the Children's Ministry Team.

ARTICLE X - BOARDS

Sect/on 1 Boards. The Church Boards shall be the Leadership, Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture, Trustee/Administrative, Trust Fund, and Membership Outreach. All candidates must be active members as described by this Constitution

Section 2 Election. A slate of Board members shall be proposed by the Leadership Board, and other nominations may be made from the floor. Election shall be annually at the second quarterly business meeting, also known as the Annual Meeting, the first Sunday in June. Not more than one member of a household may serve on the same board at the same time with the exception of the Leadership Board. Newly elected Board members shall assume their duties of office upon election.

Section 3 Term of Office. Board members shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and may succeed themselves after a lapse of one (1) year. In the event of extenuating circumstances this lapse could be reduced to six (6) months, with the approval of the Leadership Board and the congregation. A Board member filling a previous term may continue a new term on the same Board after being approved by the congregation.

Section 4 Meetings. Regular meetings of the Boards shall be held monthly. To ensure communication between Boards and the Teams formed to carry out its duties, a representative from each Team must submit an oral or written report at regular monthly Board meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson.

Section 5 Vacancies. Vacancies occurring between elections shall be filled by the Leadership Board until ratified by the congregation at the next business meeting. Additional nominations may also be made from the floor.

Section 6 Quorum. A quorum at any board meeting shall be a majority of its members. In the absence of a quorum, no official actions shall be taken.

Section 7 Absences. If a member of any Board has three consecutive unexcused absences, the Board may declare the position vacant.

Section 8 Minutes. A copy of the minutes of each meeting shall be sent to the Church office within one (1) week after the meeting to become part of the Church files.

Section 9 Budget Requests. Each Board must submit budget requests needed for projected programs to the Trustee/Administrative Board by August 1.

Section 10 Annual Reports. Each Board is to submit an Annual Report of the work it has accomplished to the Leadership Board each May 1 to be available for distribution to the Church membership. (This report must include any work accomplished by Teams formed from *each* respective Board.)

Section 11 Composition and Duties of Boards

A. Leadership Board

1. Composition shall consist of: the Chairpersons of Boards (*Trustee-Administrative*, Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture, Trust Fund and Membership Outreach), President of the Women's Fellowship, the three members at large elected by the church membership, one each year for a term of three years, the Moderator, Clerk, and Sunday School Superintendent. The Chairperson shall be elected from among the three members at large at the first called meeting of the Leadership Board following the Annual Meeting of the Church.

2. Duties

- a. The Leadership Board is responsible to integrate and coordinate the work of all individual Boards and Teams. It shares the concerns of the various Boards, and works toward the common goals of the Church. When there is a major decision to be made, the Board shall meet, prepare and present a proposal to the Church membership for approval.
- b. To update the Church Profile when necessary and submit to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.
- c. Members at Large shall attend the first called meeting (following the Annual Meeting) of all Boards to help with the election of a Chairperson and to distribute copies of the Church Constitution to all new Board members.
- d. To annually review the Church Constitution and if needed, to propose amendments at congregational meeting.
- e. In the event of a Pastoral vacancy the Leadership Board will assume the responsibility of the Pastoral Search. If any member is unable to serve the respective Board shall appoint a replacement. The Board will meet, secure and unanimously present to the Church membership a candidate for the position of Pastor.
- f. The Leadership Board shall be responsible to meet as required to prepare a slate of candidates for all elected Officers and Boards at the second quarter business meeting (Annual Meeting), slate to be available to church membership at least one week prior to the meeting and to nominate a candidate for a vacated position for election at any business meeting.
- g. To advise and assist with Ministerial concerns and serve as liaison between the Pastor and parish-act as spiritual confidant for Pastor's concerns regarding the church and his roll as spiritual leader.
- h. To conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Pastor, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Pastor's employment agreement, and to provide a copy of their review and appropriate recommendations to the Trustee/Administrative Board by the 2rid Quarterly Meeting of the Congregation.

B. Diaconate/Spiritual Nurture Board

1. Composition shall consist of nine (9) members, three (3) to be elected annually for a term of three (3) years.
2. Duties.
 - a. To be the spiritual lay leaders of the Church. To equip and empower members to do the work of evangelism, disciple-

making and missions.

- b. To advise, counsel and assist the Pastor and members in the spiritual activities of the church.
- c. To appoint a member to serve on the Trust Fund Board.
- d. To oversee religious education in the Church for all ages. Examples include but are not limited to: Sunday School, Confirmation, Adult Education, Youth Groups, Vacation Bible School. Special Activities relating to these areas include but are not limited to: Rally Day, Christmas Pageant, Christ's Birthday Party, Children's Sunday, and Youth Sunday,
- e. To propose to the Administration Board a candidate for Youth Director when necessary.
- f. Responsible for liaison between Boy Scout Troop (when active) and Spiritual Nurture Board.
- g. To oversee musical programming of the church and to foster interest and participation in said programming.
- h. To recommend to the Administration Board a candidate for a Choir Director and Organist when necessary.
- i. To provide for, prepare, and serve the Lord's Supper.
- j. To meet with new member candidates.
- k. To assist the Minister(s) with baptisms and with the acceptance of new members.
- l. To accompany Minister(s) at his/her discretion, when they conduct Communion at nursing homes/shut-ins.
- m. Make sure pulpit is filled each Sunday by minister, guest minister, lay preacher, or special service.
- n. To check flower calendar and determine if artificial flowers need to be put on the Lord's Table for Sunday morning service.

C. Trustee/Administrative Board

1. Composition shall consist of nine (9) members, three (3) to be elected annually for a term of three (3) years.
2. Duties.
 - a. To be the financial leaders of the Church. All financial procedures to be handled according to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
 - b. To raise, manage, and authorize the disbursement of **all** monies of the Church.
 - c. To borrow money when necessary.
 - d. To be custodians and managers of Church property.
 - (1) Responsible for periodic inventory of equipment, fire prevention inspection, needed acquisitions and equipment, and ordinary maintenance.
 - (2) Responsible for periodic review of Church's insurance policies, including property and employee insurance and to recommend to members any modifications thereto.
 - (3) Responsible for periodic review of employee compensation agreements in consultation with Leadership Team and to recommend to members any proposed modifications thereto.

(4) Shall oversee improvements to Church property in accordance with plans approved by the members, and shall administer any contracts entered into for said purpose Modifications in decor or furnishings must have prior approval of the Trustee/Administrative Board.

(5) Shall coordinate the use of church property for programs, projects or non-church related activities.

e. To sign ~ contract entered into by the church.

f. To be responsible for the following:

Audit - Shall conduct an annual audit of the Treasurer's records, and when a new Treasurer takes office.

Budget - Shall prepare a proposed budget for presentation to the Church membership at the fourth quarter business meeting.

Memorial - Shall record memorial gifts to the Church and recommend disposition of these funds.

Stewardship - To annually secure pledges for the Church budget and encourage members to give faithfully of their time, talent, and treasure.

Scholarship - Review applications for scholarship monies and award scholarships.

g. To seek out and hire candidates for Custodian and Administrative Assistant, when necessary.

h. To set salaries and wages for all hired personnel.

i. To authorize the termination of any hired personnel when necessary.

j. To appoint a member to serve on the Trust Fund Board.

k. To oversee the financials of the Day Care.

D. Membership Outreach Board

1. Composition shall be nine (9) members, three (3) to be elected annually for a term of three (3) years.

2. Duties

a. Keep the register of members (dates of admission, termination or death, record of baptisms and marriages, list of inactive members, grant letters of transfer)

b. To annually examine and select Local, National, and International mission projects and authorize the Administration Board to expend Mission monies to selected projects.

c. To recruit and empower membership teams to focus on:

I. Inviting unchurched and/or unreached people to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ through fellowship at First Congregational Church.

II. Involve visitors and guests to become a part of the life and ministry of our church.

d. To ensure that greeters and coffee hour are scheduled for Sunday morning services.

e. To secure a Head Usher when necessary (Duties for the Head Usher on file with the Membership Outreach Board).

f. To secure a Church Historian when necessary (Duties for the Church Historian on file with the Membership Outreach Board).

g. Deliver fresh flowers from Sunday morning service to sick or shut-in members when necessary.

- h. To schedule visitation with sick and shut-in members by Minister and Lay people.
 - i. To approve all social functions in the Church.
- E. Trust Fund Board of the First Congregational Church.
1. Composition shall be five (5) members, to include the Pastor, one member appointed annually by the Spiritual Nurture Board, one member appointed annually by the Administration Board, and two members elected to three year terms, these terms not to expire in the same year.
 2. Duties of this Board are given in the Constitution approved by this congregation for this Board.

ARTICLE XI PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The parliamentary authority for the Congregational Church shall be Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 1990 Edition (or to the best of our ability).

ARTICLE XII -AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may' be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the active members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting, provided there is a quorum present, the proposed changes have been submitted to the Leadership Board, and the proposed changes have been mailed to all church members fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. The mailing shall include the time and place of meeting.

ARTICLE XIII - DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of the " Congregational Church, of " the assets of the church shall become the property of the National Association of Congregational Churches.

ARTICLE XIV - APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

This constitution shall be effective immediately upon affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the active members present and voting at a church meeting.

Adopted by the membership of : Congregational Church , on
March 29, 1998.

Date Amended: March 3, 2002

Moderator

Clerk