

BYLAWS OF COMMUNITY OF FAITH
United Church of Christ
Elyria, Ohio

Approved July 30, 2023

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Having joined our church through profession of faith, confirmation, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer from another church or denomination, members shall be deemed:

1. *Active members:*

- Attend worship regularly, participate in financial support of our Church, and/or support the mission and ministry of our Congregation through the giving of their time, talent, gifts, or service.

2. *Home-bound members:*

- Unable to attend worship but are included on the active membership roll.

3. *Inactive members:*

- Have not attended worship, nor supported the mission and ministry of our Congregation through the giving of time, talent, financial support, or service **for a period of 1 year or more.**

4. *Deceased members:*

- Upon death, members are automatically removed from the membership roll.

Those members who are deemed inactive will not be included in the count of church membership and may not vote at Congregational Meetings.

Any member may request to be deleted from the membership roll.

ARTICLE II: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The Executive Team, Pastor, Finance Team, Endowment Team, and all Volunteer Ministry Teams shall submit their annual reports in writing to the Congregation no less than two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.
2. Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the Executive Team or by a petition to the Executive Team signed by *not less than 5%* of the active members over the age of sixteen. The Executive Team shall call such meetings within three weeks of receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meeting shall be provided to the membership. Only such business as has been mentioned in the call to the special Congregational meeting may be transacted at such special meetings.
3. All Annual and Special Meetings of the Congregation will be announced giving two weeks' notice to congregation members.
4. All Confirmands under the age of 16 can vote at Congregational Meetings, **provided** they have attended a discussion facilitated by the Pastor and/or members of the Executive Team regarding the content of each meeting. Discussions are not required once the Confirmand has reached the age of 16.

ARTICLE III: CALLING PASTORS

It shall be the responsibility of a Pastoral Search Committee, appointed by the Executive Team, to seek a candidate for Called Pastor positions. As soon as it becomes clear the Pastor's position will be vacated, a representative of the Executive Team will contact the Association Minister. All Pastors serving Community of Faith United Church of Christ must be eligible for, or have standing in, the United Church of Christ. A candidate will be presented by the Search Committee to the Congregation at a Special Congregational Meeting. An affirmative vote of 75% or more of the active members present at the Special Congregational Meeting constitutes a call. The Pastor's specific duties are defined in the Pastor's call agreement.

ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Executive Team is responsible for routine governance of the church, developing policy and deciding issues not directly requiring congregational votes.

Six (6) voting members of the Executive Team shall constitute a quorum of that Team. The President, Vice President, Pastor, or a majority of the voting members of the Executive Team shall have the authority to call an Executive Meeting.

The Executive Team is responsible for addressing employee issues, including but not limited to: job descriptions, hiring, discipline, changes in compensation, and terminations. The Executive Team shall conduct all staff performance evaluations in consultation with the Staff/Parish Relations Team. The Pastor supervises employees and reports directly to the Executive Team.

Members of the same family may not serve as members of the Executive Team simultaneously. One individual cannot simultaneously serve two elected offices.

The Treasurer is nominated by the Finance Team and appointed by the Executive Team. The Treasurer is responsible for paying bills and is the primary signer of checks. As such, the Treasurer cannot hold an elected position on the Executive Team but is encouraged to attend meetings beneficial to their position. This is done in accordance with guidelines set forth by the Living Water Association.

The elected Executive Team members, as members of the governing body of the church for routine matters, cannot be chairperson of a Volunteer Ministry Team. If an Executive Team member wishes to chair a Volunteer Ministry Team, they must resign from the Executive Team and their term will be filled by an active member appointed by the Executive Team. Similarly, if a Volunteer Ministry chairperson is elected to the Executive Team, they must resign as chairperson of the Volunteer Ministry Team.

Employees shall not be elected or appointed to the Executive Team but are invited to attend Executive Team meetings.

Nomination and Election Process of the Executive Team:

1. An election for Executive Team Members is held as part of the Annual Congregational Meeting in the fourth quarter of each year. Each Annual Election is for positions with two-year terms beginning January 1st of the immediately following year. Staggered terms are required to facilitate the ongoing work of the Executive Team, so the nine elected positions are broken up into 2 classes (EVEN Year Class and ODD Year Class).

The following positions will be elected for two-year terms beginning in EVEN numbered years (Even Year Class):

- President
- Secretary
- Nominating Team Chair
- At-Large #1
- At-Large #2

The following positions will be elected for two-year terms beginning in ODD numbered years (ODD Year Class):

- Vice President
- Finance Team Chair
- At-Large #3
- At-Large #4

This means five or four candidates (Class EVEN and Class ODD respectively) need to be elected every year. More positions may need to be elected if Executive Team appointments filling prematurely vacated terms need to be elected for the last year of a two-year term.

2. The Nominating Team will identify and approach members whose gifts could be utilized in the appropriate elected offices and encourage their participation in the election process.
3. Nominations for the Executive Team may be made by any church member and submitted to the Nominating Team.
4. The Nominating Team shall prepare a slate of people having the skills and abilities needed on the Executive Team. The slate of persons being nominated shall be distributed to the Congregation at least two weeks before the election.
5. At the Annual Congregational Meeting, other nominations may be made from the floor, provided permission from that individual has been obtained in advance, and the individual is present at the meeting. In this case a paper ballot will be used.
6. Mid-term vacancies on the Executive Team shall be filled by an individual appointed by the Executive Team for the current year. At the next Annual Congregational Meeting, an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.
7. Individuals appointed to fill an unexpired term may complete the unexpired term and can be elected to serve one additional term.
8. Following the election of the Executive Team, it is suggested these officers, in addition to all other members of the Leadership Team, be installed in a worship service where their work is dedicated, and their service is recognized by the Congregation.
9. The vote for a position nominated to be an Executive Team Member shall be voted upon individually by paper ballot.

ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team shall be the advisory body of the congregation comprised of the Executive Team and one Team Chairperson or Representative of each Volunteer Ministry Team. The Executive Team President shall also serve as Chairperson of the Leadership Team. Employees cannot chair a Volunteer Ministry Team but are invited to attend Leadership Team meetings without a vote. The Leadership Team shall identify a regular meeting schedule, at least once a quarter.

The individual Volunteer Ministry Teams to be represented will be identified in the Ways of Work. Each Team Chairperson or Representative shall have a vote on the Leadership Team. The Leadership team brings topics and issues related to church programming for discussion. Leadership Team votes are generally limited to activities of one or more Volunteer Ministry Teams, including room use, scheduling issues, promotional activities, etc.

The Leadership Team will work together to ensure effective communication across all aspects of church life. Special meetings are subject to the call of the Executive Team President, Pastor, or a majority of the Leadership Team members.

Votes by the Leadership Team require the establishment of a quorum. A quorum shall consist of a minimum of 60% of the Leadership Team members.

To develop new leaders in the congregation and to encourage a new vision for the church, the chair of each team should be rotated every 1-3 years. Each Volunteer Ministry Team is responsible for identifying the chairperson replacement and is tasked to mentor them through the transition. To encourage more involvement from more of the congregation, and to ensure that each chair is focused on their Team's vision and needs, no single person can simultaneously be the chair of two different teams. Volunteer Ministry Teams struggling to identify new leadership for their teams should bring the issue to the Leadership Team meeting for discussion.

ARTICLE VI: ENDOWMENT/INVESTMENT FUND TEAM

The purpose of the Endowment/Investment Fund Team (Team) is to:

1. Provide financial guidance to support the work of the church as directed by the Endowment Policy.
2. Provide guidelines for the collection, management, and disbursement of all financial assets entrusted to Community of Faith that are held and managed by the Team.
3. Provide guidelines and oversee the prudent investment of both restricted and unrestricted funds entrusted to and managed by the Team.
4. Aid in the proper management of donor restricted funds according to the wishes of the respective donors and within the stated mission of Community of Faith.
5. Participate with the Finance Team in the annual Stewardship campaign and provide information regarding bequests and planned giving to the Endowment/Investment Fund.

The primary responsibility of the Team is to oversee and administer the endowment and/or investment funds of Community of Faith. As a fiduciary the Team is responsible for working toward investment objectives, following established policies, and adhering to guidelines which direct the investment of the fund's assets. Changes to objectives, policies and guidelines are subject to approval of the Executive Team. The Team has the responsibility to work closely with the Team's financial advisor to ensure policies and procedures are being adhered to and assets are being managed as outlined in the investment policy statement. The Team will receive and review regular performance and transactional reporting from the financial advisor.

Structure:

The Team shall consist of five members. Each member shall be appointed by the Executive Team for a period of three years. Newly appointed members may serve two consecutive terms and then must wait at least two years before being eligible for reappointment to the Team.

In the event of a vacancy, the Team shall recommend a member to the Executive Team for appointment to fill the vacancy until the end of the term of the vacant position. The Executive Team may accept the recommendation of the Team or appoint a member on its own. The Pastor and Executive Team President shall be ex-officio members of the Team.

The Team shall elect annually from its members a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The Chairperson, or in the Chairperson's absence, the Treasurer, shall preside over all team meetings. The Treasurer shall maintain complete and accurate records of accounts held by the Fund. All checks written will require two signatures. The Chairperson and Treasurer will be authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Team. In the absence of the Endowment Team Chairperson or Endowment Team Treasurer, the Secretary of the Endowment Team is designated as an additional signer.

The Chairperson shall be authorized to sign documents in furtherance of the purposes of the fund. The Secretary shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings of the Team and supply a copy to each member of the Team and to the Executive Team.

Reporting:

A detailed report shall be included in the church's annual report and at any congregational meeting called to discuss the Endowment/Investment Fund or the financial resources of the church. The submission for the annual report should include the following:

- the purpose of the fund
- year beginning and ending balances
- an analysis of all income and disbursements
- the responsibilities of the Endowment Team
- a review of the fund's performance over the past three years

ARTICLE VII: VOLUNTEER MINISTRY TEAMS

Community of Faith United Church of Christ is organized to encourage all members and constituents to be actively engaged in the ministries and programs of the church. Volunteer Ministry Teams facilitate the mission of our Church, enabling us to be the presence of Christ. The following are examples of tasks that may be addressed by the work of the Ministry Teams. This list may change from time to time to address the needs of the church. Changes will be reflected in the Ways of Work:

- Education and spiritual formation for children and adults
- Generosity and financial stewardship
- Mission and outreach
- Care of the building and grounds
- Member care
- Fellowship and hospitality
- Worship and Music
- Fundraising

The Pastor and Executive Team President are ex-officio members of all Volunteer Ministry Teams.

ARTICLE VIII: EXECUTIVE TEAM EXPENDITURE LIMITS

The Executive Team, in consultation with the Finance Team, is responsible for oversight of the financial affairs of the church. Proposed by the Executive Team, all expenditures of \$5,000 or more must be approved by the Congregation in a Congregational Meeting where a quorum is present. Proposals or projects requiring an expenditure of \$5,000 or more shall be reviewed by the Executive Team before presentation at a Congregational Meeting. Information shall be provided at least two weeks before the Executive Team's meeting to provide members the opportunity to review the material.

In a catastrophic emergency, the Executive Team may act on behalf of the Congregation in excess of \$5,000 provided the Executive Team, in consultation with the Pastor and the Chair of the Endowment/Investment Team, reaches unanimous approval of the critical expenditure. Every effort will be made to inform the Congregation of this action; a special Congregational Meeting is to be called as soon as is feasible to address the emergency expenditure with the members.

The Executive Team would take such action ONLY in the event of an immediate situation that could cause continuing damage to the building/grounds or threaten the safety of people on our property.

ARTICLE IX: SAFE CHURCH POLICY

As a community of Christian faith, Community of Faith is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. As part of our commitment of promoting safety for all our members, we have adopted a Safe Church Policy that outlines rules and procedures for all those who utilize our facilities. This policy is on file in the church office and is posted on our website.