CONSTITUTION

First United Church of Christ  
(Congregational)  
300 Union Street  
Northfield, Minnesota 55057

ARTICLE I  
Name

This Church shall be known as the First United Church of Christ (Congregational) of Northfield, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II  
Character

SECTION 1. Fellowship. This Church declares its fellowship with all churches which seek to promote the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and accepts in particular the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation involved in the fellowship of the United Church of Christ.

SECTION 2. Faith. This Church is in covenant with the United Church of Christ. While granting to every member the freedom to discern the truths of God, this Church subscribes to the following Statement of Faith:

We believe in You, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Lord 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 Lord, 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.

Your 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 kingdom which has no end.

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

SECTION 3. Commitments. This Church has chosen to be a Just Peace Church and an Open and
Affirming Church.

ARTICLE III

Membership

SECTION 1. Qualifications. This Church will welcome to membership as full or associate members all
persons who desire to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and who covenant with the Congregation to share in the
ministry of the Church. As used in this Constitution, "member" means full or associate member, unless
otherwise indicated.

SECTION 2. Full Members. Full members shall be received by letter of transfer, by reaffirmation of
faith, or upon confession of faith including baptism if a person was not previously baptized. Full members
may act and vote in all transactions of the Church.

SECTION 3. Associate Members. Associate members are those who, due to special circumstances,
desire to retain membership in another church, yet wish to share in the work, fellowship, and worship of
this Church. Such membership in no way affects their relations with their home church. Associate
membership entitles such members to all rights and privileges of full membership, except as otherwise
specified in this Constitution. Associate members shall be enumerated for local purposes only.

SECTION 4. Rights of Members.

A. Only full members may serve as Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer, and Clerk.

B. Only full and associate members may serve as Council Members at Large or as Trustees, and act and
vote on all transactions of this Church.
C. Persons who wish to participate in this Church without becoming members are eligible to serve in all roles not referred to in paragraphs A and B, and may be non-voting participants in Congregational meetings.

SECTION 5. Duties of Members. All members are expected to attend worship services of the Church, to contribute regularly to its support, and to share in the Church’s ministry.

SECTION 6. Termination of Membership. Members may cease to be members of this Church by a request to transfer membership, by retirement if the member has not communicated with this Church or contributed to its support for at least three years in spite of attempts by this Church to correspond with the member, or by acceptance of a letter of resignation from the member.

SECTION 7. Restoration of Membership. Any person whose membership has been terminated and who desires to return to membership may be reinstated upon the member’s written request.

ARTICLE IV
Governance

SECTION 1. Congregation. The governance of the Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of full and final control of all its affairs. The Congregation as a whole will speak through the Church Council to articulate the mission of the Church.

SECTION 2. Church Council. The Church Council shall include the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer and three at-large Council members. Clergy shall serve ex officio. The Church Council shall oversee pursuit of the mission and management of the business and affairs of this Church, and shall adopt Policies and Procedures to support this effort.

SECTION 3. Church Officers.

A. The Vice-Moderator. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as presiding officer for the Council and congregational meetings in the absence of the Moderator. The Vice-Moderator shall be elected for a two year term, the first as the Vice-Moderator and the second as Moderator.

B. The Moderator. The Moderator shall preside at meetings of the Church Council, the Annual Church Meeting and at special meetings of the Church.

C. The Clerk. The Clerk shall be a member of the Church Council and serve it as secretary. The Clerk shall be elected for a term of two years.

D. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Church Council and shall serve as chair of the Trustees Committee. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years.

A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall ensure that all elected governance positions are filled in a timely manner, either by election at the annual meeting or as needed during the year to fill vacancies that occur. The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chair, an at large member and a representative from the Church Council, all elected by the Congregation.

B. Trustees Committee. The Trustees Committee shall assist the Church Council in its oversight of the Church’s financial resources. The Trustees Committee shall consist of the Church Council Treasurer, serving as chair, and up to five at-large members, all elected by the Congregation. Trustees shall be members of the Church.

C. Stewardship Committee. The Stewardship Committee shall oversee and organize the annual stewardship campaign to support the church’s mission using its financial resources. The Stewardship Committee shall consist of four members elected by the Congregation.

D. Facilities Committee. The Facilities Committee shall oversee and maintain the church building, grounds and use of the church facilities. The Facilities Committee shall consist of up to six members, all elected by the Congregation.

SECTION 5. General Provisions.

A. Terms. The terms of office of members of standing committees and at-large members of the Council shall be three years, except for persons elected or appointed to complete an unexpired term of office, and except as otherwise provided in this Constitution. Terms of office on a standing committee shall be staggered, so that approximately one-third of its members are elected each year.

B. Elections. Officers, at-large members of the Council, and members of standing committees shall be elected by ballot at each Annual Meeting of the Church. Members of standing committees and at-large members of the Council may not serve more than two consecutive terms on the same standing committee or as at-large members of the Council, but a person appointed to fill out an unexpired term is eligible for election to up to two full terms at the conclusion of the unexpired term to which they were appointed.

C. Vacancies. In case of vacancy in the position of a Church officer, the vacancy shall be filled by election at a special Congregational meeting called for that purpose. In case of vacancy in a standing committee or in an at-large position on the Council, the Nominating Committee in consultation with the affected group shall appoint a member for the unexpired term and report the appointment to the Clerk, Minister, and Moderator.
ARTICLE V
Ministry

SECTION 1. The Church shall employ called Clergy to order its worship and administer the sacraments, provide for the spiritual needs of its members, and provide leadership for the mission of the Church.

SECTION 2. Calling the Clergy.

A. Before the Senior Minister is called, a Pastoral Search Committee of up to eight members shall be formed. The Nominating Committee shall propose candidates who provide broad representation from within the Church, and the Pastoral Search Committee members shall be elected by the Congregation by a majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting assembled according to Article VI. Once elected, the members of the Pastoral Search Committee shall serve until the new Minister is called.

B. When calling an Associate Minister, the Nominating Committee shall add the Senior Minister as a member of the Pastoral Search Committee.

C. Senior and Associate Ministers shall be called by the Congregation for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting assembled according to Article VI. The Church Council must approve the terms of the proposed contract with the nominee for Minister before the meeting of the Congregation.

D. Senior and Associate Ministers shall be ordained and have standing or privilege of call in the United Church of Christ. Called Clergy shall become a full member of the church when denominationally possible and shall be installed as soon as practicable after being called and accepting the position.

SECTION 3. Senior Minister. The Church Council delegates to the Senior Minister authority and responsibility to lead and direct the spiritual, programmatic and administrative work of the Church.

SECTION 4. Termination of Clergy.

A. The relationship between the Senior Minister and Congregation may be dissolved by either party upon 60 days written notice. The Congregation may vote, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a meeting assembled according to Article VI, to terminate the relationship between the Congregation and the Minister. The vote shall be by secret, written ballot.

B. The relationship between the Associate Minister and Congregation may be dissolved by either party upon 60 days written notice. The Congregation may vote, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a meeting assembled according to Article VI, to terminate the relationship between the Congregation and the Associate Minister upon recommendation for dismissal by the Senior Minister and Council. The vote shall be by secret, written ballot.
C. If an ordained Minister is charged with misconduct, the Minister and Congregation shall follow the Disciplinary Review Procedure of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, as amended.

ACCOUNT VI
Meetings of the Congregation

SECTION 1. Annual Meeting. The Congregation shall meet annually to conduct elections and transact other business of the Church.

SECTION 2. Special Meetings.

A. Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Moderator, the Minister, or the Clerk on the request of the Church Council or on the written request of any five members of the Church. Notice of meeting shall specify the object of the meeting and shall be included in Church communications and read at the Sunday worship service preceding the meeting date. No special meeting shall be held on the same day on which the notice is given.

B. A special meeting of the Congregation to call Clergy shall be called by the Moderator or the Clerk as directed by the Church Council. Written notice of the meeting and information about the nominee(s) shall be mailed to the Congregation at least 21 days before the date of the meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be included in Church communications and read at each Sunday worship service between the date the written notice is mailed to the Congregation and the meeting date. No issue other than calling Clergy shall be acted on at the meeting.


A. Quorum shall consist of twenty-five members of the Church.

B. A majority of the members present and voting at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be decisive, with two exceptions. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose shall be required to call or terminate Clergy or to amend the Constitution.

C. Meetings of the Congregation shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except when it is inconsistent with this Constitution or any special rules of order the Congregation may adopt.
ARTICLE VII

Amendments

When a quorum is present, this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any Annual Meeting of the Church or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Notice of the meeting and the amendments to be considered shall be included in Church communications and announced during the Sunday worship service at least one week prior to the meeting. Any action taken at such meeting shall be reported at the worship service on the Sunday following such meeting and in Church communications.

ARTICLE VIII

Relationship with other Churches

The Church may enter into agreements, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution or with the laws of the State of Minnesota, with churches of other denominations for the federation or association of the respective church bodies. Any such agreement shall be made only for the purposes of fostering and strengthening the spiritual welfare of the members of the contracting churches which shall not, by its terms, be altered in their individual organizational status or deprived of their denominational identities. It shall contain such terms and conditions, dealing with right of representation, conduct of joint church affairs, operational agreement and related matters, as members of the First United Church of Christ (Congregational) may approve at an Annual Meeting or a meeting specially called for the purpose.

ARTICLE IX

Dissolution

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.