

CHURCH OF CHRIST, UNION

CONSTITUTION 2013

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 and other participants, 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, commonly referred to as Union Church.
- 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 to all in full equality.

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 Church Council, 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 Church Council.
- 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 **Associate Membership** is granted to those who wish to unite with Union Church, while retaining membership elsewhere. An associate member does not normally vote or hold office in the church; however, these privileges may be granted by the Church Council upon written request by the associate member.
- 2.6 **Membership Records:** A complete membership record, including non-resident members, shall be kept in the Union Church office. This record shall show the status of members, their addresses and all other information as needed for church purposes.

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Article III: THE CONGREGATION: Leadership, Governance & Meetings

- 3.1 **Polity:** The governance of Union Church shall be vested in its voting members as they rely on the authority and grace of Jesus Christ .
- 3.2 **Quorum:** The quorum for a congregational meeting shall be twenty-five (25) members.
- 3.3 **Church Council:** Because the congregation as a whole cannot act on a daily basis to exercise its governance, the Church Council shall oversee and serve the mission and ministry of the church, including its worship, service and outreach to the world, mutual care, nurture and education, stewardship of its properties and financial resources, support and accountability for its pastors and staff, and any other aspects of the congregation's service and fellowship in the name of Christ.
The Church Council shall be composed of the duly elected officers of the church (except Financial Secretary), the chairs (or designated representative) of each of its boards, and, *ex officio*, its Pastor(s) and any staff members it deems necessary to its work.
In this Constitution, *ex officio* shall mean active participation in deliberations without vote, unless otherwise stated.
- 3.4 **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) shall engage in Christian work in the community and the Church Universal, involving and supporting the congregation in their ministries. The Pastor(s) shall provide spiritual guidance and administer the church, implementing the program and mission in partnership with the congregation, officers, and church boards.
- 3.4.1 **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 Church Council shall search for a suitable candidate to be Interim Pastor or Interim Associate Pastor and recommend that candidate to the congregation for its decision at a called meeting. If an Interim Pastor is called, that person may not be a candidate for the permanent position. Lacking a Pastor or Interim Pastor, the Church Council shall arrange for administration of the church.
- 3.4.2 **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 Board shall present five nominees and others shall be nominated from the floor. Within one month of election, the Pastoral Search Committee shall be convened by the Moderator who shall facilitate the election of the Search Committee chair. 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 Pastoral Search Committee shall regularly keep the Church Council and congregation informed of steps taken and progress made during the period of the search. Prior to presenting a name to the congregation for election, the following persons shall meet to negotiate the terms of a written call with the candidate: the Moderator, the Church Council Chair, the chairs of the Administration and Church Finance Boards, and the chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, along with the

continuing Pastor(s) and the Church Administrator who shall serve *ex officio*. 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.

- 3.4.3 ***Continuance and Termination of a Pastor:*** Terms for pastoral calls shall be indefinite, except as noted in the Terms of Call agreement. The formal relationship between a Pastor and the church may 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.
- 3.5 **Congregational Control of Property:** The congregation shall retain control of church property, buildings and furnishings. Unless otherwise stated, the Church Council, ordinarily by action of the Properties Board, shall represent the congregation in the acceptance of gifts, and in any disposal, purchase or rental of property.
- 3.6 **Officers:** The officers of the congregation shall include a Moderator, Church Council Chair, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. They shall be members of the church, elected at the March Annual Meeting ordinarily for a three-year term with the exception of Church Council Chair (see 5.2.1), and may succeed themselves for one additional three-year term. If any of these offices is vacated, the Nominating Board shall recommend a replacement for confirmation by the Church Council to serve until the next regular election of officers.
- 3.7 **Officers' Duties:** Officers shall have such duties as are assigned them in By-laws or by congregational action. Regular duties shall be to:

Moderator: cooperate with the Pastor(s) by providing broad lay leadership for the Congregation and serve on each Board as *ex officio* member without vote. Specific duties shall be to preside at all regular and special meetings of the church, participate with the pastor(s) at the reception of new members, and moderate Church Council meetings in the absence of Church Council Chair. If neither the Moderator, nor Church Council Chair (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.

Church Council Chair: set agenda and chair church council meetings and preside at congregational meetings in the absence of the Moderator.

Clerk: keep a record of all substantial congregational actions of the church and the register of its members; maintain a file of church correspondence and of reports presented at annual meetings; prepare letters of transfer for those who move to other churches; record in the annual report all changes in membership of the congregation. In the absence of the Clerk, the Moderator may appoint a *clerk pro-tem* to take minutes at a congregational meeting.

Treasurer: keep an itemized account of receipts, disbursements and balances, pay out funds according to the policies set by the congregation or Church Finance Board; inform the Church Finance Board and the membership monthly regarding the state of church finances, and serve *ex officio* on that board.

Financial Secretary: receive and record members' payments on their pledges, provide

notices to contributors regarding the status of their pledges twice a year, and serve *ex officio* on the Church Finance Board.

- 3.8 **Congregational Worship:** Meetings of the whole congregation for worship, education, and praise shall be held each week, except when special circumstances prevent them.
- 3.9 **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 Worship Board 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.
- 3.10 **Congregational Meetings:** 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.
- 3.10.1 **Business Meetings:** The two business meetings ordinarily 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 Church Council 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.
- 3.10.2 **Meeting Procedure:** Meetings of the congregation shall be guided by Christian faith and teaching, the provisions of this constitution and by-laws, and by Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised), when not in conflict with the preceding 3.10.1, to ensure a climate of mutual respect and orderly procedure.
- 3.10.3 **Decisions:** For the purposes of this constitution, decisions, whether by the congregation, boards, sub-committees, task forces or Church Council, shall be made by consensus. (see By-law 5)
- 3.10.4 **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 three(3) Sunday mornings immediately prior to the meeting. In the event of a serious emergency, the moderator in consultation with the Church Council may call a special meeting of the congregation, dispensing with the three weeks' notice.
- 3.10.5 **Amendments** to motions at congregational meetings are always in order, but any proposed amendment to business covered in section 3.10.3 must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the members present.
- 3.11 Installation of those elected at the annual spring meeting shall ordinarily take place on the same date as their election

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Article IV: OFFICIAL BOARDS

- 4.1 **Boards & Operations:** Subject to the authority of the congregation and the coordination of the Church Council, the activities and program of the church shall be directed by ten (10) boards: Faith Development, Nurture and Care, Community Life and Growth, Worship, Mission and Service, Church Finance, Properties, Administration, Nominating, and Pastoral Relations.
- 4.1.1 **Officers of Each Board:** Each board shall choose annually from its membership a chair, a secretary, and other officers as needed.
 - 4.1.2 **Board membership:** Each board shall have a minimum of four elected members.
 - 4.1.3 **Establishing Officers Prior to Spring Election:** Prior to the annual spring election, each board shall designate a new or continuing chair. If the board is not able to do so within a month of the annual spring election, the Church Council shall designate an interim chair who will report to the Church Council when a permanent chair is selected.
 - 4.1.4 **Church Council Representative:** The chair of each board or designated representative will serve on Church Council.
 - 4.1.5 **Sub-Committees and Task forces:** Each board may establish sub-committees or task forces as needed to perform its functions. Chairpersons of these sub-committees or task forces shall ordinarily be selected from the board membership, or may be selected from the congregation at large. Each sub-committee or task force shall be responsible to and report to the board by which it was established.
 - 4.1.6 **Terms and Vacancies:** Elected board members shall ordinarily be members of the church and normally will serve three-year terms, approximately one third the number elected each year, and may succeed themselves for one additional three-year term.(rev. 3-11-03) A vacancy occurring during a member's term shall be reported to Church Council. The affected board may elect a new person for that position by presenting it to Church Council for affirmation and reporting to the congregation. If filling the last year of a term, the replacement member is eligible for re-election to a full term plus re-election for a second 3 year term on that same board.
 - 4.1.7 **Pastor Ex-Officio:** The Pastor(s) shall serve on each board as *ex officio* member(s) without vote.
 - 4.1.8 **Board Decisions:** Unless otherwise specified, board decisions shall be made by consensus. (see By-law 5)
- 4.2 **The Faith Development Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Faith Development Board shall be responsible for the general education program of the church.. *Ex officio* members shall include the Pastor(s) and the Youth Activities Coordinator(s). Responsibilities of the board shall be to:
- 4.2.1 supervise the Sunday School
 - 4.2.2 address the recruitment and training of volunteer Sunday School teachers, Children's Church leaders, adult class teachers, small group ministry leaders, youth workers, and child care workers
 - 4.2.3 sponsor retreats, Bible study and discussion groups
 - 4.2.4 sponsor youth programs
 - 4.2.5 ensure that someone is responsible for scheduling child care during church functions

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- 4.2.6 develop new educational activities or programs with the collaboration of other boards as appropriate
- 4.3 **Nurture and Care Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Nurture and Care Board shall assist with the spiritual life of the church. Responsibilities of the board shall be to:
 - 4.3.1 communicate effectively with Pastor(s) to nurture the physical and spiritual well-being of church members and friends
 - 4.3.2 care for members and friends through visits, rides, in-home communion
 - 4.3.3 offer and/or arrange special assistance in times of illness, birth, death, or crises of any kind
- 4.4 **Community Life and Growth Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Community Life and Growth Board's responsibilities shall be to:
 - 4.4.1 create a hospitable, safe and inclusive space for all within our beloved community
 - 4.4.2 welcome and follow up with guests, invite to consider membership, collaborate with Pastors on sessions for prospective and/or new members
 - 4.4.3 provide fellowship opportunities such as Wednesday Night Live meals, all-church pot-lucks, Lenten lunches, etc., throughout the year
 - 4.4.4 establish policies/guidelines that facilitate uses of fellowship spaces in association with program needs
 - 4.4.5 develop and oversee a plan for outreach (advertising, communication) to the Berea community to support church growth
- 4.5 **Worship Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Worship Board works with the Pastor(s) and music staff to make visible abundant hospitality and passionate worship. Responsibilities shall be to:
 - 4.5.1 create passionate worship experiences
 - 4.5.2 encourage aesthetic/visual qualities of the church conducive to worship
 - 4.5.3 prepare and maintain equipment and procedures necessary for congregational worship and communication of the gospel
 - 4.5.4 arrange for pulpit supply, and additional services as needed
- 4.6 **Mission and Service 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 coordinated 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. Responsibilities shall be to:
 - 4.6.1 meet the emergency needs of church families
 - 4.6.2 select, coordinate, and promote the church's local, national, and international involvements in mission giving
 - 4.6.3 coordinate the church's ecumenical activities that are related to outreach through mission
 - 4.6.4 administer fundraising events in support of mission giving

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- 4.6.5 administer the local missions of the church, including Woman's Industrial
- 4.7 **Church Finance Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Church Finance Board shall be responsible for the business and financial affairs of the church, other than personnel oversight, and shall work in consultation with the Properties and Administration boards. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary are *ex officio* members. Responsibilities of the board shall be to:
- 4.7.1 administer the finances of the church, including the submission of an annual budget to the congregation
- 4.7.2 establish policies for managing monies, investments and financial records with an annual audit of the church's books
- 4.7.3 coordinate an annual financial support campaign
- 4.8 **Properties Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Properties Board shall be responsible for the physical properties of the church, working in consultation with the Church Finance Board. Responsibilities of the board shall be to:
- 4.8.1 manage the properties of the church including land, buildings and equipment
- 4.8.2 manage the acceptance or disposition of property as authorized by the congregation
- 4.9 **Administration Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Administration Board shall be responsible for personnel support, oversight of the Pastor(s) and staff of the church, working in consultation with the Church Finance Board. Responsibilities of the board shall be to:
- 4.9.1 establish policies for office operations, in collaboration with Pastor(s), Church Administrator, Office Administrator and custodian(cleaning services), to ensure the smooth functioning of the church, including building use and scheduling
- 4.9.2 maintain position descriptions for personnel, terms of call for pastor(s), annual contracts for other employees, evaluation processes; and working with the appropriate boards, initiate and/or participate in searches and hiring of staff
- 4.10 **Pastoral Relations Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Pastoral Relations Board is a special liaison board of the congregation, which actively seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the Pastor(s) and the members of the congregation. Its goals are:
- 4.10.1 the professional growth of the Pastor(s)
- 4.10.2 the well-being of the Pastor(s) and the congregation
- 4.10.3 the promotion of mutual ministry between the Pastor(s) and the congregation
- 4.11 **Nominating Board**
Subject to the provisions of Section 4.1 of this Article, the Nominating Board shall select from the membership of the church candidates for elective leadership positions. These include the Moderator, Church Council Chair, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The board shall also select from the membership of the church candidates for the other boards: Faith Development, Nurture and Care, Community Life and Growth, Worship, Mission and Service, Finance, Properties, Administration, and Pastoral Relations.

Article V: THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- 5.1 Executive Committee of the Congregation: Subject to the authority of the congregation, the Church Council shall serve as executive committee for the congregation.
- 5.2 The Members of the Church Council shall be:
 - 5.2.1 a Chair elected annually by the congregation and twice eligible for re-election (3-year total). In the absence of the Moderator, the Chair of Church Council shall serve as Vice-Moderator of the congregation
 - 5.2.2 all elected church officers except for the Financial Secretary
 - 5.2.3 the chairs or their designees of the ten church boards
 - 5.2.4 the Pastor(s) and other professional staff as the Church Council deems appropriate. These shall serve as *ex officio* members without vote.
- 5.3 Secretary and other Officers: The Church Council shall select a secretary and other officers if needed. Members and officers shall serve until successors are selected.
- 5.4 Decision-making shall proceed ordinarily by discussion and consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, formal decisions require a majority vote of the voting members present.
 - 5.4.1 A quorum shall consist of one more than half (8) of the voting members (14).
 - 5.4.2 In addition to regular meetings, special meetings may be called by Pastor(s), Moderator, Church Council Chair or any three members of the Church Council. All members of the Church Council are to be notified of special meetings.
- 5.5 General Functions of the Church Council shall be to:
 - 5.5.1 serve as executive committee for the congregation, prepare its agenda and serve as interim decision-making body subject always to congregational review
 - 5.5.2 provide coordination for the various elements of the church program, work with and through the boards to achieve maximum effectiveness and avoid duplication
 - 5.5.3 perform such other tasks as are assigned to it by the congregation
- 5.6 Specific Duties: Specifically, the Church Council shall perform duties given to it by other provisions of the Constitution and By-laws. Among these are to:
 - 5.6.1 nominate new members for the Nominating Board
 - 5.6.2 act on requests for voting and office-holding by associate members and active participants
 - 5.6.3 waive public reception of new church members when that is appropriate
 - 5.6.4 nominate persons as Honorary Lifetime Deacons
 - 5.6.5 apply established criteria for distinguishing “active” and “inactive” membership lists
 - 5.6.6 update membership rolls each January
 - 5.6.7 set dates and times for congregational meetings
 - 5.6.8 designate a church member to fulfill the requirements of sec. 2.2 and 3.9 when the

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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 Church Council at least one month before the March annual meeting. After careful consideration the Church Council 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 BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be altered or amended by two-thirds vote and its By-laws by simple majority vote at any congregational meeting, the Church Council having provided written notice of such meeting and its substance on at least three Sunday mornings immediately prior to the meeting. In each case a written statement of the proposed alteration or amendment shall be presented **at least one week prior to** the meeting in which it is to be considered.

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 present (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 Church Council** 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: Union Church** 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.
- BL 1.2 **Active and Inactive Lists:** For purposes of administration and planning, the Church Council 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

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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 Church Council and Pastor(s).
- BL 2 **Constitution Distribution:** Prospective and new members shall receive a copy of this constitution and By-laws.
- 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 **Decision by Consensus**
For the purposes of this constitution, consensus shall mean that every reasonable effort shall be made to provide all members of the decision-making body with adequate information and time for prayerful, reasoned discussion, including whenever possible sufficient time in advance to study and form reasoned opinions. All decision-making meetings shall begin and end with prayers for God's guidance. Every member present at a meeting shall have the opportunity to voice her or his questions, concerns and opinions. When the whole group senses that it is time to reach a decision, it shall do so by whatever means it feels spiritually sensible to use, whether by word of mouth, raising of hands, written ballot, electronic ballot, or some other suitable means, except where the constitution elsewhere disallows such means. A consensus decision shall not mean unanimity of opinion. Rather, it shall mean that everyone shall have their say, and at least a majority of the voting body favors or opposes a resolution.
- BL 6 **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 7 **Open Board Meetings:** Except for Pastoral Relations, all board and committee meetings, except those concerned with personnel or employment matters, shall be open to all members of the church.
- BL 8 **Four months prior to the annual election,** Church Council shall approve the number of members requested by each board, and authorize the Nominating Board to choose candidates for those positions.
- BL 9 **Notice of Board Vacancy:** One who resigns from any board, **special committee, or task force** shall promptly give notice to the chair of that body. This chair then determines the proper method of securing a replacement (see 4.1.5) and promptly initiates appropriate action.

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BL 10 **Clarification of “*ex officio*”:** Unless otherwise specified, *ex officio* members of boards and committees shall have voice but no vote. (adopted 9-27-00)

BL 11 **Procedure to respond if someone in an elective position does not function**

BL 11.1 If a member of a board or special committee or task force does not function (e.g., for 3 consecutive months), the board, committee, or task force 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(s), shall bring the matter before the Church Council.

BL 11.2 If the non-functioning person is an officer of the congregation, or board or committee chair, the initial discernment effort will be the responsibility of the Church Council, in consultation with the Pastor(s).

BL 11.3 The Church Council, acting in a spirit of Christian love, shall have authority to declare a position vacant if that becomes necessary.

BL 12 **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 Church Council Chair and a third person they select from the Church Council. Those three persons may consult others and may, at their discretion, refer the entire question to the Church Council 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 Church Council for reconsideration. (See 3.10 on congregational meetings.) Any referrals and actions under this paragraph shall be reported to **the Church Council** monthly and summarized for the congregation annually.

BL 13 **Authorized signatures**

BL 13.1 The Moderator, Church Council Chair, and Church Finance Board Chair are each authorized to sign major contracts (as defined by the Church Council) on behalf of the congregation.

BL 13.2 The Treasurer, Moderator, Church Council Chair, Church Finance Board Chair are each authorized to sign checks.

BL 14 **Non Discrimination Policy** (adopted 12-11-11)

In keeping with Union Church’s inclusive Christian tradition and its emphasis on the dignity and worth of all people, the congregation values and embraces diversity. Employment, membership, and participation in any church activity is open to all without regard to ethnicity, race, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability or religion.

Employment decisions are based on training, education, and experience related to the requirements of each position. Due to the age and construction of the buildings, not all areas are easily accessible to persons with mobility issues. Union Church will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities within these limitations.

Approved at Congregational Meeting May 15, 2013

Jean Boyce, Clerk

Approved May 15, 2013