

CONSTITUTION
Wichita United Church of Christ
Approved Nov 24, 2024

ARTICLE I -- NAME

The name of this church shall be *Wichita United Church of Christ* hereafter referred to as *Wichita UCC*.

ARTICLE II -- OBJECT

We covenant that our principal objective shall be to stand as a leading progressive theological voice within and beyond the Wichita, Kansas area, embodying the love of God in Jesus Christ as revealed through the Holy Spirit, so that all persons come to find their own reality bound up in the ongoing redemptive work of the Divine throughout the world. Through the combination of our respective energies and resources, we endeavor to connect with those who have been wounded by other forms of the church, to seek out the least, the last and the lost in order that all claim their place as beloved children of God. Therefore, we seek to grow the realm of God through occupying a visible, proactive space in the community and mission field that surrounds us.

ARTICLE III -- POLITY

This church acknowledges and experiences Jesus Christ as the Sole Head of the Church and find, in the holy scriptures, interpreted by the Holy Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, our guidance in matters of faith and discipline.

The governance of this church is ultimately vested in our respective members, who exercise the right of control in our affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted by the State of Kansas.

While this church is amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, we accept the obligations of mutual covenant council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of all churches of the *United Church of Christ* and the Church Universal.

ARTICLE IV -- DOCTRINE

This church recognizes the Bible as the fundamental rule of faith and practice, and we hold that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the beginning of a lifetime journey of discipleship. Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit. The following *statement of faith*, therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which the Church interprets the Word of God:

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your image, and set before each one

the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, 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.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

ARTICLE V – SHARED BELIEFS

We further covenant to share in actively living out the following values:

A. SAFE PLACE FOR WORSHIP

Wichita UCC shall maintain an environment which values all individuals as unique and beloved children of God. The congregation shall not discriminate against anyone with regard to race, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. The congregation understands that individuals are on their own spiritual journey, and as such, everyone's religious beliefs and personal convictions should be treated with mutual respect.

We will demonstrate our faith by actively living out this statement as an expression of our shared mission and covenantal relationship with one another as congregations and individuals to all who encounter us:

Everyone Welcome. Seriously, Everyone.

B. OPEN AND AFFIRMING

We are proud to be visibly, actively Open & Affirming congregations.

No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

We, the Wichita United Church of Christ, recognize that all persons are created equal in God's image and are loved, valued, and blessed by God. We are an inclusive and diverse church; place of unconditional love that inspires all individuals in our community, regardless of race, culture, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and socio-economic status. We invite all to share in the

life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our congregation as we seek to “grow together in faith and love.”

C. BEHAVIOR

The congregation members at their reception and beyond, agree to abide by the following Behavioral Covenant:

As followers of Jesus Christ, we promise to respect each other at all times in the following ways:

- We will approach all things in prayer. We will speak from personal experience, from “I,” not “We,” or “They.” We accept disagreement as normal and natural to community processes.
- We will speak face-to-face, honestly and without rancor, avoiding triangulation and hearsay.
- We will listen with an open and non-judgmental mind, and try as hard to understand as to be understood.
- We are committed to being inconvenienced for the Gospel. If we are unable to effectively communicate with each other, we will ask a third-party to be present to assist us. We will support the final outcome of the decision-making process. As forgiven people, we will choose to forgive one another.

ARTICLE VI -- SERVICES

The services of the Church shall be as follows:

A. WORSHIP

Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by a vote of the church congregation, or in case of emergency, by the Pastor in consultation with the Moderator.

B. COMMUNION

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated on a regular basis, and at such other times as may be determined by the Board. Participation in communion is not compulsory, nor is membership a requirement for receipt of communion.

C. BAPTISM

The baptism of adults and the baptism or consecration of children shall be offered upon request and will be administered at such time as the Pastor or, in their absence, the Board may appoint.

D. OTHER SERVICES

Other special services for worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the Board.

ARTICLE VII -- EDUCATION

Based on a long history of making education a priority within the United Church of Christ and its predecessors, the Church shall provide Christian education for all ages.

It shall be the purpose of the church school to lead its members into an increasing experience of the fellowship with God and to lead them in the development of a character which shall be genuinely and consistently Christian in all human relationships. It will endeavor to develop interest in the Church and an increasing desire and ability to participate in its life and work.

ARTICLE VIII -- MISSION

Mission is the church's organized and active participation in spreading the Word of God, doing justice work, and providing ministry to the needs of people not only within the congregation, but in the surrounding community and throughout the world. We live missionally in the following ways:

- As a gathering body of believers actively following Jesus
- Exploring and identifying the myriad ways Jesus is incarnate in our world
- Being disciples to all ages of our time
- Seeking to eliminate injustice
- Standing with those in need

We do all of this compelled by Christ to “declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.” (1 Chron. 16:24)

ARTICLE IX -- JUSTICE

We recognize, in the cross of Christ, the invitation of the Divine to participate actively in the reshaping of the landscape of our world. This moves beyond service in mission through the local church into the realm of actively pursuing justice in the world. We understand this pursuit of justice to be made known to us through the cross of Christ, through which God revealed the falsehood of human-designed systems of religion and social control by those in power over others.

We see these human systems continually at play in the world that surrounds us and recognize the imperative signaled in the resurrection that a beloved community centered in the invitation to new, just, equitable life on an individual and corporate level must, in preaching, teaching and practice, work toward the establishment of the realm of God through both vocal opposition to unjust systems and the physical embodiment of an alternative path which is built upon the faith revealed to us in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE X - - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any congregational meeting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been laid before the congregation in writing not less than four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting. Copies of the proposed constitution changes shall either have been made available before the congregation with notification during the church service or printed in the official church publication.

ARTICLE XI--DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of *Wichita United Church of Christ*, ownership of all funds and/or property shall be transferred to the *Kansas Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ* or its successors.

Wichita United Church of Christ

BY LAWS

Approved Nov 24, 2024

ARTICLE I -- MEMBERSHIP

The members of Wichita United Church of Christ, hereafter referred to as Wichita UCC, shall be persons who have expressed a desire for membership and publicly accept its covenants by baptism (if not previously baptized) and affirmation of faith or reaffirmation of faith, along with acknowledgment and acceptance of the congregation's shared behavioral covenant. Persons desiring membership in the congregation shall be received at a regularly scheduled worship service of that congregation by public assent to the covenant of membership vows prescribed by the United Church of Christ. Any unable to attend in public may be received by the Pastor and representatives of the Board on behalf of the congregation.

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the covenants established by the United Church of Christ, as well as the following: Regular worship attendance within the past one (1) year and/or continued financial contribution within the past one (1) year, and agreement to abide by the congregation's Behavioral Covenant in all word and deed within and beyond the walls of the local church. Members whose addresses are unknown or who for a period of one (1) year have not attended worship with the congregation or contributed to its support, may, as recommended by the Board at the Annual Meeting, be removed from the membership roll. Any member in good standing who requests a letter of dismissal or transfer of membership to another church shall receive it. The right to full membership shall terminate upon notice or upon removal from the rolls of the congregation.

ARTICLE II -- CHURCH BOARD

- A. The Board shall consist of the Pastor and at least eight (8) elected members. At least one (1) member must be new to the congregational membership of no more than three years.
- B. Four (4) board members are elected each year for a two year term. Efforts should be made to avoid board members from serving consecutive terms and reflect the demographic diversity of the congregation.
- C. Vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board in order to maintain the minimum of eight members.
- D. The Board shall act on behalf of the congregation regarding routine church business, as established by these Bylaws. The Board shall also implement action initiated by the congregation and regarding matters of such importance that congregational approval is deemed necessary, the Board shall initiate such consideration by the congregation.
- E. Board meetings shall be held on a monthly basis to manage the business of the congregation. A quorum shall consist of five (5) members. Board meetings shall be open to all church members except during discussion of personnel matters.

- F. The Board shall be responsible for the following: Enact, review, and revise policies for the effective use of Church resources. Provide for an audit of financial records as necessary. Have the authority to contract for whatever may be reasonably required in the operation of the Church outside the operating budgets per their discretion. Any single expense in excess of \$5,000 shall require approval from a majority of the votes of members at a Special Congregational Meeting. Except for the sale of endowment or investment funds necessary for general operations, any sale of assets in excess of \$5,000 shall require approval from a majority of the votes of members at a Special Congregational Meeting.
- G. The Board may appoint a historian to act as custodian over Church historical materials.
- H. The Board will communicate and coordinate with the Pastoral Relations Team as necessary.
- I. The Board shall have the authority to execute leases, improvements, and other necessary work on all Church facilities without congregational approval.
- J. The Board shall receive from the Pastor and Church Administrator updates on education and other administrative Church activities conducted through those offices. The Board shall act as an advisor to the Pastor and Church Administrator with regard to any and all daily administrative functions of their offices.

ARTICLE III -- OFFICERS

Officers shall be nominated for a one year term from the slate of nominees to be voted on at the congregational Annual Meeting. All officers shall retain board voting privileges. The Officers of the Church shall be as follows:

A. MODERATOR

The Moderator shall be the principal lay officer of the Church, the presiding officer of all congregational meetings, and the chairperson of the Board. The Moderator shall, in coordination and cooperation with the Pastor, oversee church programs and ministry priorities as determined by the Board and congregation.

B. CLERK

The Clerk shall serve as secretary of the congregations and the Board. The Clerk shall: Maintain a faithful record of the proceedings of congregational meetings and of the Board. Distribute records to the Church Administrator in a timely manner for electronic publication on the church website. Coordinate with the Church Administrator to maintain new member reception, attendance, birth, baptism, marriage, anniversary, death, and other necessary membership records utilizing computer software purchased by the Church for that purpose. Issue letters of transfer of church membership when requested. Preserve through church electronic media all written communications and official reports. Give legal notice of all meetings when such notices are necessary.

In the absence of the Moderator, the Clerk shall preside over called meetings, appointing a substitute from among the Board members to assume the recording duties at said meeting.

C. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall be the principal financial officer of the Church. The Treasurer shall: Assist Church Administrator in maintaining updated paperwork relating to all Church property. Sign all checks to make payment on Church obligations. Oversee record-keeping, receipts, and necessary documentation utilizing provided financial management software. Be bonded as necessary. Contract with approved financial institutions to invest endowments, legacies, trust funds, and securities and record and credit the appropriate account with income received from all sources utilizing provided financial management software. Prepare and submit to the Board a monthly statement of all accounts. Assist the Church Administrator with preparation and submittal to the appropriate authority (federal, state, local) corporate tax information and returns with tax payments as required. Present to an auditor the financial accounting records for audit as required by the Board.

D. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall: Receive and record all non-interest/dividend Church income. Count the Offering (along with a second member of the Board) on Sunday mornings. Maintain records of pledges and individual contributions utilizing provided financial management software. Deposit all receipts in the proper bank account(s) each week and return deposit slips to Church Administrator for filing. Be bonded as necessary. Prepare and submit monthly income reports to the Board. Produce and transmit semi-annual giving statements of all pledges and identified individual contributions.

ARTICLE IV -- MINISTRY TEAMS

As the need arises, the Board may appoint specialized Ministry Teams to achieve specific tasks in a designated timeframe as determined by the Board. Such Ministry Teams shall report progress to the board or have a board liaison and fall under the authority of the Board.

A. PASTORAL RELATIONS TEAM

A Pastoral Relations Team (PRT) shall be composed of a minimum of 3, maximum of 5 members selected by the Pastor and approved by The Board for a two year term. No member of The Board shall serve on the PRT. The PRT shall meet four times during each 12-month term, unless otherwise requested. All meetings shall be kept strictly confidential. The goal of PRT is to promote faithful shared ministry between the pastor and congregation. The purpose of the PRT shall be to serve as an advisory team to the pastor: sharing ideas, dreams, expectations and concerns of the congregation with the pastor, (2) serve as a support group for the pastor's leadership and (3) promote effective communication. Additionally the PRT assists in the planning the pastor's sabbatical, a time of refreshment, nourishment and refocusing ministry for both pastor and congregation.

B. PASTOR SEARCH TEAM

When a new pastor is to be called, a search team made up of eight members and shall be convened to define the goals and call documents for the pastoral search in consultation with the Conference Minister. These representatives shall not include any members of the current Board and shall include one (1) person new to the congregations. The congregations shall utilize the search and call processes of the United Church of Christ. The congregations shall call a minister with credentials in good standing with the Conference and the United Church of Christ. In the event a new pastor is called, the Chair person will serve for two years on the Pastoral Relations Team.

ARTICLE V -- CHURCH PERSONNEL

Church personnel shall be hired by the board with agreement by the Pastor.

In the event of disagreement between personnel, such disputes shall be mediated by the Board with the aim of reconciliation vis-a-vis Matthew 18:15-16. The Pastor in consultation and consent with the board shall have final decision making authority with regard to the continuation or termination of employment for all other personnel.

A. PASTOR

1. The Pastor shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the congregations. Pastoral duties shall include but not be limited to: Engaging the congregations in coaching and vision-casting for evangelism, church growth, and operational unity. Preaching the Gospel. Administering the Sacraments. Having charge of all public worship. Administering the various activities of the Church in coordination with the Board.
2. The Pastor shall be a voting member of the Board and shall consult three (3) times annually with the Pastoral Relations Team. The Pastor shall not be a member of any Pastoral Search Team subsequently established.
3. The Pastor shall have direct oversight of all administrative church functions performed by other church personnel, including annual performance reviews of the staff.
4. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the church members who are present at a special congregational meeting duly convened for that purpose.
5. The Church may at any time by a majority vote from a special congregation meeting called for only that purpose, request a resignation effective within sixty (60) days from the date of the request. Should the Pastor wish to resign, a notice of sixty (60) days shall be expected. In the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, relations shall immediately cease.

B. CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

A Church Administrator may be employed to assist the Pastor with administrative, secretarial and other duties as assigned. The Church Administrator shall be under the direct supervision of

the Pastor. The duties of the Church Administrator shall be determined by the Pastor and Church Administrator together, then enumerated in a written job description kept in the Church Administrator's personnel file. The Church Administrator must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

C. MUSIC DIRECTOR

A Music Director may be employed to administer the Church music program, work together with the Pastor in crafting appropriate worship experiences through musical expertise, and shall act as the musical worship leader during all worship experiences. The Music Director shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. The Music Director must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

D. CHILDCARE STAFF

Childcare Staff may be employed for the care of children during worship and other events as requested. These persons will be responsible for oversight of the Nursery and Children's Church experiences, the implementation of a curriculum selected by the Board in consultation with the Pastor and Childcare Staff, the safety and security of children-in-care in accordance with safe church policies, and other duties as assigned. Childcare Staff shall be under the supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. All paid and volunteer Childcare Staff must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

E. CUSTODIAN

A Custodian may be employed to care for all church facilities, ensure safety and proper cleanliness of the church property, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. The Custodian must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

ARTICLE VI--DELEGATES

During the meeting called for election of officers, delegates shall be elected to represent Wichita UCC at the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference annual meeting and any other events requiring church representation. The delegates shall serve a one (1) year term and shall report to the congregation on all pertinent items of business. The number of delegates shall be determined in accordance with the bylaws of the Conference or other organization inviting Wichita UCC representation. In the event that delegates cannot attend an event to represent Wichita UCC, the moderator shall appoint a representative for that event.

ARTICLE VII – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1 ANNUAL MEETING – One Annual Meeting shall be scheduled by the Board in the spring. The agenda shall include a review of the Annual Report with the presentation of ministry plans for the upcoming year, the election of representatives to the Board,

and voting on any outstanding issues which have been appropriately added to the agenda according to the rules and regulations established in these Bylaws.

2. BUDGET MEETING – One Budget Meeting shall be held in November of each year to review and adopt a budget for the upcoming ministry year. The specific date of this meeting shall be set by the Board according to the rules and regulations established in these Bylaws.
3. SPECIAL MEETINGS - Any special business may be called to a Special Congregational Meeting when deemed necessary by the Board. If at least one-fifth (20%) of the active, voting-eligible members of that congregation request in writing to the Board that a special meeting is called to consider specifically itemized business, the Board shall honor that request. The nature of the business to be transacted must be clearly articulated within the request. This may be conducted during or immediately after a regular worship service.

B. MEETING RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. NOTICE – Notice for all congregational meetings shall be given by the Board at least two (2) weeks in advance by an announcement in Sunday worship service and through electronic publication in the church newsletter.
2. QUORUM – No quorum is required as long as proper notification is made. The number of church members who are present at the meeting shall be recorded.
3. VOTING – Elections shall be hand-count or written ballot as requested and decided by the Moderator. A majority vote is decisive and unless restricted by law all active church members are eligible to vote.

ARTICLE VIII – SAFE CHURCH POLICY

This congregation is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which children and youth can learn about and experience God's love. In order to promote this goal, the following requirements are in place for all persons serving in positions of children and youth ministry:

- All volunteers will have been a member of the congregation for a period of no less than one year.
- All volunteers will be interviewed by the Board on an annual basis.
- All volunteers will submit to a background check, to be paid for by the Church, prior to service.
- There will be no fewer than two adult volunteers present with children and youth at any time.

ARTICLE IX --AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any

meeting of the congregation, provided that the substance of the proposed amendment(s) shall have been laid before the congregation in writing not less than four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting. Copies shall either have been made available before the congregation with notification during the church service or printed in the official Church publication.

ARTICLE X--DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of *Wichita United Church of Christ* ownership of all funds and/or property shall be transferred to the *Kansas Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ* or its successors.