



**BYLAWS OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OF DUBUQUE, IOWA
NOVEMBER 10, 2024**

ARTICLE I- NAME AND LOCATION

This Church shall be called First Congregational United Church of Christ of Dubuque and the church office shall be located at 255 W 10th Street Dubuque, Iowa.

ARTICLE II - MISSION/VALUE STATEMENT

Journeying in faith, sharing God's unconditional love

ARTICLE III- VISION STATEMENT

Be a growing faith community

Listen to and learn from our Still Speaking God

Transform our lives, our congregation and our community

Be the hands and feet of Jesus, sharing love, grace, justice and peace for all of God's creations

ARTICLE IV- PURPOSE

The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to build Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the wider church; welcoming the diversity of all God's children in terms of race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, gender expressions and identity, and mental and physical abilities to offer loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

ARTICLE V - POLITY

This congregation shall be a member of the United Church of Christ. The government of this congregation shall be vested in its members, who shall exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of Iowa relating to nonprofit corporations.

ARTICLE V - FAITH AND COVENANT

This congregation acknowledges as its head Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all people. It acknowledges the family of Christ as all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to guide its creative and redemptive work in the world. It adopts as its statement of faith the following:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races. You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table, to join Him in His passion and victory. You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen

COVENANT

We covenant one with another and the wider church to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. Our purpose is to walk together in the ways of the Lord. We hold it to be the mission of this congregation to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world while worshiping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our ancestors, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

As we walk together in all God's ways, we seek to discern and do what is best for our church as a whole, not what may be best for individuals or factions (Philippians 2:4). We recognize that conflict and disagreement are normal and natural. We know that we can work together for the good of the church, according to God's purposes. (Romans 8:28) We will express our faith through our actions as we:

Focus on the Spirit's Leading

God is still speaking, so we will be open to change. (Revelation 21:5)

We will approach all things in prayer. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Listen and Speak Respectfully

We will speak from our own personal experience. (1 Corinthians 3:16)

When there is a disagreement or misunderstanding, we will speak to each other, (face to face when possible) honestly and without rancor, respecting confidentiality. (Ephesians 4:15)

Practice Extravagant Hospitality

No matter who you are, you are welcome here. We will honor a diversity of ideas, thoughts and perspectives when they are expressed in a way that reflects God's love. (Hebrews 13:2; Colossians 3:12-17)

Work together for the good of the Congregation

We will support and not undermine the final outcome of the decision making process.

(1 Corinthians 1:10) (Romans 14:19)

As forgiven people, we will choose to forgive one another. In the spirit of Jesus and with God's help, we will show respect and love in all we do as we journey together. (Luke 11:4)

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Generally

Membership is open to all persons who accept the cost and joy of discipleship in the church of Jesus Christ.

Section 2. Requirements for Membership

The members of this church shall be baptized persons who have been received by confirmation, confession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.

Section 3. Reception into Membership

It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council acting in cooperation with the Minister, to ensure instruction of all persons desiring to become members of the church regarding the responsibilities and privileges of membership and the manner in which the church functions. Persons shall be received into membership at a public worship service. Persons who are unable to attend in public may be received into membership by the Minister acting on behalf of the church.

Section 4. Duties of Membership

Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the community.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

The membership status of a person shall be subject to termination as follows: Upon request of a member, the church will issue a letter of transfer to another church body. If, because of a change of faith or for other reasons, a member requests to be released from the obligations of membership, the Church Council shall endeavor to secure the member's continuance in its fellowship but failing such effort, the church shall grant the request and terminate such membership. If a member has not attended church or contributed to its support for two consecutive years or persistently breaches their covenant vows, the Church Council shall make a faithful effort to re-assimilate the member into the fellowship of the church. If such effort fails, the Church Council in its discretion may, upon written notice to said individual, terminate their membership.

Section 6. Restoration to Membership

Any member whose membership has been terminated for any reason may be restored to membership by reaffirmation of faith and reception into membership as set forth in Section 3 above.

ARTICLE VII -SERVICES

Section 1. Worship Services

Regular worship services shall be held, except when temporarily suspended by the Church Council. Other services for worship may be scheduled by the Minister and the Church Council.

Section 2. Sacraments

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and all baptisms shall be celebrated at such times as the Minister or the Church Council shall determine.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the church shall be held at a date determined by the Church Council in November every year. Annual reports of the church officers, the Minister(s), other appropriate staff and any congregational teams are to be posted in the annual report. The proposed following year's budget and any special business shall be made available to the members of the church no later than the Sunday prior to the meeting. Church Council members shall be selected and nominated by the Leadership Team and elected at the annual meeting by the vote of the members.

Section 2. Congregational Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation membership may be called by the Minister, Church Council or upon written request of seven or more church members to the Church Council. Written notice of any special meeting and its purpose shall be given at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to the Church Business Office to be posted for members.

Section 3. Quorum and Voting

Ten percent of the church membership shall constitute a quorum for any Congregational or Church Council meeting. At any meeting at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of the church members present shall constitute the action of the church unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws or in the Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE IX – OFFICERS & LEADERSHIP

Section 1. Minister

Call and Term: When a Minister vacancy occurs, the Church Council shall appoint a Search Team. The Search Team will meet and select its own chairperson and follow administrative policies. At a duly called meeting of the church membership, the Search Team shall present and introduce the candidate whom it recommends to fill the vacancy. At such a meeting, the candidate shall be called to the Minister for an indefinite period by the two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present.

In the call, the financial and other contractual terms of the relationship shall be stated.

While the term of the minister shall be indefinite, the church may, at any time by a majority vote at a meeting called for that purpose, request the minister's resignation, with the requirement that the resignation be presented and become effective within ninety days following the meeting unless a different time period is mutually agreed to by the church and the minister. In the event the minister

wishes to resign his or her position, ninety days advance written notice shall be given by the minister to the Church Council unless a shorter or longer notice period is mutually agreed to between the minister and Church Council.

Duties: The Minister shall have in his or her charge the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Church Council. The Minister shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the Sacraments, plan and conduct services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the Church Council. At each annual meeting of the church, the minister shall submit a written report of the past year's accomplishments and events and shall outline the objectives and goals of the Minister for the coming year. The Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council.

Ordained Staff: The Church Council may, at its discretion, recommend the appointment of appropriate Ministerial staff, including, without limitation, assistant or associate ministers, and prescribe the duties of such Ministerial staff.

Support Staff: In addition, the minister and Church Council may select and appoint such support staff as the minister deems necessary in order to carry out the affairs of the church.

Compensation: The Ministerial staff and professional staff compensation shall be fixed by the Church Council.

Supervision: The ministerial staff is supervised by the Church Council which will conduct reviews of the ministerial staff in accordance with the minister call agreement.

Section 2. Moderator and Vice-Moderator

Election: The church moderator and the vice-moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting for a 2 year term then be ineligible for election for one year. A vacancy in the office of moderator or vice-moderator shall be filled until the next annual meeting by appointment of the Church Leadership Team.

Duties: The moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the church and of the Church Council. The moderator shall serve on the Leadership Team.

Vice-Moderator: A vice-moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting for a two year term then be ineligible for election for one year. The vice-moderator shall perform the duties of the moderator in the absence of the moderator. The vice-moderator shall serve on the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Clerk

Election: A church clerk shall be elected at annual meeting for a two year term and may be reelected for successive terms. A vacancy in the office of clerk shall be filled until the next annual meeting by appointment of the Leadership Team.

Duties: The clerk shall issue calls for all regular and special meetings of the congregation, shall

serve as secretary at all meetings of the congregation, Church Council and Leadership team meetings and shall maintain minutes of all such meetings. The clerk shall maintain accurate records of and report upon special events of the church, including baptisms, confirmations, weddings, new members, transfers and dismissals. The Clerk shall also serve as custodian of the church's historical records and artifacts, and in collaboration with the Church Council initiate appropriate programs in recognition of the church's historical heritage.

Section 4. Treasurer

Election: The church treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting for a two year term and may be re-elected for a second term, but then be ineligible for election for one year. A vacancy in the office of treasurer shall be filled until the next annual meeting by appointment by the Leadership Team.

Duties: The treasurer shall monitor the accounts of the church; oversee the receiving and disbursing of funds by the church business manager as directed by the Church Council; submit written monthly reports of receipts and disbursements of the Church Council; and submit at the annual meeting a detailed written annual report to the congregation of receipts and disbursements for the previous year. The treasurer performs audits of the church finances and presents to the Church Council and annually in the treasurer report.

Section 5. Leadership Team

Leadership Team consists of the following:

Minister(s), Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Church Business Manager

ARTICLE X - STRUCTURE OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Council Members

The Church Council shall consist of the following:

*Minister(s), Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, *Church Business Manager, team leader from each group and 3 members at large. (*non voting member)

Section 2. Meetings

The Church Council shall meet monthly, unless approved by the Church Council to meet more or less frequency. The dates of each year's meetings will be announced by the Moderator at the Annual Meeting. Congregation meetings may be called by the moderator, the Minister, or upon written request of a majority of the Council. Written notice of any special meeting and its purpose shall be given to the business office at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. All meetings of the Council should be open to any member of the church. Minutes of Church Council meetings are made available to all members in the church business office. The Moderator shall be the chairperson of the Church Council and preside at its meetings. The Vice Moderator shall preside in the absence of the moderator. The clerk shall serve as secretary at all meetings.

Section 3. Duties

It shall be the function of the Church Council to visualize the work of the church and to confer and consult with the Minister(s) as to the general direction of the church's activities and to cooperate with the Minister in the formulation of a well-rounded church program. The Council

shall schedule special meetings for the purpose of long range planning, and serve as a means of communication among the various ministries as a whole. Vacancies occurring among any of the church officers (except that of Minister and Church Business Manager) shall be filled by appointment by the Church Council. Upon a vacancy in the Minister, the Church Council shall appoint a Search Team following church policy guidelines located in the church business office. The Church Council shall have the authority to appoint a team of individuals as may from time to time be necessary in order to carry out its duties. In addition, the Church Council shall have such other powers and duties as are set forth elsewhere in these bylaws.

Section 1. Church Council membership shall be for a term of two years. Persons may be re-elected for a second term, but then be ineligible for election for one year. Vacancies shall be filled until the next annual meeting by action of Council. The Church Council shall identify active teams and report the existence and actions of such teams to the congregation in the annual report.

Section 2. Teams – All teams shall be responsible for recruiting their members. Teams should consist of no more than twelve members with the exception of the Search Team, which shall consist of not less than seven or more than nine members. Teams meet as needed and follow team administrative guidelines, which shall be reviewed by the church council from time to time.

Section 3. Group Leader- The group leader is responsible for gathering and reporting to the church council the work of each team under their respective group. Group leaders are selected by the Church Council to serve one calendar year. In the absence of a group leader, a representative of said group may serve as representative at Church Council.

ARTICLE XI - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall be the twelve month period beginning on the 1st day of January and ending on the 31st day of December of each year.

ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

(Full policies and procedures available in Policy and Procedure Manual in Church Office)

Teams

Teams are task/project driven. Teams can be started or ended at any time during the calendar year. The Church Council reviews teams at least annually and reports to the congregation. Any member of any team may attend Church Council meetings as a non-voting member.

Gift Policy

First Congregational UCC continues to be blessed by generous donors whose gifts reflect an understanding that stewardship and giving is a response of gratitude and trust in God. In response to gifts received, our church commits itself to responsible administration of all gifts and pledges to honor the intent of the donor whenever possible and to demonstrate our Christian faith and further the missions of our church.

Safe Church

It is the intention and responsibility of the Church to take whatever action is needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this Safe Church Policy. This policy is written with the intent to protect our children, youth, employees, volunteers, guests and our entire church family. This concern for safety and support for those who have been or could be harmed does not negate our concern for those who offend and our willingness to offer healing and hope to all.

Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

This policy is designed to help employees and leadership of the church identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide the church with a procedure which, if observed, will allow a transaction to be treated as valid and binding.

Search & Call

The search process is a blend of employment work and spiritual work. We use the word call to reflect that distinct blend of the practical and the sacred. A congregation does not hire a new Minister but calls a Minister, following a careful business-like search that is infused with prayerful attention to God's direction. Candidates do not seek a new job but enter into an employment process in order to be rooted in new ways within God's call. This team is appointed by the Church Council and is a blend of church leadership and congregation members at large. This team consists of not less than seven or more than nine individuals of the congregation with not more than two members on elected church council or leadership roles of the congregation. Members of this team may not be related family members of elected church leadership. Further, members of this team cannot be paid employees of the congregation or their immediate family.