



United Church
of Christ
in New Brighton
1000 Long Lake Road
New Brighton, MN
55112

651-633-1327

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEW BRIGHTON, MINNESOTA

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church shall be the United Church of Christ in New Brighton, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSES

The avowed purposes of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward all people; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

1. This church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in the current Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ relating to local churches.
2. This church shall hold its standing in the Minnesota Conference acting as an Association of the United Church of Christ.
3. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of Minnesota relating to corporations not for profit, or ecclesiastical corporations.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT

1. **Doctrine.** This church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Faith.** This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of humanity. It acknowledges as siblings in Christ 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 prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own.

In accordance with the teachings of our Christian Tradition and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and Communion. An expression of this faith is the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith.

3. **Covenant.** We covenant with God and with one another and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to journey together in God's holy ways. We will strive to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to be firm in faith, quickened in hope, and constant in love. And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance, and influence as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Amen.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has been confirmed, or has been baptized and has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Pioneer and Perfector of our faith.
2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of Communion; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and ministries; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

Their reception into membership ordinarily will be in a regular service of worship.

3. Any member is entitled to receive, upon request, a letter of transfer to any other Christian church. Any member may resign their membership by sending to the church a written note to that effect.
4. **Status of Membership:**
 - a. Members are persons who have accepted Articles V.1 and V.2 above and who have entered into covenant with the Congregation, as expressed in Article IV.3.
 - b. Associate Members are members who retain membership in another church as well.
 - c. Members may have their membership declared inactive at the discretion of the Deacons. Inactive members will not be included in official membership statistics and will have no vote. Membership may be reactivated at the discretion of the Deacons.
5. Each active member shall be entitled to one vote at all Congregational Meetings. However, only members eighteen years of age or over shall vote on matters involving the selling, conveying, encumbering, or otherwise disposing of real estate.

ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in a Congregational Meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of 30 members. (See Article XII).

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Composition of the Church Council.

The Church Council shall be composed of members in the following categories:

- a. Officers elected by the governing body for one year: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Lead Financial Secretary.

They may succeed themselves as officers.

- b. The immediate Past Chairperson who acts as advisor to the current Chairperson.
- c. The Lead Minister and Associate Minister and/or Assistant Minister(s).
- d. One representative from each elected standing committee.

The representative should be the Chairperson. When the duly selected representative to the Church Council is unable to attend a Church Council meeting, they shall send an active member of the standing committee as an alternate representative with full voting power to the Church Council meeting. (See Article V.5.)

- e. Representatives from non-elected congregational committees, teams, and work groups as recommended by the Church Council and approved by the governing body annually at a Congregational Meeting.

2. Church Council Meetings.

- a. Normally the Church Council shall meet monthly, and in no case shall two months pass without a meeting. The newly elected Church Council shall meet on or before the first Monday in June.
- b. One-half of the membership of the Church Council shall constitute a quorum.
- c. Any member, staff member, or employee of the Congregation is encouraged and entitled to attend any Church Council meeting with the right to speak, but without vote. Other interested parties may be invited to attend at the discretion of the Church Council, and they will have the right to speak but not to vote.

3. Duties and Authority of the Church Council.

- a. The Church Council shall be the executive, policy-making body of the Congregation and shall transact the business of the church.
- b. All acts and deliberations of the Church Council are subject to revision by the governing body.
- c. The Church Council shall coordinate the activities and programs of the church and of its standing committees, non-elected committees, teams, and work groups. The Church Council shall ensure that the guidelines in the Resource Notebook are reviewed at least annually. The Church Council has the responsibility to propose and approve any necessary or desired changes in those guidelines.
- d. The Church Council shall be the legal representative of the church.
- e. The Church Council shall have the fiduciary responsibility and shall recommend a financial budget to the governing body each year.
- f. The Church Council may authorize any non-budgeted expense if funds are available.
- g. The Church Council may borrow up to and including \$10,000. Borrowing over \$10,000 must receive the approval of the governing body.

- h. The Church Council shall, by appointment, fill vacancies in the unexpired terms of officers, and standing committee members elected by the Congregation.
- i. The Church Council may appoint special committees and may delegate special tasks to the standing committees of the Congregation.
- j. The Church Council shall appoint, in June of each year, the:
 - Members of the Ministerial Relations Committee
 - Members of the Personnel Committee
 - At-large member of the Finance Committee
 - Members of the Planned Giving Committee
 - Church Historian
 - Accountant
 - Associate Financial Secretaries
- k. The Church Council shall appoint official delegates to represent the church at meetings of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, and any other representational bodies as approved by the Church Council. The delegates selected shall report back to the Church Council.
- l. The Church Council shall make preparations for the two regular Congregational Meetings in January and May and for any other properly called Congregational Meetings. (See Article XII.) Preparations should include a proposed agenda and any materials needed to support the matters to be considered at the meeting. The Church Council may also arrange for other support for the meetings such as a meal, childcare, etc.
- m. The Church Council shall annually consider the church in terms of its Purposes (Article II) and may adopt one or more objectives by which the Church Council and the church can serve those purposes more fully and effectively.
- n. The Church Council shall ensure that the policies and processes of the church are current, appropriate, and followed.
- o. The Church Council shall ensure that the Constitution is reviewed at least every two years.

4. **Duties of Elected Officers.**

- a. **Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall:
 - Preside at all meetings of the Church Council and at all Congregational Meetings.
 - Have the usual powers pertaining to the presiding officer.
 - Call special meetings of the Church Council when necessary.
 - Execute and sign approved documents on behalf of the Church Council and Congregation except as otherwise provided in the Constitution or by state or federal law.
 - Appoint such committees as the Church Council may authorize them to create.
 - Serve on the Finance Committee.
 - Serve no more than two (2) consecutive years.
- b. **Vice Chairperson:** The Vice Chairperson shall:
 - Act in the position of the Chairperson in the absence of that officer or in case of the incapacity of the Chairperson to carry out the duties of their office, or upon the Chairperson's resignation or death.
 - Be appointed to chair any such committees the Church Council may deem it advisable for them to head.

- Serve on the Personnel Committee.
 - Serve no more than two (2) consecutive years.
- c. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall:
- Act as clerk of the Church Council in all its deliberations and actions.
 - Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Church Council and also of Congregational Meetings.
 - Submit the minutes of each Church Council meeting and Congregational Meeting for Church Council approval at the subsequent meeting, which approval shall be recorded and shall make the approved minutes official and legal.
 - Have fiduciary responsibility.
 - Have authorization to sign checks in the absence of the Treasurer and when a second signature is required.
 - Sign approved documents on behalf of the Congregation as required by state or federal law.
- d. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall:
- Report to the Church Council.
 - Have fiduciary responsibility.
 - Be responsible for oversight of church financial assets.
 - Disburse the money on budget authority when the annual budget has been officially adopted by the governing body.
 - Disburse any other monies specifically authorized by the Church Council.
 - Prepare proposed budget for Church Council's consideration.
 - Make regular reports to the Church Council and make records available for financial accountability activities as requested.
 - Serve on the Finance Committee.
- e. **Lead Financial Secretary:** The Lead Financial Secretary shall:
- Report to Church Council.
 - Have fiduciary responsibility.
 - Collect and record all receipts and make timely deposits working with the Associate Financial Secretaries as a team.
 - Maintain individual donor records and provide regular donor reports.
 - Record and separate into accounts the monies designated for specific items, such as special offerings for the Deacons Fund, Neighbors in Need, etc. and include these separate accounts in the Financial Secretary's report.
 - Liquidate gifts of securities promptly in accordance with the church's Financial Policies.
 - Coordinate and facilitate a range of electronic giving options.
 - Report to the Church Council, as necessary, the status of pledges, and budgeted and non-budgeted incomes.
 - Serve on the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE VIII. STANDING COMMITTEES

1. The following are standing committees that shall be elected by the Congregation at the annual meeting: Adult Education, Continuing Stewardship, Deacons, Education and Faith Formation, Fellowship, Membership and Engagement, Social Justice and Outreach, Special Fundraising, Technology and Social Media, and Property Management. The duties and responsibilities of each standing committee shall be as follows:

- a. **Adult Education:** This committee shall be responsible for enhancing the faith life of adults by providing regular opportunities for education and spiritual development. The committee shall coordinate efforts with the Education and Faith Formation Committee when planning for educational opportunities that include children and youth.
- b. **Continuing Stewardship:** This committee shall be responsible for stewardship education and the development, implementation, promotion and evaluation of our church's stewardship program and opportunities.
- c. **Deacons:** This committee shall have responsibilities for the worship life and spiritual well-being of the church. They shall consult with the Lead Minister and Associate Minister about their work in this regard.
- d. **Education and Faith Formation:** This committee shall be responsible for providing leadership in education and faith formation for children, youth, and families, and intergenerational groups. The committee will seek to ensure a balanced ministry of worship, study, service, and fellowship. Education and Faith Formation shall coordinate their efforts with other committees as needed.
- e. **Fellowship:** This committee shall be responsible for promoting a Christian and welcoming fellowship among the members, friends, and visitors of the congregation.
- f. **Membership and Engagement:** This committee shall be responsible for nominating members for Church Council offices, committees, and appointed positions; supporting growth in membership and member involvement; and helping the church plan for its future.
- g. **Social Justice and Outreach:** This committee shall be responsible for the mission education, social justice, and outreach ministry of the church.
- h. **Special Fundraising:** This committee shall raise money through fellowship activities towards special projects or the church's annual budget.
- i. **Technology and Social Media:** This committee shall be responsible for planning, implementing, supporting, and stewarding maintenance of the communication technology and social media in and for the church.
- j. **Property Management:** This committee shall be responsible for the care and custody of the church property in accordance with the provisions in our Articles of Incorporation and Constitution and Bylaws, the direction of the Church Council, and the laws of the State of Minnesota and the United States of America.

2. Standing Committee Meetings:

- a. One-half of the membership of a standing committee shall constitute a quorum.
 - b. Visitors to standing committee meetings. Any member, staff member, or employee of the Congregation is encouraged and entitled to attend any standing committee meeting with the right to speak, but without vote. Other interested parties may be invited to attend at the discretion of the standing committee, and they will have the right to speak but not to vote.
3. The members of the ten (10) standing committees shall be elected for one (1) year terms. Members may not serve more than six (6) consecutive terms. The number of members on each committee is designated in the Resource Notebook.

ARTICLE IX. RESOURCE NOTEBOOK

1. The more detailed list of the duties and responsibilities of these standing committees is designated in the Resource Notebook. Some non-elected committees, teams, and work groups are also included in the Notebook.
2. Any committee, team, or work group may recommend changes in those guidelines to the Church Council for their approval. The Church Council may delegate responsibility for reviewing the proposed changes for redundancies or gaps in the duties and responsibilities of the committees to the Membership and Engagement Committee.
3. All committees that are included in the Resource Notebook, including the non-elected committees, teams, and work groups, shall exercise full responsibility and authority for carrying out their tasks as designated in the Notebook.

ARTICLE X. STAFF

1. Lead Minister.

- a. **Definition of the Position:** Consistent with the purpose and goals of the church, the Lead Minister is called as pastor and teacher of the Congregation. The Lead Minister shall preach the gospel; administer the sacraments; and provide pastoral care, community outreach, and administrative leadership. The Lead Minister shall be a voting member of the Church Council and an ex-officio member, with voice without vote, on all of the committees that they staff. Vote at Congregational Meetings is granted by virtue of membership in the Congregation.
- b. **Search and Call:** When a vacancy is anticipated, the Church Council Chairperson shall contact the appropriate person in the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ to initiate the search and call process according to United Church of Christ procedures. After orientation to the search and call process, the Church Council will recommend a Lead Minister Search Committee to the Congregation for approval at a duly-called Congregational Meeting. The Church Council may appoint an Interim Minister Search Committee to recommend a candidate for Interim Minister. The Church Council is authorized to select and hire an Interim Minister for the Congregation.

The Lead Minister Search Committee shall follow the search and call process of the United Church of Christ. They shall select one candidate to recommend to the Congregation for call by election at a duly-called Congregational Meeting. The Lead Minister shall be called for an indefinite term by a two-thirds vote of members voting at the Congregational Meeting.

It shall be the responsibility of the Lead Minister Search Committee to consult with the Ministerial Relations and Personnel Committees concerning job description and compensation, and to draft a proposed call for approval by the Church Council. The Lead Minister Search Committee will issue the call in writing, including a complete statement of the call agreement.

When the Congregation has voted to call a Lead Minister and the Lead Minister has accepted the call, the Church and the Lead Minister shall join in requesting that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ acting as an Association install the Lead Minister. The Lead Minister shall become a member of the United Church of Christ in New Brighton and shall hold ordained ministerial standing in Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ acting as an Association.

- c. **Resignation:** The Lead Minister may resign with at least ninety (90) days written notice to the Church Council Chairperson and Congregation. Upon mutual agreement, this time provision may be waived.

d. **Termination:** A vote on retaining the Lead Minister shall be taken only at a special meeting of the Congregation called for only that purpose. A review of the relationship between the Lead Minister and the Congregation, with the assistance of the Minnesota Conference, must take place before the meeting may be called. When a meeting is called to vote on retaining the Lead Minister, the question shall be phrased: "Shall (name) be retained as our Lead Minister?" If a majority of members voting in person votes in the affirmative, the Lead Minister shall be retained. If the outcome is a majority voting in the negative, the Lead Minister shall resign or be terminated effective in ninety days or as mutually agreed between the Lead Minister and Church Council. In the interests of compassion or justice, the Church Council may negotiate a severance package for some or all of the Lead Minister's compensation package that will extend beyond the effective date of resignation.

2. **Other Ministerial Staff.**

The Church may employ additional ministerial staff as required. Associate and Assistant Ministers shall be subject to the same call, termination, or conflict resolution procedures as in Article X, section 1, except that before any Search Committee shall recommend the call or hiring of additional ministerial staff, the recommendation of the Lead Minister shall first be obtained. The Lead Minister may be a full member of the Search Committee.

The duties of the called ministerial staff shall be mutually defined by the ministerial staff and the Church Council. The Associate and/or Assistant Minister shall be a voting member of the Church Council. Vote at Congregational Meetings is granted by virtue of membership in the Congregation.

3. **Other Staff.**

The Church may employ additional staff consistent with the purposes and goals of the church. The staff may include, but not necessarily be limited to, Office Administrator, Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation, Accompanist, Choir Director, and Custodian. Staff shall have voice and vote at any church meeting if they are a member. If they are not a member, staff shall have voice without vote at any church meeting. The hiring and termination processes shall be guided by the personnel policies of the church.

4. **Compensation.**

Financial compensation and other conditions of employment of all staff members will be approved by the Church Council upon recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee. Approval of the budget by the governing body shall constitute approval of the compensation plans.

ARTICLE XI. PROPERTY

1. The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise; and own, hold, invest, re-invest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake; and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for, and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage, or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer, and convey such property for the general purposes of the church; it may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and re-invest the same; and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.
2. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE XII. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. A Congregational Meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January each year. At this meeting, the Congregation shall receive financial reports and the proposed annual budget, and act on these and other business presented.
2. A Congregational Meeting of the church shall be held between April 15 and May 15 each year. At this meeting, the governing body will elect the officers of the Church Council and members of the standing committees, and act on any other business presented. All Church Council officers, clergy, staff, and committees shall submit their annual reports for distribution prior to the meeting. All newly elected persons will take office at the conclusion of the meeting, with the understanding that outgoing members of the committees will help carry out their group's program responsibilities through June.
3. Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the Church Council or by a petition to the Church Council signed by not less than thirty (30) members. The Church Council shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition. Only items on the agenda will be discussed and acted upon.
4. **Prior notice of Congregational Meetings:** Notice of regularly scheduled meetings will include a tentative agenda and will be mailed to the membership via first class mail no less than two weeks before the meeting. Notice of special meetings will include an agenda to address the specific purpose for which the meeting was called and will be mailed to the membership via first class mail no less than two weeks before the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII. RULES OF ORDER

1. *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.
2. The Church Council and standing committees are authorized to conduct voting by email when the Chair finds that it is impracticable for the Church Council or standing committee to meet in-person for that purpose. Email votes have the same force and effect as in-person votes.
3. The Church Council and standing committees are authorized to meet via Zoom or similar electronic platform when the Chair determines that it is impracticable for the Church Council or standing committee to meet in-person. Votes may be taken during such meetings using chat, survey or similar functions and those votes have the same force and effect as in-person voting.
4. Under extreme conditions, if the Church Council determines that it impracticable for the Congregation to meet in person at a Congregational Meeting, it may conduct the Congregational Meeting via Zoom or similar electronic platform. Votes may be taken during such meetings using chat, survey or similar functions and those votes have the same force and effect as in-person voting.
5. All email votes will be recorded in the minutes of the next regular meeting of the Church Council or committees or teams or work groups.
6. Neither proxy votes nor absentee ballots will be allowed during votes at any meetings of the Congregation, Church Council, or standing committees.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any duly-called meeting of the governing body by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two weeks prior to the meeting.

Change History

Articles VII and IX revised by Congregation	May 3, 1998
Substantial revisions by governing body vote after extensive study and recommendation by the Resource Notebook subcommittee of the Church Council.	January 25, 2004
Added Article VII.1.d. (allow for Church Council representation from non-elected teams and work groups)	May 6, 2007
Removed “Youth Support” as a standing committee; moved its responsibilities to “Christian Education.”	May 17, 2009
Substantial revisions by governing body vote after extensive study and recommendation by the By-Laws subcommittee of the Church Council. Changes include the addition of Special Fundraising and Technology and Social Media as standing committees and the renaming of the Our Church’s Wider Mission Committee to Social Justice and Outreach.	May 5, 2013
Name of Christian Education Committee changed to Education and Faith Formation Committee	May 4, 2014
Substantial revisions by governing body vote after review and recommendations by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Church Council. Changes include authorization of electronic meetings and email votes, elimination of the distinction between Boards and standing committees, renaming of Human Resources to Membership and Engagement and Trustees to Property Management, addition of gender neutral and inclusive language, and updating of the responsibility statements for most of the standing committees.	January 31, 2021