

**SAINT STEPHENS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Merrill, WI 54452**  
**CONSTITUTION**

Approved –November 2002  
Revised - November 2010  
Revised - November 2011  
Revised - November 2015  
Revised – October 2018 (Amendment)  
**Revised December 2021**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this church shall be Saint Stephens United Church of Christ.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE, AFFILIATION, DOCTRINE, AND MEETINGS**

**Section 1 – PURPOSE**

The avowed purpose of this Church shall be the worship of God known through the gospel of Jesus Christ, the practice of loving service, the building of God's Kingdom, and the furtherance of Christian fellowship.

**Section 2 – AFFILIATION**

This Congregation shall be a member of the United Church of Christ and shall be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws and Manual on Ministry of said church.

**Section 3 – DOCTRINE**

St. Stephens Church's doctrine is the testimonies of faith through the words and deeds of its active membership. No doctrine shall be held as a test of faith for inclusion in or exclusion from its membership. The faith of St. Stephens Church shall always give honor and reverence to historic Christian Creeds, its Evangelical heritage, and the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ. Each member shall engage and journey in their own relationship with all that is sacred, according to their own conscience and experience, trusting always that we are stronger together than apart.

**Section 4 – MEETINGS**

The Congregation shall hold an Annual Meeting and such other Special Meetings as are provided for in the By-Laws.

**Section 5 – QUORUM**

~~Fifty (50)~~ **Twenty-five (25)** active members shall constitute a quorum. **In the event the meeting is rescheduled due to lack of quorum, those present at the rescheduled meeting will constitute a quorum.**

**ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be open to all persons who desire to be in covenant with the Congregation through the sharing of their presence and resources for the furtherance of our mission and ministry. Someone can become a member through baptism, confirmation, letter of transfer, profession of faith, or agreement to covenant.

#### ARTICLE IV – THE CHURCH COUNCIL

##### Section 1

The Church Council shall be the governing body of the Church. It shall be composed of the Pastor(s) and twelve (12) elected members. Two (2) additional members may be High School age youth, **who are chosen and appointed by the Pastor(s) in consultation with the Council and Nominating Committee. All members of Council, except for the Pastor(s) and youth reps are voting members of the Council.**

##### Section 2

All business administration of the Church is entrusted to the Church Council in the interim between Congregational Meetings.

##### Section 3

**No less than 75% (minimum of 9 members)** of the elected **and appointed** Church Council members shall constitute a quorum.

#### ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

The officers of this Congregation shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall make up the Executive Committee of the Church, **in conjunction with the Pastor(s)**. They shall function on the Council's behalf while the Council meetings are adjourned.

#### ARTICLE VI – ADMINISTRATION

##### Section 1 – Congregational Meeting

The supreme legislative and administrative power of the Church is vested in the Congregation itself assembled in meeting, duly and legally called, as provided in the By-Laws.

##### Section 2 – Congregational Prerogative

It shall be the prerogative of the Congregation **at a duly called Congregational Meeting** to decide such questions as the buying and selling of real property, building projects, extensive repairs of Church property, the call of Pastors, and such other powers and prerogatives as may be herein set forth.

#### ARTICLE VII – SENIOR PASTOR

##### Section 1

**After receiving recommendation from the Search Committee and Church and Ministry Committee,** the Council shall nominate one candidate for the role of Senior Pastor, to be voted upon by the Congregation. The Congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time and

shall vote by ballot for or against his/her election. **He/she is ~~elected~~ called to the position of Senior Pastor with a 70% or higher vote from the congregation.** If he/she is ~~elected~~ called, the Council then tenders him/her a call according to the form prescribed by the Conference. The call will be confirmed through the rite of installation by the Northwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. The change in Senior Pastor shall be in accordance with the By-Laws of Saint Stephens United Church of Christ. The Senior Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. Either party may terminate this relationship with three (3) months' notice or a period of time mutually agreeable. The Senior Pastor will be expected to uphold the United Church of Christ Ordained Minister's Code as found in the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry (see Appendix A).

#### Section 2 - Functions in the Church - Head of Staff

He/She is responsible for the daily operation of the Congregation and supervision of all staff. **He/she is responsible for annual reviews of all staff.** He/She shall make an annual report of his/her work to the Congregation. The Senior Pastor is an ex-officio member of all organizations within the Congregation.

#### Section 3 - Congregation's Obligation to the Senior Pastor

The Congregation commits to upholding the "Local Church in Relation to Its Pastor" as found in the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry (see Appendix B).

### ARTICLE VIII – ASSOCIATE PASTOR

#### Section 1

Candidates for the role of the Associate Pastor shall be recommended by the Church and Ministry Committee in conjunction with the Senior Pastor. Their recommendation must meet the approval of the Church Council and shall be elected by the congregation. The call must also be confirmed by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Northwest Association.

#### Section 2

An Associate Pastor(s) may be called by the congregation in accordance with the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ. **He/she is ~~elected~~ called to the position of Associate Pastor with a 70% or higher vote from the congregation.** Pastoral Assistants may be hired with specific terms and requirements. Associate Pastor(s) responsibilities will be based on the Call Agreement or terms of hire for which the Associate Pastor(s) was called/~~hired~~; Associate Pastor(s) will participate in the total program of the Church, and other responsibilities, tasks, and activities as directed by the Senior Pastor. Associate Pastors shall be called for an indefinite period. Either party may terminate this relationship with three (3) months' notice or a period of time mutually agreeable. Associate Pastor(s) will be expected to uphold the United Church of Christ Ordained Minister's Code as found in the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry (see Appendix A).

#### Section 3 - Congregation's Obligation to the Associate Pastor(s)

The Congregation commits to upholding the "Local Church in Relation to Its Pastor" as found in the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry (see Appendix B).

## ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution shall be presented in writing to the Executive Committee within one week of a regularly scheduled Council meeting. Such proposed amendments, in order to be considered, must be presented, in person, to the Council as a whole. **All elected and appointed representatives of Church Council must have an opportunity to submit a vote for the amendment vote.** Once the entire Council has viewed the proposal, they will vote to either pass the proposal along to the Congregation, table for further discussion, or dismiss it. If it is voted to be passed along, **by 75% (minimum of 9 members) of the** vote of Council members, the Council will give the Congregation three weeks' notice before a regular or special meeting to consider the amendment. **70%** of the members at the Congregational Meeting can then change, adopt, or reject the proposed amendment.

### **Amendment 1**

~~In reference to the By-Laws, Section V—ELECTIONS, Paragraph 1, a Council member “shall be elected for a two-year term. A member can be elected for only two (2) consecutive terms.” This means a member may not serve for more than four (4) consecutive years on the Church Council.~~

~~This Amendment to the By-Laws of the St. Stephens UCC Constitution & By-Laws authorizes the Church Council to extend the term of the St. Stephens Church Council President who is holding the position in 2018 for a term that will not exceed twelve (12) months, extending that St. Stephens Church Council President’s term on the Council to a total of five (5) consecutive years.~~

## ARTICLE X – REVISIONS

~~The Constitution and By-laws shall be reviewed and affirmed and/or amended no less than every three years with a majority vote of the Church Council.~~