

BY-LAWS

Grace United Church of Christ

Uniontown, OH

Approved by the Congregation, September 17, 2023

These By-Laws, consistent with the Constitution of Grace United Church of Christ, further define and/or regulate the officers, boards, committees, teams, and membership. They also describe its free and voluntary relationship with the United Church of Christ.

Article I Congregation

Section 1 Meetings

- 1) The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in a Congregational Meeting at which a quorum is present. It shall be the ultimate voting authority in all matters of Church life, including but not limited to, approval of budget and other major transactions, election of officers, and approval of ministers. The administration of the Church is entrusted to the Consistory, chosen and composed as provided herein.
- 2) There shall be two annual Congregational Meetings, one in November and one in February.
- 3) At the November meeting Elders, Deacons, and Isabelle Carl Warden Fund Relief Committee members shall be elected for the following year, as further specified in these By-Laws. A budget for the following year shall be adopted. Any other congregational business may also be considered and acted upon.
- 4) At the February meeting, reports of the previous year's activities and financial reports shall be presented. Any other congregational business may also be considered and acted upon.
- 5) Any meeting of the Congregation may be called by the Consistory, with announcement of all meetings being made on two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting as to time, place, and purpose. At any meeting other than the two annual meetings, only those purposes for which the meeting was called shall be discussed and acted upon.
- 6) Upon written request of ten percent of the Congregation members for a special congregational meeting with a specific purpose, Consistory shall call such meeting within four weeks of having received the written request.
- 7) An Emergency Meeting of the Congregation may be called by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Consistory, who shall notify each member of the Congregation as to its place, time, and purpose; either by phone, electronic media or other generally accepted communication at least 24 hours prior to such meeting.

Section 2 Nominations and Elections

- 1) The Consistory shall appoint a Nominating Committee, who shall submit nominees to the Consistory to replace any of the following whose term is ending. Nominees

are to be presented for election at the November Congregational meeting. Consistory shall approve such nominations to be submitted to the Congregation for consideration. All nominees shall give prior consent.

- a) Spiritual Council members, who shall be Elders;
 - b) Consistory President, Consistory Vice President, and Deacon representative for any of the four ministry areas (see Article II, Paragraph 1);
 - c) and Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee members.
- 2) Nominees shall be announced at least two Sundays prior to the November Congregational Meeting.
 - 3) Additional nominations may be made by the Congregation at the meeting, provided that prior consent has been received from the nominee, and the nominee is present at such meeting.
 - 4) Spiritual Council members, Consistory members except for President and Vice President, and Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee members shall be elected for a term of two years. The President and Vice President of Consistory shall be elected for a term of one year.
 - 5) No person shall serve on Spiritual Council, Consistory, or as a member of the Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee for more than two terms or four years in succession, whichever is less.
 - 6) No person shall serve on the Spiritual Council, the Consistory, or the Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee at the same time.
 - 7) Vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the Consistory for that term of office.

Article II Consistory

- 1) The Consistory shall be composed of six members having voice and vote: the President, Vice President, and a Deacon representative for each of the four areas of ministry listed below. The Church Treasurer, Consistory Secretary, and the Senior Pastor are included in Consistory as members having voice without vote.
 - a) Worship & Faith Formation Ministry Area
 - b) Care Ministry Area
 - c) Mission & Outreach Area
 - d) Resourcing Ministry Area
- 2) The Consistory shall be accountable directly to the membership of the Church.
- 3) The Consistory shall meet monthly as needed, but no less than ten (10) times per year. A quorum shall consist of sixty percent (50%) of the voting members.

- 4) The Consistory's work shall include:
 - a) Reviewing, modifying, and approving the budget of the Church;
 - b) Setting annual mission direction and goals for the Congregation;
 - c) Approving all personnel actions;
 - d) Reviewing the work of all teams through regular reports;
 - e) Establishing teams as deemed necessary;
 - f) Acting as Trustee for the Isabelle Carl Warden Fund Trust, and providing for annual review of Isabelle Carl Warden Fund investments in coordination with the Finance Team and the Treasurer;
 - g) Approving expenditures from undesignated memorial and other funds as delegated by the Congregation;
 - h) Appointing delegates to Association, Conference, and other representative meetings;
 - i) Taking such action as it deems necessary to promote the mission of the Church.
- 5) The property of the Congregation, whether real or personal, and all monies and legacies, shall be under the care of Consistory; except that the purchasing or selling of property, the borrowing of money that encumbers the property, major remodeling, and erection of buildings shall be determined only by a majority vote of the Congregation at a duly called meeting.
- 6) The new Consistory shall meet with the outgoing Consistory during the month of December. At that meeting, Consistory approves the Consistory Secretary and the Treasurer, who are appointed from the membership of the Congregation but need not be a Deacon or Elder. Consistory then appoints for a term of one year the Financial Secretary who shall be a member of the Congregation but need not be a Deacon or Elder.
- 7) The Consistory shall report on its work to the Congregation at least annually.

Article III Spiritual Council

- 1) The Spiritual Council shall consist of three Elders of the Church and the Pastor.
- 2) The Spiritual Council shall meet monthly as needed, but no less than 10 times per year. A majority of the members shall serve as a quorum.
- 3) The Spiritual Council will serve as Counsel to the clergy of Grace UCC and serve as a forum for any grievances and tensions to be dealt with in a constructive manner.
- 4) The Spiritual Council's work shall include:

- a) Preparing for sacramental celebrations;
- b) Assisting in all devotional and religious services as requested by the Pastor;
- c) Providing opportunities for spiritual development including, but not limited to, prayer groups, prayer chain, worship planning groups, and retreats; and
- d) Recommending and overseeing its budget.

Article IV Officers and Other Positions

1. President

The President shall

- a) Ensure that all meetings of the Congregation and Consistory are regularly called, open and conduct such meetings, and ensure the execution of all resolutions;
- b) Announce or designate someone to announce all regular and special meetings of the Congregation on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting;
- c) Serve as an ex-officio member of all teams of the Congregation and Consistory.

2. Vice-President

The Vice-President shall:

- a) Preside at any meetings when the President is not present or at the request of the President;
- b) Help the President and make the President's administration more effective.

3. Consistory Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- a) Keep a record of all transactions at the meetings of the Congregation and Consistory in the form of minutes;
- b) Issue appropriate communication to call meetings when requested by the President or Pastor;
- c) Sign all minutes of the meetings of the Consistory and Congregation;
- d) Write correspondence as directed by the Consistory and/or Congregation.

4. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- a) Maintain charge of all monies for Congregational support;
- b) Make all payments of bills authorized by the Consistory;
- c) Render a monthly report to the Consistory and a semi-annual and annual report to the Congregation;
- d) Be bonded to the amount as determined by the Consistory;

- e) Be the authorized signor on all financial accounts (except Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund accounts).

5. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall:

- a) Be appointed for the term of one year by the Consistory;
- b) Tabulate the envelope contributions to the account of each individual Church member who has been assigned a number as it appears on his or her envelope;
- c) Prepare and submit confidential yearly reports to each contributing member or friend of the Congregation, showing his or her accumulated amount.

6. Deacon Representatives of a Ministry Area

Each Deacon representing one of the four Ministry Areas shall:

- a. Report to Consistory the goals and actions of each team in the areas of ministry they represent. The Deacon may be an active participant of a team or the Deacon may request an oral or written report from the chairperson of each team.
- b. Act as a bridge between the teams in the Ministry Area they represent to share appreciation, questions, and the thoughts of Consistory with each team or the appropriate member(s) of the team.

Article V Pastor

Section 1 Duties and Other

1. The Pastor's duties include:

- a) Setting a good example to the Congregation;
- b) Conducting all services such as the Congregation or Pastor may desire;
- c) Supervising the work of religious education;
- d) Administering the Holy Sacraments;
- e) Visiting the sick and comforting the distressed;
- f) Performing all such duties as belonging to the Pastor's office in the United Church of Christ;
- g) Keeping a complete record of pastoral duties performed, including baptisms, confirmations, reception of new members, marriages, funerals, and pastoral calls whereas all such records are the property of the Congregation;
- h) Preparing an annual written report to the Congregation;
- i) Acting as ex-officio member of all the organizations, teams, and committees within the Church, except the Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee;

2. No other Pastor shall perform any religious ceremony in the Church without the settled Pastor's consent.
3. The Pastor's salary should be paid promptly, should be sufficient, and preserve the dignity of the calling, subject, however, to the provisions of the contract between Pastor and Congregation.
4. The Pastor's salary and allowances shall be reviewed each year in accordance with that recommended by the Denomination.

Section 2 Call

1. As soon as a pastoral vacancy is anticipated, the Consistory President will report it to the Association.
2. The Congregation shall call as Pastor only a person who has been recommended or approved by the Living Water Association, Ohio Northeast, of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ. The search for such a candidate will be held in accordance with the recommended process of the Association.
3. The Consistory, upon the recommendation of the search committee, shall nominate one candidate to be voted upon by the Congregation. The Congregation shall consider one candidate at a time and vote by ballot on his or her election. If he or she is elected, the Consistory shall tender a call according to the form and guidelines prescribed by the Heartland Conference. The call must be confirmed by the Living Water Association, Ohio Northeast, of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ.
4. The Pastor shall serve for an indefinite amount of time unless otherwise specifically outlined at the time of his or her call.
5. In order to terminate the pastoral relationship, a minimum of three months' notice will be given by either the Pastor or Congregation, unless other terms are agreed upon by mutual consent. Any proceedings as to termination of agreement of Minister and Congregation will be through the Consistory upon recommendation of the Spiritual Council.

Article VI Isabelle Carl Warden Relief Fund Committee

1. This five-member committee shall include no more than three men or three women members. Committee members must be members of the Congregation.
2. The committee will meet in January and organize for the coming year. A Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer will be elected, and they will meet monthly throughout the year.
3. If a committee member must step down, Consistory shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term.

4. The committee will handle and administer the funds made available to it from the Isabelle Carl Warden Fund, which shall include interest and short term capital gains, not invested principal.
5. Long-term capital gain transfer to the relief committee can only be made after a committee request and upon approval of Consistory and the Congregation, unless the trust fund principal is greater than the inflation adjusted principal, in which case only Consistory approval is required.
6. If the available funds exceed \$10,000, the excess shall be reinvested.
7. Relief funds are available only to members of the Congregation. Funds are for emergency purposes, not continuous or supportive. Except for extreme cases, assistance should be given not more than once. Assistance is not automatic and should be given where the need is greatest, as limited by available funds. For more continuous assistance, members in need should be referred to public or government agencies, as available.
8. All relief payments shall be by check, signed by the Secretary/Treasurer and the Chairman.
9. The books will be closed at year-end and will be audited by persons appointed by Consistory. A report for the year will be prepared for the February Congregational Meeting.
10. Details of committee spending will be kept confidential by committee members.