

Constitution and Bylaws

First Congregational Church
Wyandotte, Michigan

Revised April 8, 2018

Constitution

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Constitution
First Congregational Church
Wyandotte, Michigan

Revised May 21, 2017

Article I - Name

The name of this Church shall be First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ of Wyandotte, Michigan.

Article II - Covenant, Statement of Faith, and Purpose

Section 1 - The covenant of this Church shall be the Covenant of the Salem Church adopted in 1629 which is as follows:

“We covenant with the Lord and one with another and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth.”

Section 2 - We adopt the following Statement of Faith which was adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 1959 as expressive of our faith and doctrinal attitude:

“We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

He calls us into his Church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ’s baptism and to eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen

Section 3 - The purpose of this Church is to bring people to Jesus Christ and membership in his family, develop them to Christ-like maturity, and equip them for ministry in the church and their mission in the world, in order to magnify God’s name.

Article III - Government

This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head. The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The body of believers who compose this Church, while independent in their actions, shall honor the principles of fellowship as recognized by the United Church of Christ.

Article IV - Pastoral Ministry

Pastors shall be called to the pastoral ministry of this Church, released or dismissed by two-thirds majority vote of members present at a meeting called for that purpose. For calling such a meeting, see Article VIII, section 2 of the Constitution.

Article V - Membership

Section 1 - Membership in this Church is open to any person who has been baptized, or has made a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Section 2 - Persons desiring membership in the Church shall make application to The Church Council, and upon its approval shall be received into membership. The applicants shall attend a stated worship service and shall give assent to the Statement of Faith and the Covenant of this Church. Applicants for membership may be accepted in absentia upon the recommendation of the Church Council.

Section 3 - The duties of Church membership shall include: (a) being in sympathy with the purpose of the Church; (b) attendance at regular worship services; (c) serving in its practical work; (d) contributing to the current expenses and benevolent funds according to ability.

Section 4 - Membership may be terminated in three ways: (a) Letters of Transfer: Letters of Transfer to those churches which will accept them shall, on written request, be granted to members in good standing upon authorization by The Church Council. (b) Withdrawal: Any person who desires to withdraw his or her name from the Church Roll may have such privilege upon written application to and action by The Church Council. Such person shall be informed in writing of the action of The Church Council. (c) Retirement: Any person who has been inactive for two years may be placed on The Retired Members List by The Church Council, after he or she has been informed by letter. Retired members are defined as members who attend 0 worship services and give \$0 to the church treasury for two consecutive calendar years.

Section 5 - If a member persistently breaches his/her covenant vows, The Church Council shall respond, observing the rule recorded in Matthew 18:15-17. Initially, the one wronged shall go to the offender and indicate the wrong. If the offender refuses to change, the matter shall be taken to The Church Council. After due notice has been given the member, a hearing before The Church Council will be granted. If, after faithful efforts have been made to bring the member to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ and the member fails to make amends, The Church Council may censure the member, or suspend or terminate the person's membership in the Church. The decision of The Church Council shall be final. Notice of such action shall be reported to the Church at the Annual Meeting.

Article VI - Officers, Election and Term of Elected Church Leaders

Section 1 - The Officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, a Moderator, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. The elected leaders of this Church shall be the Church Officers, the Church Council, and the Christian Education Superintendent.

Section 2 - (a) The Church Officers shall serve as the Nominating Committee for the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consult the candidates whom they recommend and obtain their consent before placing their names in nomination. All nominees shall be members of the Church. Nominations may also be made from the floor by a member before the election takes place, providing that the consent of the nominee is first obtained. (b) The election shall be made by ballot except when the number of nominees does not exceed the number to be elected, in which case the election may be by oral vote. A majority of those present and voting shall constitute an election. (c) When any of the elected church leaders are removed by resignation or other cause, the Clerk shall as soon as possible, call a meeting of the Church to elect a successor. The successor shall be elected in accordance with the requirements for the office filled, and shall be for the unexpired term. Nominations shall be made by the Nominating Committee (the Church Officers).

Section 3 - (a) With the exception of the Pastor, the elected church leaders shall be elected by the Church at the Annual Meeting. (b) The Pastor shall be called and chosen by the Church in accordance with Article IV of the Constitution and Article II, Section 3 (d) of the Bylaws. (c) All elected Church Leaders shall be elected for a term of one year, renewable at the Annual Meeting with no term limits. (d) The Church Council shall consist of 8 members.

Article VII - Church Council

There shall be a Church Council composed of the Pastor, a Moderator, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Christian Education Superintendent, and 3 Council Members-at-Large/Officers-in-Training. The Church Council shall consist of 8 voting members.

Article VIII - Meetings

Section 1 - The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held within the last two weeks of February. The date and time shall be decided and announced by the Church Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 2 - The clerk shall call a business meeting of the Church at the request of the Pastor, the Church Council, the Moderator, or petition of twelve members of the Church. In absence of the Clerk, the Pastor, the Moderator, or the Treasurer shall issue the call. Notice of such meeting shall be read from the pulpit at least two Sundays in advance.

Section 3 - Business of importance may be transacted at any regular meeting of the Church, but no action shall be taken which shall conflict with this Constitution and Bylaws, nor the laws of the State of Michigan.

Article IX - Property

Section 1 - In its corporate name, the Church may acquire, own, or dispose of property, for such work as the Church may undertake to further the purpose of the Church, as described in Article II of this Constitution. The Church may sue or be sued. In addition, the Church may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property, and make any contracts for promoting the purposes of the Church.

Section 2 - In the event it becomes necessary for this Church to dissolve itself, the following steps shall be taken. The Church Council shall adopt a resolution recommending that the corporation be dissolved and directing that the question of dissolution be submitted to the church membership. All voting members shall be notified in writing that the question of dissolution will be discussed at a special meeting of the congregation, called for that purpose. A resolution to dissolve the corporation is adopted if it receives at least two thirds voter approval. All corporate liabilities are paid. Any assets remaining are conveyed to one or more organizations engaged in activities substantially similar to those of this Church, as named in the dissolution resolution. The Officers of the Church shall file the articles of dissolution with the State of Michigan.

Article X - Amendments

Section 1 - The Constitution of this Church may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any business meeting of this Church, of which due notice has been given, provided a statement of the proposed amendments has been given at a previous meeting and published on two successive Sundays. Amendments may also be made at the Annual Meeting, without previous notice, by unanimous vote of all member's present

Section 2 - Any or all provisions of the Constitution or amendments thereof, previously enacted which conflict with the provisions as now amended are hereby repealed.

Bylaws

Revised April 8, 2018

Article I - Duties of the Officers

Section 1 - Pastor. The Pastor shall unite with the Church as soon as possible after assuming office. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the visitation of members; conduct services of public worship, preach the Gospel, and administer sacraments. The Pastor shall make a yearly report at the Annual Meeting. In addition the Pastor shall supervise the following Worship Volunteer Ministry Positions:

- Communion Guild members
- Decorations Committee chairperson
- Flower chairperson
- Scripture Readers
- Worship Committee
- Administrative assistant

Section 2 - Moderator. The Moderator shall preside at all regular and special business meetings of the Church and shall act as President of the Church Council. The Moderator may call special meetings of the Church and of the Church Council whenever necessary. The Moderator shall make a yearly report at the Annual Meeting. In addition the Moderator shall supervise the following Community Service Volunteer Ministry Positions:

- Detroit Soup Kitchen Coordinator
- Wainwright Soup Kitchen Coordinator
- Garfield Neighborhood Ministry (Thanksgiving Basket Project Coordinator, Christmas Gift Coordinator, Tutoring Program)
- ChristNet Homeless Ministry Coordinator
- CROP Walk Coordinator
- Salvation Army Mitten Tree Coordinator

Also the Moderator shall supervise the following Public Relations Volunteer Ministry Positions:

- Building and Property Maintenance
- Wyandotte Activities (church and civic events - ecumenical services, parade, street fair, etc.)
- Newsletter Editor
- Website Editor

In the absence of a Pastor, the Moderator will assume the supervisory responsibilities of the Worship Volunteer Ministry Positions.

Section 3 - Clerk. The Clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the Church and shall submit the same for revision and correction at each business meeting of the Church. The Clerk shall issue letters of transfer upon request of the Church Council, keep on file all correspondence, all official records, and other records of the Church, and shall call all meetings as provided for. The records of the Church shall be open at all times for the inspection of any member of the Church. The Clerk shall be the Secretary of the Church Council. The Clerk shall notify all officers, members of boards and committees and delegates of their election or appointment. The Clerk shall make a yearly report at the Annual Meeting. In addition the

Clerk shall supervise the following Membership Care Volunteer Ministry Positions: Member Christmas Basket Coordinator, Funeral Luncheon Coordinator, Small Group Leaders, Social Activity Coordinators, and the Kitchen Coordinator.

Section 4 - Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have custody of all title papers, contracts, and investment documents. The Treasurer shall keep accounts of all monies received and paid out, be subject to the direction of the Church Council, make monthly statements to the Council of funds in the treasury as of the first day of each month, and make a yearly report at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer is responsible for receiving and acknowledging all monies donated to the Church in memoriam. The Treasurer shall be Vice-President of the Church Council, and preside at business meetings in the absence of the Moderator. In addition the Treasurer shall supervise the following Church Finance Volunteer Ministry Positions:

- Audit Committee Members
- Counting Committee Members
- Giving Campaign Coordinators
- Fundraising Project Coordinator

Article II - The Church Council

Section 1 - Membership. The Church Council shall consist of the following officers: the Pastor, the Moderator, who shall be President; the Clerk, who shall be Secretary; the Treasurer, who shall be Vice-President, the Christian Education Superintendent. Three Council Members-at-Large/Officers-in-Training shall be elected to the Church Council at the Annual Meeting. The Council Members-at-Large/Officers-in-Training shall be mentored by the Moderator, the Clerk, and the Treasurer. However, election to these three positions shall not guarantee succession to officer positions.

Section 2 - Meetings. The Council shall meet monthly and at such other times deemed necessary by the Moderator or any three members of the Church Council.

Section 3 - Duties. (a) It shall be the function of the Church Council to consider the entire task of the Church; to advise the Pastor on the general direction of the Church's activities and to cooperate with the Pastor in the formation of a well-rounded program; to exercise general supervision over the work of the entire Church, making every effort to correlate and produce harmony in the working of the various departments and to consider and recommend to the Church such aims and methods as may increase its usefulness and welfare. The Church Council shall have the power to appoint committees not otherwise provided for, as shall in its judgment be desirable for furthering the work and activities of the Church.

(b) The Church Council shall supervise and direct the evangelism program of the Church. The Council shall nurture an evangelism conscience within the congregation; identify and organize evangelistic activities; supervise church publications and advertising; enlist, train, and support evangelism workers; and enable the contacting of prospective and new members. The Council shall submit an annual Membership Growth Goal to the Church for adoption at the Annual Meeting.

(c) The Church Council shall make all arrangements for the Annual Church Meeting. This meeting shall be held during the month of February; date and time to be decided and announced from the pulpit, and published in the Church publications not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.

(d) In the event of a vacancy or pending vacancy in the Pastoral Ministry, A pastoral Search Committee shall be elected by the Church, from nominations presented by the Church Council. Said Committee shall consist of not fewer than five or more than nine Church members. Nominations to the Committee may also be made from the floor by a member before the election takes place. The Search Committee shall, with the cooperation of the Minister of the Michigan Conference and others, make a canvass of available candidates for consideration by the membership of the Church at a meeting called for this purpose.

(e) The Church Council shall prepare a schedule of persons to prepare the Lord's Supper and a schedule of persons to assist the Pastor in its administration; attend to the supply of the pulpit during the absence of the Pastor; exercise full jurisdiction and authority in all matters relating to membership, including eligibility, instruction, discipline, letters of transfer, and termination of membership.

(f) The Church Council shall have the supervision and direction of the educational program of the Church. The Christian Education Superintendent shall have charge of the Sunday School with full power to appoint and remove staff; and appoint Youth Group Advisors who are responsible for maintaining youth fellowship programs. The Christian Education Superintendent and the Youth Advisors shall submit budget requests.

(g) The Church Council shall have general oversight of the musical services of the Church, acting in cooperation with the Pastor and the Music Director. The Church Council may appoint church members to form a special task force as needed. Any sum of money set aside for music in the budget as adopted at the Annual Meeting shall be at the disposal of the Music Director, to be paid out by the Church Treasurer, on order of the Church Council, by and with the authorization of the Music Director.

(h) The Clerk shall recruit church members to serve as Care Callers/Hotline Callers to assist the Pastor in the visitation and spiritual care of the congregation.

(i) The Church Council shall see that the Church complies with government regulations pertaining to nonprofit religious corporations and is properly organized as required by the State of Michigan. The Church Council shall hold the property of the Church, be responsible for the maintenance of the Church properties. Superintend the raising of funds needed for the Pastor, and all other expenses of the Church, and through the Treasurer, disburse the same, subject always in their action to a direction vote of the Church but having no power to buy or sell, mortgage or lease or transfer, the real property of the Church without a specific majority vote of the Church. The Church Council shall make an Annual Report to the Church and prepare a budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting for action by the Church. The Church Council shall have the Church Treasurer's financial records audited at the year end and a statement by the auditors included in the Annual Report.

(j) The Church Council shall prepare volunteer ministry descriptions, identify volunteers, match volunteers with volunteer ministry positions, recruit volunteers, train volunteers, support volunteers, complete volunteer ministries, and evaluate the volunteer ministry program of the church. The Church Council shall submit an Annual Volunteer Ministry Report to the Annual Meeting.

Article III - Committees

Section 1 - The Congregational Relations Committee. The Congregational Relations Committee shall understand the pastoral and congregational roles, provide a communication link, and help the church and pastor deal with conflict. The Committee shall submit an annual report to the Annual Meeting and Mission Statement.

Section 2 - The Chief Usher. It shall be the duty of the Chief Usher to open and close the church on Sunday and see that sufficient ushers are provided and present at all services of the Church. The Chief Usher shall supervise and train the following Hospitality Ministry Volunteer Positions:

- Door Greeters
- Fellowship Hour Hosts
- Guest Greeters (welcome visitors)
- Parking Lot Greeters
- Ushers

Section 3 - Removal from Office. Any person may be removed from any Standing Committee of the Church if they fail to attend three consecutive meetings without notifying the Chairperson of said Committee, should circumstances prevent them from carrying out their duties. Such persons to be contacted by the Chairperson, the Pastor and/or Moderator.

Article IV - Sacraments

Section 1 - The Lord's Supper shall be observed as directed by the Church Council. Invitations to the Lord's Table shall be open to all.

Section 2 - Adult baptism may be administered on Confession of Faith. It shall be the privilege of the members of this church to consecrate their young children to God by the sacrament of baptism.

Section 3 - Confirmation will traditionally occur during the eighth grade (or at the Pastor's discretion) and the Confirmands can become Full Church Members at this time, if they desire.

Article V - Ecumenical Affiliations

Section 1 - This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and acknowledges as sisters and brothers in Christ all those who profess and call themselves "Christian". This Church cherishes the bonds of fellowship that bind it to other churches in the United Church of Christ.

Section 2 - This Church shall be affiliated with the Detroit Metropolitan Association of the United Church of Christ and the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Section 3 - Delegates to Associations, Councils, or other Ecclesiastical bodies with which this Church is connected, or in which it may vote to be represented, shall be appointed by the Church Council. They shall make brief reports of their attendance, and of the action of such bodies at suitable meetings of Church groups. The necessary expenses of the Pastor and Delegates representing the Church at such meetings shall be paid by the Church Treasurer from the funds of the Church.

Article VI - Meetings

Section 1 - All meetings for business shall be opened with prayer.

Section 2 - Twenty members present at any regular or properly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 3 - Every member shall be entitled to vote on all business of the Church.

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Section 4 - Three tellers shall be appointed by the Moderator at Annual Meeting to examine the ballots and report the results of the elections.

Section 5 - The annual budget as presented by the Church Council shall, when adopted, be adhered to unless revised by vote of the Church at a meeting regularly called. Special collections shall be taken only under the approval of the Church Council.

Section 6 - The Church Council shall prepare an agenda for the Annual Meeting for adoption by the Church.

Article VII - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

Article VIII - Amendments

Section 1 - Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any regular Annual Meeting of the Church and may be suspended during any business meeting by two-thirds vote of the members present.

Section 2 - Any and all Articles of the Bylaws or provisions thereof previously enacted or amended which conflict with the Bylaws as now amended or altered are hereby repealed.

Article IX -Parliamentary Authority

The rules of parliamentary practice comprised in Robert's Revised Rules of Order shall govern the business meetings of the Church in all classes to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Bylaws and Special Rules of the Church.