

# CHURCH OF CHRIST, UNION

## CONSTITUTION 1998 (AMENDED 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007)

Last revised & approved at Annual Meeting March 13, 2007 - Joan English, Clerk, Pro Tem)

### Preamble

The purpose of this constitution shall be to provide for a spirit and a means by which the will of God may be discerned and communicated in a way valuing the contributions of all members, seeking consensus in a democratic process, and respecting the Spirit of Christ in all.

### Article I: NAME

- 1.1 The name of this church is Church of Christ, Union, of Berea, Kentucky.
- 1.2 Founded as a Free church of Christ in 1853 by the Reverend John Gregg Fee and a group of Christians who desired to worship in a fellowship not limited by denominational or racial distinctions, this church remains nonsectarian and open in full equality to all.

### Article II: MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

- 2.1 **Fellowship Principles:** "The Church of Christ, Union, receives all followers of Christ and works with all who work with him; respecting each one's conscience; working by love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This statement of Fellowship Principles is affirmed by every person uniting with this congregation.
- 2.2 **Joining the Church:** This church invites persons seeking membership to express to the pastor(s) or, if the pastorate is vacant, a church member designated by the General Committee, their sincere desire to follow Christ. Candidates for membership shall be publicly received at a Sunday morning service, at which time they enter into a covenant with the church. Public reception may, for special reasons, be waived by vote of the General Committee.
- 2.3 **Full Membership** with the privileges of voting and holding office is granted upon confession of faith and baptism, letter of transfer from another Christian church, reaffirmation of faith when no letter of transfer is available, or presentation of evidence of clergy status. When called for, the mode of baptism shall be that requested by the person seeking membership or the parents, if a child is presented for baptism. When a child's dedication is desired, the service shall be arranged by the pastor(s), or currently designated person, and the child's parent(s).
- 2.4 **Clergy Membership** is granted to an ordained or licensed pastor who wishes to retain membership in another church body and who presents evidence of clergy status.
- 2.5 **Wayside Membership** is granted to those who wish to unite with the Church of Christ, Union, while retaining membership elsewhere. A wayside member does not initially vote or hold office in the church; these privileges may be granted by the General Committee upon written request by the wayside member.
- 2.6 **Membership Records:** A complete membership record, including non-resident members, shall be kept in the Union Church office, available to all members. This record shall show the status of members, their addresses and all other information as needed for church purposes.

### **Article III: THE CONGREGATION: Leadership, Governance & Meetings**

- 3.1 **Polity:** The government of Church of Christ, Union, is vested in its voting members.
- 3.2 **Quorum:** The quorum for a congregational meeting shall be twenty-five members.
- 3.3 **Pastoral Leadership:** The congregation shall call qualified ordained pastors to cooperate with appropriate congregational leaders in enabling and directing the ministry and mission of the congregation. The pastor(s) as servant leader(s) shall preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, watch over the members and the spiritual interests of the church, and organize and develop the church's strength for the best possible service. The pastor(s) engage in Christian work in the community and the Church Universal, involving and supporting the congregation in their ministries. The pastor(s) provide spiritual guidance and administer(s) the church, implementing the program and mission in partnership with the congregation, officers, church boards and committees.
- 3.3.1 **Staffing and Vacancies:** The congregation has the authority to arrange its pastoral leadership in any manner that it shall choose, including the calling of a pastor, co-pastors, associate pastors, or interim pastors. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the General Committee shall inform the Board of Deacons and instruct them to plan for temporary supply preachers. Additionally, the Board of Deacons may recommend to the General Committee the name of a candidate for interim pastor. The General Committee shall consider this recommendation relative to the entire church program and may accept, modify, or return it to the Deacons, requesting a different recommendation. If the Board of Deacons and General Committee agree on a recommendation, the General Committee shall then bring its recommendation to the congregation at a called meeting for action. If an interim pastor is called, that person may not be a candidate for the permanent position. Lacking a pastor or interim pastor, the General Committee shall arrange for administration of the church.
- 3.3.2 **Pastoral Search and Call:** When a vacancy occurs, the moderator shall call a special meeting of the congregation. At this meeting, members of the church present shall elect a Pastoral Search Committee of nine members. The Nominating Committee shall present five nominees and others shall be nominated from the floor. Within one month of their election, the Pastoral Search Committee shall be convened by that member whose surname is alphabetically first among the members. With such specific instructions as the congregation agrees upon, the Pastoral Search Committee shall seek out persons until a majority of the committee is prepared to nominate a candidate for the call of the church. The Search Committee will regularly keep the congregation informed of steps taken and progress made during the period of the search. Appropriate communication with the General Committee shall be arranged by the two committee chairpersons. Prior to presenting a name to the congregation for election, the chairpersons of the General Committee, Pastoral Search Committee, and the Board of Trustees shall consult with the Pastoral Relations Committee, the continuing ministerial staff, and their respective committees to negotiate the terms of a written call with the candidate. The call of the church shall be agreed upon by a three-fourths majority of a meeting of the congregation. Nominations from the floor at this meeting will not be in order.
- 3.3.3 **Continuance and Termination of a Pastor:** Prior to the end of the agreed upon term as stated in the written terms of call, the General Committee, in consultation with the Pastoral Relations Committee, shall prepare for the congregation a recommendation

concerning continuance. That recommendation shall be presented to the congregation at a business meeting. The formal relationship between a pastor and the church shall terminate as agreed upon in the written terms of call but with not less than 60 days' written notice from either party unless a shorter period is mutually agreed upon by the pastor and the congregation.

- 3.4 **Congregational Control of Property:** The congregation shall retain control of church property, buildings and furnishings. It may authorize the Board of Trustees to represent the congregation in the acceptance of gifts, and in any disposal, purchase or rental of property.
- 3.5 **Officers:** The officers of the congregation shall include a moderator, clerk, treasurer, financial secretary and Church School superintendent. They shall be members of the church, elected at the same time as the election of new board members for a three-year term and may succeed themselves for one additional three-year term. To prevent office terms from expiring simultaneously, three-year terms will be calculated as beginning in the year listed under the description of each officer's duties. If any of these offices is vacated, the Nominating Committee shall recommend a replacement for confirmation by the General Committee to serve until the next regular election of officers. Any office filled by paid staff shall not be subject to these term limits.
- 3.6 **Officers' Duties:** Officers shall have such duties as are assigned them in bylaws or by congregational action. Regular duties shall include:

**Moderator:** cooperating with the Pastor by providing broad lay leadership for the Congregation and serving on each Board as ex officio member without vote. Specific duties shall include presiding at all regular and special meetings of the church and participating with the pastor(s) at the reception of new members. If neither the moderator, nor vice-moderator (as provided for in sec. 5.2.1), is able to perform these duties, the moderator may appoint an officer to serve in his or her place. Failing this, the officers present shall select an officer to serve. Three year term for Moderator will be calculated beginning in 2001 (as per "Officer" paragraph, 3.5).

**Clerk:** keeping a record of all acts of the church and the register of its members; maintaining a file of church correspondence and of reports presented at annual meetings; preparing letters of dismissal for those who transfer to other churches; recording in the annual report all changes in membership of the congregation, and serving ex officio on the Board of Trustees. In the absence of the clerk, the moderator may appoint a *clerk pro-tem* to take minutes at a congregational meeting. Three year term for Clerk will be calculated beginning in 2000 (as per "Officer" paragraph, 3.5).

**Treasurer:** keeping an itemized account of receipts, disbursements and balances, paying out funds according to the policies set by the congregation or the Board of Trustees; joining with the financial secretary in counting moneys received as offerings or appointing another member to make that count if s/he cannot; informing the Trustees and the membership monthly regarding the state of church finances, and serving ex officio on the Board of Trustees. Three year term for Treasurer will be calculated beginning in 2000 (as per "Officer" paragraph, 3.5).

**Financial Secretary:** receiving and recording members' payments on their pledges and providing quarterly notices to contributors regarding the status of their pledges; joining with the treasurer in counting moneys received as offerings or appointing another member to make that count, and serving ex officio on the Board of Trustees. Three year term for Financial Secretary will be calculated beginning in 1999 (as per "Officer" paragraph, 3.5).

**Church School  
Superintendent:**

administering the program of the Church School, its teachers and classes, under the direction of the Board of Christian Education and serving ex officio on the Board of Christian Education. If the superintendent is unable to function for a time, the Board of Christian Education may select a temporary replacement. A Director of Christian Education may also serve as Church School superintendent. Three year term for Superintendent will be calculated beginning in 1998 (as per "Officer" paragraph, 3.5).

- 3.7 **Congregational Meetings:** Meetings of the whole congregation for worship, education, and praise shall be held each week, except in case of special circumstances that would prevent them. There shall be at least two business meetings of the church each year, one primarily to act on the budget, and one to include elections and receipt of annual reports. Additional meetings shall be scheduled at such times as the church shall decide and as provided for in this constitution and by-laws.
- 3.7.1 **Business Meetings:** The two business meetings shall be called no later than the middle of December to act on the budget for the following year and no later than the middle of March to hold elections and receive reports from the pastor(s), officers of the congregation, the auditors of the church books, the boards and committees of the church. The General Committee shall set the dates and times of the meetings. The congregation may also meet at the call of the moderator, the pastor(s), or any five members of the church. At meetings of the congregation, the moderator will appoint a parliamentarian as an advisor on matters of procedure.
- 3.7.2 **Meeting Procedure:** Meetings of the congregation shall be guided by Christian faith and teaching and the provisions of this constitution and by-laws, according to Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised), where applicable, to ensure a climate of mutual respect and orderly procedure.
- 3.7.3 **Advance Notice for Meetings:** No church action involving the call of a pastor, or the employment of any paid officer or staff member subject to the vote of the whole congregation, the alteration of the annual budget, or the sale or significant alteration of any church building or property, shall be taken at any meeting unless written notice and content of the proposed action shall have been given on the four Sunday mornings immediately prior to the meeting (3-11-03). In the event of a serious emergency, the moderator in consultation with the General Committee may call a special meeting of the congregation, dispensing with the four weeks notice.
- 3.7.4 **Amendments** to motions at congregational meetings are always in order, but any proposed amendment to business covered in section 3.7.3 must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

- 3.8 **The Nominating Committee**, as a special committee of the congregation, shall consist of six members, two elected each year at the annual business meeting in March upon nomination by the General Committee for terms of three years, and may not succeed themselves. The Nominating Committee shall select from the membership of the church candidates for elective leadership positions. These include the moderator, clerk, treasurer, financial secretary, and the Church School superintendent. The committee shall also select from the membership of the church candidates for the boards of Christian Education, Deacons, Mission, and Trustees, the Pastoral Relations Committee, and chairperson and member(s)-at-large for the General Committee.
- 3.9 **The Pastoral Relations Committee** is a special liaison committee of the congregation, which actively seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and the members of the congregation. Its goals are the professional growth of the pastor, the well-being of the pastor and the congregation, and the promotion of mutual ministry between the pastor and the congregation. The committee shall consist of six members, two elected each year at the annual spring business meeting upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for terms of three years, and may not succeed themselves.
- 3.10 **Installation** of those elected at the annual spring meeting shall be scheduled by the pastor(s) within four Sundays of their election.
- 3.11 **Sacraments** shall be administered in a manner expressive of the Fellowship Principles. The mode of Baptism shall be that requested by the person seeking membership or by the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child presented for baptism. The Lord's Supper shall be administered at such times as the pastor(s) and the Board of Deacons shall determine, including World Communion Sunday. The invitation to the Lord's Table shall include all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. Other ordinances of the church such as a wedding, funeral, memorial service, or dedication of a child, shall be arranged by the pastor(s) or currently designated person (see 2.2) and the parties involved.

#### **Article IV: OFFICIAL BOARDS**

- 4.1 **Boards & Operations:** Subject to the authority of the congregation and the coordination of the General Committee, the activities and program of the church shall be directed by four boards: Board of Christian Education, Board of Deacons, Mission Board and Board of Trustees.
- 4.1.1 **Officers of Each Board:** Each board shall choose annually from its membership a chairperson, a secretary, and other officers as needed.
- 4.1.2 **General Committee Representative:** Each board (except Trustees and the Christian Education Board) shall choose one of its members to serve with its chairperson on the General Committee. (see 5.2.4)
- 4.1.3 **Establishing Officers Prior to Spring Election:** At the board meetings prior to the annual spring election, each board shall devise a strategy for leadership of the continuing board. Each board shall be organized within a month of the annual spring election.
- 4.1.4 **Sub-Committees:** Each board may establish committees as needed to perform its functions. Chairpersons of these committees shall ordinarily be selected from the board membership. Committee members may be selected from the congregation at large. Each committee shall be responsible to and report to the board by which it was established.

- 4.1.5 **Terms and Vacancies:** Elected board members shall be members of the church and shall serve three-year terms, one third the number elected each year, and may succeed themselves for one additional three-year term (3-11-03). A vacancy occurring during the first two years of a member's term shall be reported to the General Committee and shall be filled by the regular election procedure. In the final year of a term, or any portion thereof, a replacement member may be selected by the other board members and is not thereby made ineligible for election to a full term on that same board.
- 4.1.6 **Pastor Ex-Officio:** The pastor(s) shall serve on each board as ex officio member(s) without vote.
- 4.1.7 **Board Quorum:** A quorum at board meetings shall consist of one more than half the total number of voting members. Unless otherwise specified, board decisions shall be made by a majority of voting members present.

#### 4.2 **The Board of Christian Education**

Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Board of Christian Education shall be responsible for the general education program of the church. It shall consist of nine elected members. Ex officio members shall include the Church School superintendent and the youth activities coordinator(s). Responsibilities of the board shall include:

- 4.2.1 supervising the Church School through the elected Church School superintendent
- 4.2.2 recruiting and training church school teachers
- 4.2.3 sponsoring retreats, Bible study and discussion groups
- 4.2.4 designating institutional representatives for scouting programs and other programs housed in the church, where appropriate
- 4.2.5 sponsoring youth programs and designating coordinator(s)
- 4.2.6 selecting staff for nursery during Church School and worship hours
- 4.2.7 selecting adult leaders for acolytes
- 4.2.8 developing new educational activities or programs

#### 4.3 **The Board of Deacons**

Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Board of Deacons, eighteen in number, shall assist with the spiritual life of the church. Responsibilities of the board shall include:

- 4.3.1 providing and serving communion, collecting offerings and assisting the pastor(s)
- 4.3.2 arranging for worship services when needed, including temporary pulpit supply
- 4.3.3 administering the program of music, in cooperation with the professional staff; nominating paid music professionals for election by the congregation after salaries are approved by the Board of Trustees
- 4.3.4 welcoming worshippers, ushering and assisting the disabled
- 4.3.5 recruiting new members
- 4.3.6 providing for social activities and promoting friendship among members
- 4.3.7 providing guidance for the aesthetic/visual qualities of the church and its worship

4.4 **Mission Board** (rev. 3-8-05)

Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Mission Board shall be responsible for the church's outreach through mission where "outreach through mission" is understood to mean reaching out beyond Union Church with gifts – time, energy, skills, talents, money – seeking peace and justice, and the practice of inclusive love, here and elsewhere, in ways that reflect the congregation's ongoing struggle to understand the teachings of Jesus and to translate them into meaningful commitment and action. The board shall include nine elected members; ex officio members shall be any professional staff designated by their job descriptions. Responsibilities shall include:

- 4.4.1 meeting the emergency needs of church families
- 4.4.2 selecting, coordinating, and promoting the church's local, national, and international involvements in mission giving
- 4.4.3 coordinating the church's ecumenical activities that are related to outreach through mission
- 4.4.4 administering the bazaar(s) and/or other fundraising in support of mission giving
- 4.4.5 administering the local missions of the church, including Woman's Industrial.

4.5 **Board of Trustees**

Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the business and financial affairs of the church. All powers and authority originally conferred by charter on the Board of Finance are hereby conferred on the Board of Trustees. It shall consist of nine elected members plus ex officio members the clerk, treasurer, financial secretary.

Responsibilities of the board shall include:

- 4.5.1 managing the properties of the church including land, buildings and equipment and the acceptance or disposition of property as authorized by the congregation
- 4.5.2 administering a program of stewardship including an annual campaign and a year-around emphasis on stewardship as a form of Christian worship
- 4.5.3 administering the finances of the church, including the submission of an annual budget to the congregation; and establishing policies for managing moneys, investments and financial records with an annual audit of the church's books
- 4.5.4 establishing policy for secretarial and custodial personnel including recommending terms of employment and providing annual letters of employment and assisting the pastor(s) in day-to-day supervision, evaluation and resolution of on-the-job problems

**Article V: THE GENERAL COMMITTEE**

5.1 **Executive Committee of the Congregation:** Subject to the authority of the congregation, the General Committee shall serve as executive committee for the congregation.

5.2 **The Members of the General Committee** shall be:

- 5.2.1 a chairperson elected annually by the congregation and twice subject to re-election (3-year total). In the absence of the moderator, the chairperson of the General Committee shall serve as vice-moderator of the congregation.
- 5.2.2 the moderator, Church School superintendent and treasurer of the church
- 5.2.3 the chairpersons of the four program boards
- 5.2.4 a second person selected by and from each of two boards: Deacons and Mission; the treasurer shall serve as the second trustee on the General Committee and the Sunday School Superintendent shall serve as the second member from the Christian Ed. Board..

- 5.2.5 three members at large elected for three-year staggered terms and who may not directly succeed themselves. These shall be persons not currently serving in an elected leadership position.
- 5.2.6 the pastor(s) and such other professional staff as may be so designated by the congregation. These shall serve as ex officio members without vote
- 5.3 **Secretary and other Officers:** The General Committee shall select a secretary and other officers if needed. Members and officers shall serve until successors are selected.
- 5.4 **Decision-making** shall proceed principally by discussion and consensus. Formal decisions require a majority vote of the voting members present.
  - 5.4.1 A quorum shall consist of one more than half of the voting members (8)
  - 5.4.2 In addition to regular meetings special meetings may be called by pastor(s), moderator, General Committee Chairperson or any three members of the General Committee. All members of the Committee are to be notified of special meetings.
- 5.5 **General Functions** of the committee include:
  - 5.5.1 serving as executive committee for the congregation, preparing its agenda and serving as interim decision-making body subject always to congregational review
  - 5.5.2 providing coordination for the various elements of the church program, working with and through the boards to achieve maximum effectiveness and avoid duplication
  - 5.5.3 performing such other tasks as are assigned to it by the congregation
- 5.6 **Specific Duties:** Specifically, the committee shall perform duties given to it by other provisions of the Constitution and bylaws. Among these are:
  - 5.6.1 nominating new members for the Nominating Committee
  - 5.6.2 acting on requests for voting and office-holding by wayside members
  - 5.6.3 waiving public reception of new church members when that is appropriate
  - 5.6.4 nominating persons as Honorary Lifetime Deacons
  - 5.6.5 applying established criteria for distinguishing “active” and “inactive” membership lists
  - 5.6.6 updating membership rolls each January
  - 5.6.7 setting dates and times for congregational meetings
  - 5.6.8 designating a church member to fulfill the requirements of sec. 2.2 and 3.11 when the pastorate is vacant

## **Article VI: HONORARY LIFETIME DEACONS**

Honorary Lifetime Deacons are designated after long experience and service to the church. Any member of the church may nominate candidates to the General Committee at least one month before the March annual meeting. After careful consideration the General Committee will present its nominee(s) for acceptance by the congregation. To ensure careful selection, no nominations for this church honor will be accepted from the floor of the meeting. An Honorary Lifetime Deacon will be assigned no specific obligations, but may hold active office in the church.

## **Article VII: PROVISIONS FOR BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS**

- 7.1 **Procedure:** This constitution may be altered or amended by two-thirds vote and its bylaws by simple majority vote at any congregational meeting, the General Committee having provided written notice of such meeting and its substance on at least four Sunday mornings immediately prior to the meeting (3-11-03). In each case a written statement of the proposed alteration or amendment shall be presented at the Sunday service immediately preceding the meeting in which it is to be considered.
- 7.2 **By-laws:** The church shall enact such bylaws as may be necessary to carry out the requirements of this constitution.

## **ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH** (added 9-24-06)

- 8.1 **The Church of Christ, Union** may only be dissolved as a legal corporation at a special meeting called for that purpose for which written notice has been given in advance to all members and announced for four (4) Sundays prior to the vote. A motion to dissolve must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Active Members (as per the process defined in by-law 1.2).
- 8.2 **Upon dissolution** of The Church of Christ, Union, no part of the net assets of the congregation shall ever be used to the benefit of any donor, member, officer of the church, or any private individual. Any assets remaining after the full payment of all debts and necessary final expenses and obligations of the church, shall be distributed only to organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for charitable, educational, or scientific purposes as an exempt organization(s) under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law. Those organizations which are advancing the historic mission purposes of The Church of Christ, Union and recent mission outreaches of the congregation shall be given preference.
- 8.3 **The General Committee** shall be responsible for presenting a distribution plan to the congregation not later than sixty (60) calendar days following a vote to dissolve the church. Standard quorum rules apply and a majority vote is needed to approve the distribution of assets.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **BL 1 Membership Status and Transfer**

- BL 1.1 **Transfers:** Church of Christ, Union, affirms its continuing concern for the spiritual well-being of its members, wherever they may be. Those who move to other communities are encouraged to participate and join in the fellowship of a local congregation. After two years, if there is no indication of status from the member, his or her name shall be put on the "inactive" list. Application for a letter of transfer to another congregation shall be made to the clerk, who will issue the letter and notify the congregation of Church of Christ, Union without delay.
- BL 1.2 **Active and Inactive Lists:** For purposes of administration and planning, the General Committee may list members of the church as "active" or "inactive," or may authorize the development of such lists. In that process, members will be considered "inactive" when there is any indication that Union Church membership is no longer meaningful to them, either through attendance, contribution, service, correspondence, or other sign. Such a review of the membership lists shall ordinarily be conducted annually.
- BL 1.3 **Mailing Lists:** With respect to congregational mailings, names may be removed from a mailing list with the individual's permission or when repeated inquiries bring no response.

- BL 1.4 ***Clerk Oversees Membership Records:*** The implementation of this bylaw shall be by the clerk under the direction of the General Committee and pastor(s).
- BL 2 Constitution Distribution:** The clerk shall provide prospective and new members with a copy of this constitution and bylaws.
- BL 3 Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year for the Church shall be the calendar year.
- BL 4 Definition of “Holding Office:”** Reference in the constitution to those holding office will be taken to include all elected directly by the congregation (other than paid professionals).
- BL 5 Voting and Balloting:** Congregational action shall be taken by a majority vote of members present, assuming a quorum, unless a higher number (e.g., two-thirds) is previously agreed upon. Voting shall be by secret written ballot whenever the moderator thinks it appropriate, or upon the request of any member present at the meeting. Members who cannot be present are encouraged to submit statements articulating their views on motions to the clerk, Moderator, or other member of the congregation. These statements will be read at the meeting. Neither absentee nor proxy ballots will be used (rev. 12-14-03).
- BL 6 Open Board Meetings:** All board and committee meetings, except those concerned with personnel or employment matters, shall be open to all members of the church.
- BL 7 Notice of Board Vacancy:** One who resigns from any board or standing committee shall promptly give notice to the chairperson of that body. This chairperson then determines the proper method of securing a replacement (see #4.1.5) and promptly initiates appropriate action.
- BL8 To clarify “ex officio”:** Unless otherwise specified, ex officio members of boards and committees shall have voice and vote. (adopted 9-27-00)
- BL 9 To provide a procedure to respond if someone in an elective position does not function** (adopted 9-27-00)
- BL 9.1 If a member of a Board or Standing Committee does not function (e.g., for 3 consecutive months), the Board or Committee chair will attempt to determine whether a constructive change is possible. If a satisfactory arrangement cannot be achieved the chair, in consultation with the Pastor, shall bring the matter before the General Committee.
- BL 9.2 If the non-functioning person is an officer of the Congregation, or Board or Standing Committee chair, the initial discernment effort will be the responsibility of the General Committee, in consultation with the pastor.
- BL 9.3 The General Committee, acting in a spirit of Christian love, shall have authority to declare a position vacant if that becomes necessary.
- BL 10 To provide for interpretation of the Church Constitution** (adopted 12-13-05): Questions as to the meaning or application of the Church Constitution shall be referred to the Moderator, the Vice-moderator and a third person they select from the General Committee. Those three persons may consult others and may, at their discretion, refer the entire question to the General Committee for decision. In all such deliberations, the Church Constitution shall be liberally construed to promote the welfare of the Church and the effectiveness of congregational governance. The Congregation may review a decision and return it to the General Committee for reconsideration. (See Constitution paragraph 3.7 on congregational meetings.) Any referrals and actions under this paragraph shall be reported to the General Committee monthly and summarized for the congregation annually.