

**UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**



®

UNITED
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH

Live the Love



CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

CONSTITUTION	1
PREAMBLE.....	1
ARTICLE I – NAME, PURPOSE AND MISSION STATEMENT.....	1
A. Name.....	1
B. Purpose.....	1
C. Mission Statement.....	1
ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP	1
ARTICLE III - AUTHORITY.....	2
A. Congregation.....	2
B. The General Board.....	2
C. Executive Committee.....	2
D. Qualifications of Officers	2
E. Duties of Officers.....	3
F. Positions Elected by the Congregation	5
G. Officers Elected by the General Board.....	6
H. Officers Appointed by the General Board	6
I. Pastoral Relations Committee.....	6
J. Termination and Resignation of Elected Positions.....	7
ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS	7
A. Meetings to be Held	7
B. Notice.....	7
C. Rules of Order.....	7
ARTICLE V – THE MINISTER.....	7
A. Qualifications:.....	7
B. Duties:.....	7
C. Selection.....	8
D. Terms of Employment	8
E. Termination and Resignation.....	8
ARTICLE VI– AMENDMENTS	9
BY-LAWS.....	10
I. The Church Year	10
II. The General Board	10
III. The Leadership Team.....	10
A. Mission.....	10
B. Major Responsibilities	10
C. Membership	10
IV. Ministry Coordinators.....	11
V. Ministries	11
A. Finance and Stewardship	11
B. Property.....	11
C. Christian Education.....	11
D. Worship and Spirituality.....	11
E. Mission.....	11
F. Hospitality.....	11
VI. Church Policies and Guidelines.....	11
VII. Pastoral Relations Committee	12
VIII. Church Staff – Excluding the Minister	12
IX. Amendments.....	12

APPENDICES..... 13
APPENDIX A – YEARLY TIMELINE FOR CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS 13
APPENDIX B – CHURCH LEADERSHIP DIAGRAM 14

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the members of The United Christian Church of California, Pennsylvania, a congregationally governed body, in order to promote the work of the church in the Spirit of Christ and thus advance God's Kingdom, do here adopt this constitution.

ARTICLE I – NAME, PURPOSE AND MISSION STATEMENT

A. Name

The name of this organization shall be The United Christian Church of California, Pennsylvania, (hereinafter referred to as UCC) affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in the United States and Canada, and committed to the historic principles of this body whose local Congregations are variously known as Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, or Disciples of Christ.

B. Purpose

“To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.” Based on Micah 6:8

C. Mission Statement

“To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.” Based on Acts 1:8

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

This Congregation shall consist of those who are now members, and those who shall unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression to their faith through baptism by immersion, and those who unite by transfer of membership having been previously baptized.

In order to maintain active status of UCC persons must attend worship services, participate as a lay leader, contribute financially, or otherwise show continuing interest in the church, at some time within the preceding twelve-month period.

Any person who has failed to take any of the actions of a member for more than a twelve-month period will be considered an inactive member. Exceptions to this will be shut-ins, deployed military, and college students. If a person becomes an inactive member, they may become an active member again by taking any of the actions listed above.

Resignation or transfer of membership to another Congregation is at the request of the member. Membership ceases at death or whenever a member's whereabouts are unknown.

The membership roster will be maintained by the church Clerk-Historian.

ARTICLE III - AUTHORITY

A. Congregation

The Congregation is made up of the members and participating friends of UCC and shall be responsible for organizing itself to fulfill its mission.

All are invited to attend a Congregational Meeting. In order to vote, a person must be an active member.

B. The General Board

1. The affairs of the Congregation shall be managed by the General Board.
2. It shall be the duty of the General Board to:
 - a) Consider and recommend to the Congregation general policies
 - b) Transact business
 - c) Administer the programs of the church through the designated ministries
3. The General Board shall consist of the following positions: Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Clerk-Historian, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer, and the officers elected from the Board (Moderator, Vice Moderator and Board Secretary).

C. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Board Secretary, and the Finance and Stewardship Ministry Coordinator.
2. They shall have the authority to make time-sensitive decisions on behalf of the General Board with subsequent report to the General Board.

D. Qualifications of Officers

Officers must be active members of the Congregation and give evidence of seeking to grow in their own understanding and practice of the Christian life. Such evidence will include the following:

1. Strive to conduct one's life in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ.
2. Attempt to promote good will and Christian fellowship in the Congregation and community.
3. Attendance at the worship services and stated meetings of the Congregation.
4. Demonstrate Christian Stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures in the support of the Congregation and its outreach programs.
5. Demonstrate a willingness to fulfill assignments on behalf of the Congregation.
6. Demonstrate the skill or evident potential in carrying out responsibilities of the particular office.

E. Duties of Officers

1. Moderator

The Moderator shall preside at all General Board and Congregational Meetings and act as a liaison between the General Board and Congregation. The Moderator shall call Executive Committee meetings as necessary and serve as an official advisor to the Minister on sensitive and confidential matters.

2. Vice-Moderator

The Vice-Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator in the Moderator's absence and assist the Moderator and Minister in duties as requested.

3. Board Secretary

The Board Secretary shall keep minutes of all regular or special business meetings of the church, serve as Secretary to the General Board, keep a record of all its regular or called meetings, and perform other duties as may be assigned.

4. Elders

The Elders serve as spiritual and community leaders of the Congregation. The Elders are responsible for the following functions/roles:

- a) Promote the growth and welfare of the Church in cooperation with the Ministry Coordinators.
- b) Serve at the Table in worship.
- c) Spiritual support for shut-ins and those in crisis or with special needs.
- d) Keep in contact with those who have not recently been present in worship.
- e) Regularly attend General Board meetings.
- f) Perform other duties as shall be assigned.

5. Deacons

The deacons shall promote the growth and welfare of the church in partnership with the Elders and Ministry Coordinators. The Deacons are responsible for the following functions/roles:

- a) Distribute the Lord's Supper.
- b) Receive the offerings.
- c) Assist in baptismal services.
- d) Regularly attend General Board meetings.
- e) Perform other duties as shall be assigned.

6. Trustees

The Trustees shall act as the legal agents of the church in all corporate matters, under the direction of the General Board and subject to the approval of the church, hold legal title to all church property, and handle all business transactions related thereto, and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

7. Clerk-Historian

The Clerk-Historian shall keep a complete record of the church membership and such vital statistics as births, deaths, baptisms and weddings, receive all applications for church letters and issue them under authority delegated by the General Board.

8. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for receiving all income of the Congregation, keeping accurate records of the source and amount of such income, depositing and transferring such income to its proper accounts, providing the treasurers of the Congregation with copies of all deposit receipts, shall work closely with the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Coordinator, making regular written reports of income received to the General Board. The Financial Secretary shall be guided by the Handbook for Treasurers of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Congregations.

9. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall disburse all funds of the church according to the authority designated by the General Board, shall work closely with the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Coordinator, and make reports at each regular meeting of the General Board. The Treasurer shall be guided by the Handbook for Treasurers of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Congregations.

10. Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer

The Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer shall keep all records of the funds received for the Capital Improvement Fund Accounts, disbursing funds, as needed, for church properties including any supplies and repairs that are to be made and shall work closely with the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Coordinator. A report shall be presented at each regular meeting of the General Board. The Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer shall be guided by the Handbook for Treasurers of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Congregations.

11. Honorary Officers

The Honorary Officers are those whose service and consecration to the church merits this honor after retiring from active responsibility because of infirmities or advanced age. The offices are known respectively as Elder Emeritus or Deacon Emeritus and may serve as members of the General Board with vote.

12. Junior Deacon

The Junior Deacons shall act as the fifth Deacon and serve the choir, musicians, nursery, and junior church when needed and may attend the meetings of the General Board without vote.

F. Positions Elected by the Congregation

1. Nominating Committee

- a) By the first Sunday in April, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Minister, shall appoint a Nominating Committee to be approved by the General Board. This committee shall be comprised of three (3) board members whose terms do not expire at the end of the current year and two (2) members of the Congregation who are not board members. After approval by the General Board, the names of the Nominating Committee shall be announced to the Congregation by the last Sunday in April.
- b) All suggestions from the congregation for nominees shall be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by the second Sunday in May.
- c) The committee shall then consider qualifications, secure consent from the nominees, and prepare a slate consisting of nominees for each vacancy for Elder, Deacon, Trustee, Clerk-Historian, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer, and Pastoral Relations Committee member.
- d) The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations to the Congregation two consecutive Sundays prior to the annual business meeting and shall also be posted on the bulletin board.
- e) The Nominating Committee shall report its slate of nominees for election at the annual business meeting to be held on the second Sunday of June.
- f) Vacancies in any office of the church shall be filled for the un-expired term by recommendation of the Executive Committee in consultation with the Minister and approval by the General Board.

2. Terms of office:

The following officers shall be elected by the church from its membership at its Annual Business Meeting for a term as designated:

- a) Elders
Not to exceed nine, one third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, not to exceed two consecutive terms.
- b) Deacons
Not to exceed eighteen, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, not to exceed two consecutive terms
- c) Trustees
Not to exceed six, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, not to exceed two consecutive terms.
- d) Clerk-Historian
For a term of one year.
- e) Financial Secretary
For a term of one year.

- f) Treasurer
For a term of one year.
- g) Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer
For a term of one year.

G. Officers Elected by the General Board

The Moderator, Vice Moderator and Board Secretary will be elected from the membership of the General Board by the General Board at the July board meeting.

1. Moderator

For a term of one year, not to exceed four consecutive terms.

2. Vice Moderator

For a term of one year, not to exceed four consecutive terms.

3. Board Secretary

For a term of one year, not to exceed four consecutive terms.

H. Officers Appointed by the General Board

Junior Deacons and Honorary Officers will be appointed by the General Board as needed.

1. Junior Deacon

For a term of one year, subject to renewal.

2. Honorary Officers

Life appointment.

I. Pastoral Relations Committee

1. Duties of Pastoral Relations Committee

- a) This committee shall seek to establish and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the Minister and the members of the Congregation.
- b) The committee shall function as an advisory group to the Minister and as a link of communication between the Minister and Congregation.
- c) The Pastoral Relations Committee shall make reports to the General Board and Congregation as needed. Recommendations for policy changes, program ideas, compensation, and dispute resolution concerning the Minister shall go to the appropriate Ministry Coordinator.

2. Nominating Process

This committee shall consist of five individuals elected from the church's membership, selected as follows:

- a) The Minister and members of the General Board shall each submit nominees to the Nominating Committee by the second Sunday in May.
- b) The Nominating Committee shall consider both lists giving preference to nominees appearing on both lists and prepare a slate of nominees.
- c) The Minister and Moderator shall be given the opportunity to veto nominees prior to the Nominating Committee's report of its nominations.
- d) Nominations shall be approved by the Congregation at their Annual Meeting.

3. Length of Term

- a) The term shall be for three years. Members may serve no more than one term but may serve again after a break of one year.

J. Termination and Resignation of Elected Positions

If an elected individual is unable to fulfill their duties, due to personal reasons including but not limited to: illness, work, relocation, etc.; they shall submit a letter of resignation to the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

A. Meetings to be Held

The church shall hold:

- 1. Annual Business Meeting: to be held the second Sunday in June. Special meetings: as called (1) by the Executive Committee, (2) at the request of the General Board, or (3) by written petition of fifty percent or more members of the church.

B. Notice

Notice of all regular or special business meetings of the Congregation shall be given at a regular Sunday service of the church at least one week in advance of the meeting.

C. Rules of Order

All business meetings of the General Board shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as revised.

ARTICLE V – THE MINISTER

A. Qualifications:

The Minister of the Congregation is a person serving Jesus Christ in response to God's call to the Christian ministry. Expectations of the Minister include: a deep spiritual life of study and prayer; high ethical and moral standards; and a keen balance between the demands of church, family and personal health. The Minister needs to be an Ordained or Commissioned Minister who currently holds standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

B. Duties:

- 1. To know and visit the people of the Congregation—their needs, their goals, their personal battles, and be able to bring comfort, inspiration, and assurance from God's word.

2. To preach the Good News of Jesus Christ so as to comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable, and call the members of the Congregation to lead lives as true disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. To use skills of leadership, teaching, and administration offering support and encouragement to the ministry of all God's people.
4. To serve as an ex-officio member (without vote) in Congregation, Board, and other meetings of church groups.
5. To serve as a role model in Christian living and a reminder of Christ's presence in the world.
6. To serve the wider communities beyond the local church.

C. Selection

1. The Executive Committee will nominate a representative committee of five to be approved by the General Board, who shall serve as the Search Committee and be responsible for recommending a prospective Minister to the General Board.
2. The Search Committee shall consult with the Regional Minister for information and counsel concerning procedures and prospective candidates.
3. The Search Committee shall recommend one prospective Minister to the General Board, giving preference to seminary educated and ordained candidates.
4. The General Board, at a stated or called meeting, may approve the recommendation of the Search Committee by at least two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Upon approval, the General Board shall recommend employment of the prospective Minister to the Congregation.
5. The Congregation, in a stated or called meeting, may approve the recommendation of the General Board by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.
6. Upon approval of the Congregation, a call shall be extended to the prospective Minister by the General Board on behalf of the Congregation.

D. Terms of Employment

1. An agreement of employment setting forth the compensation package for the Minister and other conditions of the call shall be provided to the Minister, with a copy filed in the church office.
2. The term of the Ministry shall be for an indefinite period.

E. Termination and Resignation

1. Voluntary resignation of the Minister shall be submitted to the General Board in writing, after consultation with the Executive Committee. Sixty-day notice must be given.
2. Termination of the Minister shall be dealt with confidentially between the Minister, Executive Committee and the Regional Minister. Sixty-day notice must be given.
3. The General Board shall approve the resignation or termination of the Minister by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting and recommend approval to the Congregation.

4. The Congregation, in a stated or called meeting, shall take final action in approving or disapproving the resignation or termination of the Minister by at least a two-thirds majority vote.

ARTICLE VI- AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendments provided that written notice of the proposed amendment has been read at a regular Sunday service at least two consecutive weeks before the vote is taken.

This Constitution shall be reviewed every five years.

Adopted: June 11, 2000

Revised: June 15, 2003

Revised: June, 2012

Revised: June, 2018

BY-LAWS

I. The Church Year

The church year shall begin on July 1.

II. The General Board

The General Board shall:

- A. Hold regular meetings on a day mutually agreed upon by the Board members.
- B. Hold special meetings as required on call of the Moderator or upon request of fifty percent or more members of the General Board.
- C. Consider twenty-five percent of the members of the General Board as constituting a quorum.
- D. Observe the following order of business:
 1. Meetings called to order by presiding officer.
 2. Devotions.
 3. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting.
 4. Moderator's report.
 5. Minister's report.
 6. Report of Church Clerk and approval of report.
 7. Report of Financial Secretary and approval of report.
 8. Report of Treasurer and approval of report.
 9. Report of Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer and approval of report.
 10. Reports from Ministry Coordinators and ad hoc reports.
 11. Action on recommendations growing out of reports.
 12. Consideration of unfinished business carried over from previous meetings.
 13. New business and program suggestion for future activities.
 14. Adjournment.
 15. Minister's inspirational moment and benediction.

III. The Leadership Team

A. Mission

The mission of the Leadership Team is to assist the Minister in discerning the mission priorities and coordinating the work of the Ministries.

B. Major Responsibilities

1. To meet by the last Sunday in March to set Ministry goals, calendar events and determine the Ministries' budget proposals for the upcoming church fiscal year.
2. To coordinate with Finance and Stewardship Ministry to finalize the budget proposal for the upcoming church fiscal year by the second Sunday in April.
3. To meet by the last Sunday in October to review the goals and budget set in Spring.
4. To create written proposals to the General Board for the creation or the dissolution of a Ministry.

C. Membership

The membership of the Leadership Team will be composed of the Minister, Executive Committee, and Ministry Coordinators.

IV. Ministry Coordinators

- A. Each Ministry shall be facilitated by the Coordinator as called annually by the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Board Secretary and Minister.
1. Ministry Coordinators will connect with the spiritual gifts of the Congregation and link them to the needs of these Ministries by creating task forces.
 2. Spiritual gifts shall be considered based on participation in church life regardless of membership, with the exception of the Finance and Stewardship Ministry Coordinator who must be selected from the membership of the General Board.
 3. Coordinators should be selected by the first Sunday in September.
 4. Coordinators shall report to the General Board on the actions and needs of the Ministries.

V. Ministries

Those persons working within these Ministries shall communicate with the Coordinator regarding the goals and needs of the Ministry. The task of administering the mission of the church shall be delegated to the following Ministries:

A. Finance and Stewardship

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to communicate and encourage Christian stewardship. They shall oversee the budget, Capital Improvement Funds, investment accounts and proceeds from fundraisers, memorial gifts, and special offerings.

B. Property

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to maintain and improve the properties of the church including the church van, maintain insurance coverage and oversee custodial staff.

C. Christian Education

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to plan and administer the total educational program of the church.

D. Worship and Spirituality

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to lead the membership in a genuine experience of worship and to enrich personal and family devotional life.

E. Mission

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to involve the Congregation in projects that address the needs of both local and global communities. It shall encourage the ongoing support of the Disciples Mission Fund and general church ministries.

F. Hospitality

It shall be the mission of this Ministry to provide a welcoming environment for fellowship within the Congregation and community.

VI. Church Policies and Guidelines

Church policies and guidelines established by the General Board shall be reviewed triennially through the Leadership Team. Policies and guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Living Endowment Fund Policy
- Child Protection
- Employee Job Descriptions
- Ethical Guidelines
- Healthy Congregations Covenant of Conduct

- Medical and Leave Guideline for Pastor
- Rentals

VII. Pastoral Relations Committee

- A. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall meet with the Minister once per quarter, at minimum. The Moderator shall be present at the meeting, ex-officio.

VIII. Church Staff – Excluding the Minister

A. Job Description

1. All positions must have a job description detailing the responsibilities of the position and the church officer(s) responsible for overseeing the position.
2. New positions' job descriptions must be approved by the General Board before considering applicants.

B. Hiring

1. Employment of staff members may be considered upon recommendation to the General Board. The Board shall request those with oversight of the employee to furnish the Board a recommendation to hire or to release such employees as shall be deemed necessary.
2. Final authority, except the call of the Minister, shall reside with the General Board.
3. Employment of staff members shall be by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. A written statement setting forth terms and other conditions of employment shall be included in the minutes with a copy given to the employee.

C. Performance Review

All staff members shall review their job performance annually with their supervising officer and at least one member of the Executive Committee.

IX. Amendments

These By-laws may be amended by a majority of the members of the General Board present and voting in regular or special meeting, provided that the proposed amendments has been submitted in writing to the membership for the General Board at least thirty days prior to the vote thereon.

They shall be reviewed every five years.

Adopted: June 11, 2000

Revised: June 15, 2003

Revised: June 2012

Revised: June 2018

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – YEARLY TIMELINE FOR CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS

March

Last Sunday Deadline for Leadership Team to set Ministry goals, calendar events and determine budget proposals for upcoming church fiscal year

April

First Sunday Deadline for Executive Committee with Minister to appoint a Nominating Committee

Second Sunday Deadline for Leadership Team to coordinate budget proposals for upcoming church fiscal year with the Finance and Stewardship Ministry

Board Meeting Nominating Committee must be approved

Last Sunday Approved Nominating Committee must be announced to the congregation

May

Second Sunday All suggestions from the congregation must be submitted to the Nominating Committee

Last Sunday Nominations must be reported during worship to the congregation and posted on bulletin board

June

First Sunday Nominations must be reported during worship to the congregation and posted on bulletin board

First Monday All Annual Reports must be turned into the church office in preparation for the Congregational Meeting

Second Sunday Congregational Meeting and election of officers

July

1st Church financial year begins

September

First Sunday Deadline for Moderator, Vice Moderator, Board Secretary and Minister to select Ministry Coordinators

October

Last Sunday Deadline for Leadership Team to review Ministry goals and budget set in Spring

APPENDIX B – CHURCH LEADERSHIP DIAGRAM

Congregation

General Board

Elected by Congregation

- Elders (9)
- Deacons (18)
- Trustees (6)
- Clerk-Historian
- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer
- Capital Improvement Fund Treasurer

Appointed by Board:

- Honorary Officers
- Junior Deacons

Leadership Team

Minister

Executive Committee

Elected by the Board from its membership

- Moderator
- Vice Moderator
- Board Secretary
- Finance & Stewardship Ministry Coordinator*

**Called by Moderator, Vice Moderator, Board Secretary*

Ministry Coordinators

Called by Executive Committee

Not Required to be Board Members

- Finance & Stewardship*
- Property
- Christian Education
- Worship & Spirituality
- Mission
- Hospitality

** Must be a member of the Board*

Pastoral Relations Committee

Elected by Congregation

Five Members