

**Constitution of the
First Congregational Church
of
Tallmadge
United Church of Christ**

(1/4/11)

CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TALLMADGE, OHIO

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TALLMADGE, OHIO

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ARTICLE I – NAME AND LOCATION

The name of this church shall be the First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, United Church of Christ, located in Tallmadge, Ohio.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The avowed purpose of this church is to provide the followers of Jesus Christ the opportunity:
to worship God,
to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to celebrate the Sacraments,
to grow in Christian understanding and knowledge of Scriptures,
to realize Christian fellowship and unity within the church and the church universal,
to render loving service toward humankind, to strive for justice and peace, and to become more deeply committed to the Christian life.

ARTICLE III – POLITY

1. This church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and By-laws of the United Church of Christ relating to local churches.
2. The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of Ohio relating to corporations not for profit.

ARTICLE IV – FAITH AND COVENANT

FAITH - This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all humanity. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures from the Holy Bible, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaims in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two (2) Sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

“STATEMENT OF FAITH”

"We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ and our Father, and to His deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in His own image and sets before Him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by His righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, He has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Himself.

He bestows upon us His Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

He calls us into His church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be His servant in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table, to join Him in His passion and victory

He promises to all who trust Him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, His presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in His kingdom which has no end

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto Him. Amen."

COVENANT - We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We hold it to be our purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our fathers, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Therefore, we declare it our purpose to be loyal to the interests of the First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, so long as we are members of it. We promise that, to the extent of our abilities, we will conscientiously cooperate in sustaining its worship and its ordinances by our attendance and fellowship; in upholding its good name by careful Christian living and by forwarding its work by our encouragement and financial support.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Active members are those who are in a covenant partnership with this church, attending the regular worship, celebrating the Lord's Supper, living the Christian life, sharing in this church's life and work, contributing to its support and benevolences, and seeking diligently the spiritual welfare of the members and the community.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Officers of the church shall be a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, and Business Manager.

- The Moderator, who shall act as the chairperson. The Moderator is an *ex-officio* member of all church boards and committees, and shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the church and at the monthly meetings of the Executive Council. The Moderator shall be the official lay representative of the church. The Moderator shall serve as a representative of the church to the Eastern Ohio Association and to the Ohio Conference.
- The Vice Moderator, who shall perform all the duties of the Moderator in the absence of the Moderator.
- The Clerk, who shall serve as secretary at all regular and special meetings of the church and at the monthly meetings of the Executive Council and shall maintain a permanent record of those meetings. The Clerk shall prepare an annual report to be presented to the congregation.
- The Treasurer, who shall be accountable for all monies deposited by the Financial Secretary in designated church funds and for the budgeted expenditures recommended by the Executive Council and approved by the Governing Body.
- The Financial Secretary, who shall receive all monies paid on annual pledges, the building fund, or other special funds, and the plate collection. The Financial Secretary is responsible for the timely deposit of all funds. The Financial Secretary shall prepare a weekly report for the Treasurer and a monthly report for the Executive Council. A quarterly status report shall be prepared and available to each individual contributor.
- The Assistant Financial Secretary, who shall perform all the duties of the Financial Secretary in the absence of the Financial Secretary.
- The Business Manager, who shall be responsible for the daily operation of the church. The Business Manager works closely with the Senior Pastor, Trustees, Stewardship and Pastoral and Staff Relations. The Business Manager works to assure proper operation of the financial, office administration and support functions of the church.

ARTICLE VII – GOVERNING BODY (CONGREGATION)

1. The Governing Body of the church shall be the active membership assembled in a church meeting.
2. The quorum of a meeting of the Governing Body shall be fifty one (51) percent of the average Sunday worship attendance of the previous calendar year.
3. The option receiving the most votes of the quorum present shall be the action of the church.
4. Annual Meeting
 - A. An annual meeting of the Governing Body shall be held each year. The date of the meeting shall be determined by the Executive Council.
 - B. Annual reports of Executive Council, Boards and staff shall be presented at the annual meeting.
5. Special Meeting
 - A. Special meetings of the Governing Body may be called by the Executive Council
 - B. The Governing Body may request a meeting by presentation of a petition to the Executive Council signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members
 - i. The Executive Council shall direct that a meeting of the Governing Body be held within twenty-eight (28) calendar days of receipt of the request for meeting. Notice of the meeting shall state the purpose for which the meeting is called. Two (2) public announcements shall be given with the first announcement given at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. The Executive Council shall be the policy making body of the church.
2. The Executive Council shall be comprised of the following members or their designees:
 - A. The Moderator, who shall act as the chairperson.
 - B. The Vice Moderator
 - C. The Clerk
 - D. The Treasurer
 - E. The Financial Secretary
 - F. The Assistant Financial Secretary
 - G. The Business Manager
 - H. Presidents of Women’s Fellowship and Women’s New Initiative
 - I. The Chairperson of each Board delineated in the Article IX
 - J. The Chairperson of each standing Committee.
 - K. Members at-large.
 - L. Elected delegates.
 - M. Pastors and staff directors or coordinators shall be considered non-voting members of the Executive Council.

3. The Executive Council shall transact all business of the church. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum. (no fewer than 10). The Executive Council shall report to the Congregation at its regular or special meetings.
4. The Executive Council shall meet no fewer than ten (10) times each year. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator, the Senior Pastor, or at the written request of four (4) members of the Executive Council.
5. The Executive Council shall appoint and approve committees as the Executive Council deems necessary. The status of each committee shall be reviewed annually
6. The Executive Council shall be authorized to hire and dismiss personnel other than the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s).

ARTICLE IX – BOARDS

All acts of all Boards shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

BOARD OF DEACONS MINISTRY

The Board of Deacons Ministry shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members of the church, including a chair, co-chair, secretary, treasurer, and representatives from the Altar, Worship, Hospitality, and Scholarship Committees.

The Board of Deacons Ministry is responsible for the assistance and support the Pastor(s) in the spiritual work of the church as it relates to the care of the altar, worship services and hospitality.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINISTRY

The Board of Trustees shall consist of the Treasurer of the church, the President of Women's Fellowship, The Business Manager and a minimum of eight members of the church.

The Board of Trustees Ministry shall be responsible for the care and custody of all physical property of the church as a sacred trust in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of incorporation, this Constitution and the laws of the State of Ohio, under the direction of Executive Council.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY

The Board of Christian Education Ministry shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members of the church and the Church Librarian. The Associate Pastor, and the Director of Christian Education are ex-officio non-voting members.

The Board of Christian Education Ministry is responsible for the review, assessment, administration, and supervision of the total program of Christian teaching of the church, and shall ensure that the Safe Church Policy remains in effect.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

The Board of Stewardship Ministry shall consist of the Financial Secretary and a minimum of eight (8) members of the church.

The Board of Stewardship Ministry shall be responsible for reviewing and assembling the yearly budget,

conducting stewardship programs, governing special offerings and fund raising, making recommendations to Executive Council for filling vacancies on boards and committees, and enlisting new members for their time, talents, and support.

BOARD OF SOCIAL ACTION AND MISSIONS MINISTRY

The Board of Social Action and Missions Ministry shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members of the church.

The Board of Social Action and Missions Ministry is responsible to seek to be informed about and to educate the church concerning the relationship of the Christian faith to the social issues of the day. This ministry shall endeavor to motivate the congregation, individually and collectively, to become involved in outreach ministries, both internal and external.

BOARD OF MUSIC MINISTRY

The Board of Music Ministry shall consist of six (6) to eight (8) members of the congregation and directors of all choirs. The Director of Music and organist are ex-officio non-voting members.

The responsibilities of the Board of Music Ministry shall include general oversight of the musical activities of the church. These responsibilities include collaboration with other boards and committees to provide a meaningful worship experience for the congregation.

ARTICLE X – STANDING COMMITTEES

PASTORAL AND STAFF RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Pastoral and Staff Relations Committee shall consist of six (6) voting members as follows: Moderator, Chairperson of the Board of Deacons Ministry, Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education Ministry, and three (3) members appointed by the Senior Pastor, to serve a term at the discretion of the Senior Pastor. The Business Manager is an ex-officio non-voting member. The Pastoral and Staff Relations Committee reports directly to the Executive Council as needed.

ALTAR COMMITTEE

The Altar Committee shall consist of at least ten (10) voting members including representation from the Board of Deacons Ministry or appointed by the committee chairperson. The Altar Committee reports to the Executive Council as needed through the Board of Deacons Ministry.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee shall consist of at least three (3) voting members including representation from the Board of Deacons Ministry or appointed by the committee chairperson. The Worship Committee reports to the Executive Council as needed through the Board of Deacons Ministry.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

The Hospitality Committee shall consist of at least three (3) voting members including representation from the Board of Deacons Ministry or appointed by the committee chairperson. The Hospitality

Committee reports to the Executive Council as needed through the Board of Deacons Ministry.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Committee shall consist of at least five (5) voting members including representation from the Board of Stewardship Ministry or appointed by the committee chairperson or associate pastor. The Associate Pastor also serves on this committee as a non-voting member. The Scholarship Committee reports to the Executive Council as needed through the Board of Stewardship Ministry.

WILLS & BEQUESTS COMMITTEE

The Wills & Bequests Committee shall consist of four (4) voting members including representation from the Board of Stewardship Ministry, including the Treasurer, and two (2) members appointed by the committee chairperson.

ARTICLE XI - PASTOR(S)

THE SENIOR PASTOR, as the Spiritual Leader of the church, shall have the responsibility for the pastoral care and the spiritual education and welfare of church members, whom he/she shall encourage to be followers of Christ. The Senior Pastor shall have under his/her care all worship services, and shall assist, when feasible, boards and committees with their efforts to serve the church, its members, and the community.

AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR shall be called and discharged by a vote of the congregation in the same manner as the Senior Pastor. His/her duties shall be defined by a ministry challenge (job description) which shall be composed by the Pastoral Relations Committee in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Pastoral and Staff Relations Committee. When a new Senior Pastor accepts a call to the church, each Associate Pastor shall offer his/her letter of resignation to the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall act upon the letter of resignation within ninety (90) days.

ARTICLE XII – ADDITIONAL MINISTERIAL PERSONNEL

If additional ministerial personnel offices are created or if vacancies occur, they shall be called in the following manner:

1. The Senior Pastor shall be directed by the Executive Council to make nominations.
2. In consultation with the Pastoral and Staff Relations Committee, the Pastor shall contact, interview, and correspond with possible candidates until he/she is ready to make a recommendation to the Executive Council. The Pastor may choose to work with the Pastoral Relations Committee functioning as a search committee to aid him/her in this process.
3. The Executive Council shall direct the Clerk of the church to send a letter of call to the nominee upon two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by the Executive Council.
4. His/her services may be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by the Executive Council.
5. When a new Pastor accepts a call to this church, each of the ministerial personnel shall offer

his/her letter of resignation to the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall act upon the letter of resignation within ninety (90) days.

Duties shall be assigned by the Pastor of the church in consultation with the Pastoral and Staff Relations Committee and shall be reported to Executive Council. The Pastor shall determine the general operating plan for the church's ministerial staff based on needs and personal skills.

ARTICLE XIII – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

To be eligible to hold a position of Officer, Board Chair or otherwise designated leader of the church, individuals shall meet the following criteria:

- A. Be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- B. Be a member of the church.
- C. Maintain regular attendance at church worship services, share in the life and work of the church and contribute to its support.
- D. Uphold the polity of the UCC and the covenant of the First Congregational Church of Tallmadge.

The following leadership positions within the church shall be filled by election:

- A. Officers of the church – Two year term.
- B. Members of Boards – Two year term.
- C. Members at-large of the Executive Council – Three year term.
- D. Delegates – e.g. Tallmadge Interfaith, The Eastern Ohio Association, and the Ohio Conference and General Synod of the United Church of Christ. – Three year term.

ARTICLE XIV – PROPERTY

The church in its corporate name may sue or be sued, acquire property by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise and own, hold, invest, reinvest or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purpose of the church; it may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objectives and purposes of the church.

ARTICLE XV – DISSOLUTION

Should the church be dissolved, the membership would be encouraged to transfer all its assets, properties and interest, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument in trust or otherwise made before or after such dissolution, to the Association or the State Conference of the United Church of Christ. If it is not so disposed of, it should be disposed of so as to further the ongoing work of the Christian church.

ARTICLE XVI - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The current edition of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the Governing Body may adopt.

ARTICLE XVII - AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

This Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Governing Body by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the quorum present. Public announcement of the proposed amendments(s) shall be provided prior to the meeting for the purpose of amending the constitution.

PROVISO

This revision of the Constitution accepted (as amended) on _____ is adopted with the proviso that it shall be effective and in full force on _____