

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

CONSTITUTION

Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be The Congregational Church of Austin, The United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II. Purpose

The purpose of this Church shall be to foster the love and worship of God and the service of humanity in Christian fellowship. To implement this intent, it will be the responsibility of the governing bodies of this church regularly to formulate goals which will reflect the church's highest priorities in pursuing its aims.

ARTICLE III. Polity

The government of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the Secretary of State of the State of Texas.

While this Church has local control, it willingly accepts the obligations and opportunities of mutual counsel, courtesy, and cooperation involved in free fellowship with the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to share the common aims and work of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE IV. Membership

Upon formal affirmation by the members, any person desiring to join in the purpose stated in Article II will be admitted to membership.

ARTICLE V. Meetings

There shall be a regular annual business meeting and additional special meetings as prescribed in the bylaws.

ARTICLE VI. Quorum

Section 1. The time, place, and purpose of a congregational meeting shall be announced at least one week in advance. At a meeting so announced, fifteen percent of the active, local members of the church shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. In the absence of notice as provided in Section 1, business may be transacted at any congregational meeting at which 25% of the active members holding full membership are present.

ARTICLE VII. The Board of Trustees

There shall be a Board of Trustees, elected by the membership as provided in the bylaws, which shall have the responsibility for the care and custody of the property of The Congregational Church of Austin. The Board shall have charge of all legal, financial, and related matters, subject only to the will of the membership in congregational meetings.

ARTICLE VIII. The Board of Deacons

There shall be a Board of Deacons, elected by the membership as provided in the bylaws.

It shall be the duty of the Board to collaborate with the minister in attending to the spiritual needs of the members of The Congregational Church of Austin and of the community. The Board's responsibilities shall include the assisting in the preparation and administration of the ordinances and in arranging for the filling of the pulpit in case of a vacancy or in the absence of the minister.

ARTICLE IX. The Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee, whose purpose shall be to recommend the nomination of suitable candidates to fill positions of currently approved offices.

ARTICLE X. Coordinating Council

There shall be a Coordinating Council which shall have two major purposes. The first is to address issues which fall within the purview of more than a single board or committee. The second is to address issues which are of church-wide importance, but which have not been expressly delegated to a particular board or committee. The Council shall report to the congregation its recommendations on whatever issues it may have studied.

ARTICLE XI. Officials

The officials of The Congregational Church of Austin shall be a Minister, a School Superintendent, a Moderator, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, a Director of Enlistment, an Historian/Archivist, as well as members of church boards and committees and church representatives to other organizations.

Article XII. Terms of Office of Church Officials

Section 1. The Minister shall be elected by the church members for an indefinite period, subject to an annual review initiated by the Coordinating Council. The conditions of employment shall be as stipulated in a written contract prepared by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. All other church officials shall be elected by the congregation at the annual business meeting. They shall be elected for terms of office as provided in the bylaws.

Article XIII. Duties of Church Officials

Section 1. The Minister, assisted by the Board of Deacons, shall be responsible for the worship services and pastoral care of church members. The minister shall also collaborate with other church officials and church bodies to achieve the goals of the Church and shall report to church members at the annual business meeting an assessment of the spiritual and secular affairs of the church.

The Minister shall serve ex-officio as a member of all boards and of the Coordinating Council and will be expected to participate regularly in their activities. The minister will be welcome to serve ex-officio on all committees.

Section 2. The School Superintendent shall appoint teachers and other necessary personnel, shall coordinate the church school program, and shall report on the church school activities at the annual business meeting of The Congregational Church of Austin.

Section 3. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the church. In the Moderator's absence, a Moderator pro-tem shall be elected for that meeting only.

Section 4. The Clerk shall keep an up-to-date roster of all members and a permanent record of all minutes of all official meetings of the membership of The Congregational Church of Austin, and shall submit a report at the annual business meeting. The Clerk shall serve ex-officio as a member of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Deacons. The Clerk or Minister shall process all membership resignation and transfer requests.

Section 5. The Financial Secretary, under bond, shall receive church funds, deposit them in a financial institution selected by the Trustees, keep records of income, submit them to the Board of Trustees as required for audit, report on the status of the church income to members at the annual business

meeting, and perform such other duties as may be required. The Financial Secretary shall serve ex-officio as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section 6. The Treasurer, under bond, shall disburse church funds as authorized by the Board of Trustees, keep adequate records of all disbursements, submit them to the Board of Trustees as required for audit, report on the financial status of the church to members at the annual business meeting, and perform such other duties as may be required. The Treasurer shall serve ex-officio as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section 7. The Director of Enlistment, with the aid of the Minister and other members as needed shall plan and supervise the enlistment of talent and money for the church.

Section 8. The Archivist shall collect and preserve historical records and memorabilia in order to maintain an up-to-date history of The Congregational Church of Austin.

Section 9. A complete job description for all the positions occupied by church officials shall be maintained and kept current.

Article XIV. Memorial Fund

There shall be a memorial fund to serve as a way of remembering deceased members and friends.

Article XV. Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any meeting at which one-fifth of the active members is present, provided:

- 1) copies of the proposed amendment shall have been presented to members at a congregational meeting or in a written communication not less than thirty days previously;
- 2) notice in writing has been given to members at least one week in advance of the meeting at which the proposed amendment is presented.

BYLAWS

Article I. Membership

Section 1. There shall be three categories of membership: (a) Full membership shall be accorded to all persons who apply for membership, subscribe to the purposes of the church, and are recommended and approved as provided in Section 2, below; (b) Associate membership may be granted to persons who because of temporary residence, affiliation with another church, or for some other reason, do not desire full membership but wish to participate in the work of the church and give it their support; and (c) Inactive membership. A list of inactive members shall be kept of those persons who joined the church but do not attend or contribute. Upon their request inactive members will be restored to full membership. Active, local members are considered to be those who live in Travis and adjacent Texas counties.

Section 2. Applications for membership shall be presented to the Board of Deacons, who, after due consideration shall make an appropriate recommendation at a meeting of the congregation. After favorable vote by church members, membership becomes effective with the formal reception ceremony at a regular church service, which must take place within sixty days. If an applicant is not thus formally received, the application is automatically voided.

Section 3. Upon written request by or on behalf of a member or associate member leaving the church, the Minister or Clerk shall issue a letter of dismissal and/or transfer of membership.

The Board of Deacons shall consider the status of inactive members, ascertain their wishes, and then make appropriate recommendations at the annual business meeting regarding any possible change in membership status.

Article II. Meetings

Section 1. The regular annual business meeting of the church shall be held

in the month of January on a date and at a time and place designated by the Coordinating Council.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the Minister, the Moderator, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deacons, the Coordinating Council, or upon written request of at least ten members.

Article III. Nominations, Elections, and Terms of Office

Section 1. Officials of the church shall be elected at the annual business meeting.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall submit to the church members at the annual business meeting at least one name in nomination for each vacant position. Following the reading of the list of nominees, additional nominations for any position shall be accepted from the membership. In addition, the Nominating Committee at a specially called meeting shall submit at least one name in nomination to fill the unexpired term of any official who is unable to continue in office.

Section 3. All voting shall be conducted by a show of hands or by a voice vote unless this rule is suspended by a unanimous vote of those members present.

Section 4. Adult members of Boards of Deacons and Trustees and members of the Nominating Committee and all other current committees shall be elected for three year terms of office. One-third of the members of each of the two Boards and members of each committee shall be elected each year so as to produce staggered terms of office. They may not succeed themselves. Student members of the Board of Deacons and Trustees shall be elected for one year terms. They may not succeed themselves.

The Moderator shall be elected for a three year term of office. The Moderator may not serve two successive terms. The Clerk, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Historian-Archivist, and the Member-at-large

representative of the Coordinating Council shall be elected for one year terms of office. All other church officials including representatives to external organizations shall serve one year terms of office. They may succeed themselves.

Board and committee members will be replaced when they have missed three consecutive meetings. They may petition the particular board or committee for an exception.

Article IV. The Board of Trustees

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of the Minister, the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary as ex-officio members, and eight other members, elected as follows: six adult members and two student members.

Section 2. A Chairman and a Secretary elected by Board members shall constitute the officers of the Board.

- a. The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Board and shall perform any other duties as the Board requires. At the annual business meeting the Chairman shall submit a written report to the congregation on the significant activities of the Board for the current year and outline pending matters of concern that require Board action. The Chairman shall also give a copy of this report to the Archivist for permanent filing.
- b. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Board. At the annual business meeting, the Secretary shall give a copy of the proceedings of the Board to the Archivist for permanent filing.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees shall hold such meetings as are deemed necessary by the Chairman or a majority of the Board.

Section 4. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. A member who misses three consecutive meetings will be

automatically dismissed from the Board but may seek reinstatement.

Article V. The Board of Deacons

Section 1. The Board of Deacons shall consist of the Minister and the Clerk as ex-officio members, and eight other members elected as follows: six adult members and two student members.

Section 2. A Chairman and a Secretary elected by Board members shall constitute the officers of the Board.

- a. The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Board and shall perform any other duties as the Board requires. At the annual business meeting the Chairman shall submit a written report on the significant activities of the Board for the current year and outline pending matters of concern that require Board action. This report shall be given to the Historian/Archivist for permanent filing.
- b. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Board. At the annual business meeting, a copy of the proceedings of the Board shall be given by the Secretary to the Historian/Archivist for permanent filing.

Section 3. The Board of Deacons shall hold such meetings as are deemed necessary by the the Chairman or a majority of the Board.

Section 4. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Article VI. The Nominating Committee

Section 1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members.

Section 2. There shall be a single officer of the Committee, its Chairman. She or he will be elected annually by the Committee members.

- a. The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Committee and shall supervise the selection of suitable candidates to fill vacancies for positions of church officials. The Chairman will assure that potential

candidates are fully informed of the responsibilities they will be expected to fulfill. The Chairman also shall ascertain that the candidates consent to serve.

- b. The Chairman shall be responsible for the preparation of the slate of candidates for approved church offices. This slate will be presented to the congregation at the annual business meeting.
- c. The Committee will also be responsible for securing nominees for positions that become vacant during the year and presenting these at specially called meetings of the congregation.

Article VII. The Coordinating Council

Section 1. The Coordinating Council shall consist of the Minister, the Moderator, the Clerk, a member-at-large of the congregation, a representative of the Board of Deacons, and a representative of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. The officers of the Council shall be a Chairman and a Secretary, these positions to be filled by the Moderator and the Clerk respectively.

Section 3. The Council shall meet at least quarterly. In addition, it shall meet at the call of the Moderator or when requested by at least two other members of the Council.

Section 4. The Coordinating Council shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Set and review the goals of the church and the priorities placed on these goals. Evaluate programs of the church in the light of the goals, and initiate needed new ones.
- b. Make an annual evaluation of the Minister's performance. After receiving the Minister's report of her or his activities and accomplishments, deliberations will be carried out in the Minister's

absence. On the basis of these deliberations, meet with the Minister and share those results with him or her in an effort to assure that mutually agreed upon emphases are being pursued.

- c. Make recommendations regarding the nature and number of all non-standing church bodies or positions, as well as their respective responsibilities, composition, size, and term of service; such recommendations being subject to adoption by church members at a business meeting.
- d. Make recommendations whether or not to send delegates to external organizations.
- e. Approve job descriptions submitted by church officials.

Section 5. Four members shall constitute a quorum.

Article VIII. Job Descriptions

All church officials, including chairmen of boards, committees, and councils, shall be responsible for writing and keeping current the job description for his/her office. All such job descriptions shall be submitted to the Coordinating Council for approval.

Article VIX. Memorial Fund

Section 1. Various undertakings may be appropriate to commemorate the lives of loved ones. Ordinarily, however, only objects of lasting value will be considered fitting gifts. Similarly, it would not ordinarily be fitting to use Memorial funds to meet operating expenses or to purchase consumable items.

Section 2. The Trustees shall be responsible for accepting and safe keeping of money donated to the fund.

Section 3. Designated gifts shall be subject to the consideration of the Board of Deacons who shall determine whether such gifts are appropriate and therefore acceptable. If the Board of Deacons decides not to accept a gift, a

vote by the membership shall be required to approve or disapprove that decision.

Section 4. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Deacons to review periodically how monies or other gifts in the Fund as used. The Board will offer to the membership for consideration and action the Board's recommendations regarding possible Fund projects.

Section 5. It shall be the responsibility of the Financial Secretary to send an appropriate and timely letter of appreciation to the donor(s).

Article X. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting at which one-fifth of the active members are present with the following provisions:

- a. an affirmative vote by two-thirds of those present and voting.
- b. notice of a meeting at which a proposed amendment shall be considered must have been given at least one week previously.

Approved at the annual meeting of the Congregational Church of Austin on
27 January 1985.