

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ



DOUGLAS UCC
A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

Constitution

January 5, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONSTITUTION

Page	Article/Section	Title
4	I	Name
	II	Mission Statement
	III	Polity
5	IV	Faith Covenant
	V	Membership
6	VI	Pastor
7	VII	Church Council
9	VIII	Immunity
	IX	Meetings
10	X	Auxiliary Organization
	XI	Amendments

CONSTITUTION OF DOUGLAS CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ARTICLE I. NAME

I. The name of this church shall be the Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ, located in Douglas, Michigan.

ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT

In response to the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, our mission as the Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ is the following:

**To grow together spiritually as progressive Christians, welcoming all;
pursuing peace, justice, love and healing for all creation.**

We demonstrate this by:

- **Being open and affirming;**
- **Acting as a Whole Earth Church;**
- **Respecting and understanding all belief and faith traditions;**
- **Recognizing and celebrating our connectedness to all peoples;**
- **Valuing questions rather than answers.**

As a community of believers and with the Grace of God, we follow this mission in order to perpetuate Christ's ministry of love, healing and forgiveness.

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 adopted July 4, 1961, and as amended, relating to local churches.

2. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. Except as otherwise provided for in the Constitution, the vote of the majority of members present and voting at the meeting, shall be the action of this church. The Church Council represents the membership with day-to-day matters.

3. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it

shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH COVENANT

At Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ, we seek to build “A Just World for All.” Our Mission is to grow together spiritually as Progressive Christians, welcoming all, pursuing peace, justice, love and healing for all creation.

We believe that “God is Still Speaking” through other people, nature, music, art, a theorem, the Bible, and in so many other ways. We balance our rich religious tradition with openness to the new ideas, new people, and new possibilities of the future.

We demonstrate this by:

- Being an “Open and Affirming” congregation, fully inclusive of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender and questioning persons (LGBTQ) in the church's life and ministry.
- Acting as a “Creation Justice Church,” a congregation that is committed to seeing the interconnectedness of all of God’s creation, to practice wise stewardship of the Earth's resources, and to provide outreach in the community for environmental concerns.
- Respecting and understanding all belief and faith traditions, recognizing the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the way to God and acknowledging that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us.
- Recognizing and celebrating our connectedness to all peoples, including but not limited to: believers and agnostics; those of all classes and abilities; those of all gender identities and expressions; conventional Christians and questioning skeptics.
- Valuing questions rather than answers in the search for understanding, and drawing from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has been confirmed, or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Savior, and who unites with this church upon presentation of letter of transfer from another church, or who unites through re-affirmation of faith. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into unity "faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races," membership is open to all without regard to race, sex, age, nationality, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

A. Associate Membership is available to those who desire to express full

1. Clergy members who retain ecclesiastical standing in another denomination
 2. Those who live in the Douglas area for part of the year and wish to retain membership in their home congregation
2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship services of the church and the celebration of Holy Communion; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and wider mission responsibilities; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.
3. Reception: Upon completion of instructional classes conducted by the Pastor, new members, are presented to the congregation.
4. Termination, revision, and restoration of the membership shall be affected by the Pastor with approval of the Church Council as follows:
- A. Any member desiring a letter of transfer may receive same from the Pastor upon request.
 - B. If a member because of change of faith or for some other reason requests in writing to terminate the membership, the Church Council may grant the request.
 - C. Members whose address has long been unknown or those who for a period of two years have not communicated with the church or contributed to its support shall, by vote of the Church Council, be placed on the Inactive Member List. If, after the expiration of one year following such action, the relationship still remains the same, the name will be placed on the Friends List by vote of the Church Council.

ARTICLE VI. PASTOR

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, appointed by the Church Council, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of the Pastor, as outlined by the Grand West Association's search procedures.
2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Associate Conference Minister.
3. In fulfilling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for the period of vacancy, the Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Associate Conference Minister.
4. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period and reviewed annually to reflect specific terms and conditions outlined within the call agreement. Any changes will be attached as an addendum.

5. Loving discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-laws of the United Church of Christ.

6. The church may at its discretion choose an Associate or Assistant Pastor(s) or other part time employees and issue a call agreement or other form of contract.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Council Composition

- A. The church Council, comprised of active members, shall be the executive body of the church and be composed of the Pastor, the Moderator, the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Trustee. At-large members will complete the council membership. Half plus one of the members shall constitute a quorum when voting decisions are made.
- B. Council members affected by seasonal residency will notify the council in advance of their planned absence. Attention will be given to means used to keep seasonally absent members informed. These means may include electronic meetings.
- C. Term of office for the Church Council is two years. After two years of service, a member may be appointed/affirmed for a second two-year term. After the completion of four years of service, a person will be ineligible to serve on the council for one year. Exceptions may be made for offices which require a certain expertise. Every effort should be made to stagger years when members exit the council to provide mentorship to new members.
- D. The Church Council shall meet at least every other month, or more often as deemed necessary by the Pastor or Moderator.
- E. The Church Council shall be the body responsible for initiating, coordinating, and implementing the policies of the church. Council shall create and maintain a policy manual listing current policies and make this publicly available to the church members, shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church and community, care for the property of the church, and monitor the budget, making financial decisions as necessary. The Church Council shall support and maintain an open relationship between the Pastor and members of the church. It shall fill vacancies in the church appointed and affirmed positions, and shall appoint ad hoc committees as needed.
- F. The council shall affirm the members of the Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Fund Committee, the Stewardship/Finance Committee, the Property Committee, and any other standing committees serving the church.

2. Officers and Staff

- A. **The Moderator.** The Moderator, appointed and affirmed every two years, shall serve as the presiding officer of the Annual Meeting of the church, of the Church Council, and of any Special Meetings of the church called for the purpose of transacting business.
- B. **The Recording Secretary.** The Recording Secretary, appointed and affirmed every two years, shall keep a record of the proceedings of the church and shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Church Council and all meetings of the church. The Recording Secretary should facilitate along with the Church Council the keeping of a register of the names and addresses of the Active Members, Inactive Members, and Friends of the Church. This information shall be published in the annual directory and/or in the annual report.
- C. **The Treasurer.** The Treasurer, appointed and affirmed every two years, shall pay the bills of the church as directed by the congregation in its adoption of the annual budget and by the Church Council at its monthly meetings. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and shall present a written financial report at each monthly meeting of the Church Council, as well as a yearly written and reviewed (by the Financial Oversight Committee) report at the Annual Meeting of the church.
- D. **The Financial Secretary.** The Financial Secretary, appointed and affirmed every two years, shall count the weekly Sunday offerings of the congregation; keep a record of all such offerings, as well as other contributions to the church. The Financial Secretary shall make a regular report to the Church Council and to the congregation at such times as may be requested. The Financial Secretary is also responsible for preparation of annual tax statements of members' contributions and the mailing of them to members in January of each year.
- E. **The Trustee.** The Trustee, appointed and affirmed every two years, supervises the Property Committee whose primary function is to manage the church's physical assets including insurance updates, physical inventory of assets, appraisals of property, building inspections and other related items. The Property Committee also manages building maintenance/repair, ground maintenance.
- F. **At-Large Members.** At-large members are members of council who do not hold a staff, or an officer's position.
- G. If the church has the services of an Administrator, the Church Council may delegate some responsibilities of the officers and the Church Council to the Administrator.
- H. Other officers/members may be appointed as deemed helpful to the functioning of the Church Council.

ARTICLE VIII. IMMUNITY

1. No council member or other person responsible for properties of the church shall be liable to the church for monetary damages and will be bonded to protect the resources and assets of the church.

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

1. Services of Worship

- A. Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the church or direction of the Church Council.
- B. Special services shall be held under the direction of the Pastor and Church Council.
- C. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be celebrated weekly and at such other times as may be determined by the Pastor and Church Council.

2. Business Meetings

- A. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the last half of June.

At this meeting, the yearly reports shall be received, officers and members of the Church Council elected and/or affirmed, members and friends affirmed, delegates appointed, the annual budget approved, standing and ad hoc committee chairs and members as well as volunteer positions affirmed, and other business transacted. The Church Directory should also be distributed at this time.
- B. The Budget Committee shall meet beginning in April to develop the budget for the ensuing year. The proposed budget, once received by council, should be distributed for review by the church membership at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.
- C. The regular Sunday services and other meetings of the church shall be considered sufficient, in case of necessity, to transact business, except corporate action requiring legal notice and business specially referred to other meetings.
- D. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Pastor, the Moderator, and/or the Church Council. Notice of such meetings shall be given at two consecutive Sunday services preceding the meeting. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in such notice.
- E. The Church Council shall issue an invitation to be an officer and/or Church Council member for the ensuing year. Two weeks before the Annual Meeting,

the list of volunteers shall be posted. The election/affirmation of officers/Church Council members shall occur at the Annual Meeting.

- F. Absentee ballot may be authorized by the Church Council.
- G. A quorum shall consist of twenty per-cent of the active membership of the church.
- H. Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive.
- I. All persons of legal age who contribute to the support of the church may vote on all financial matters. (Legal: 18 years old.)
- J. The fiscal year of the church shall be July 1 – June 30.
- K. The Annual financial review should be completed and prepared for council to receive within the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

ARTICLE X. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. All organizations connected with the church and using its equipment shall be regarded as integral part of the church, under its general oversight. In the event that an auxiliary organization, created and sanctioned by council, shall cease to function, all records and monies shall be transferred to the Church Council to become property of the church.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any duly-called meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, provided that public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) shall have been made two weeks prior to the meeting.