

# **Constitution**

## **PREAMBLE**

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the church body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this church shall be Community Universalist Church.

## **ARTICLE II: REGISTERED AGENT AND REGISTERED OFFICE**

The registered agent for the church shall be Texas Registered Agent, LLC. and the registered office address shall be 5900 Balcones Drive, Suite 100, Austin, TX, 78731.

## **ARTICLE III: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God, preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer the ordinances, build community, and spread the good news that through Jesus Christ all of creation will be reconciled to God.

# ARTICLE IV: STATEMENT OF FAITH

As a diverse faith community, we empower each member of our community to come to their own understanding of and relationship with God. However, we are also a community that continues in a long faith tradition and as such we have a foundational set of beliefs that most of us share.

1. We believe in God, who is Love, Light, Truth, and Spirit, the Creator of the universe, whom we are called to seek, know, and love; and whose nature was revealed to the world in the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.
2. We believe that the universal commandment is to love and serve one another as we love ourselves.
3. We believe in the law of justice by which actions generate consequences, whether to be manifested in this life or the life to come; and that love, grace and forgiveness ultimately overcome the law of justice.
4. We believe in the full and final triumph of the grace of God over the powers of sin and death: that the mercy and forgiveness of God are victorious; that this victory of redemption is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and that, therefore, no human being will be condemned or allowed to suffer pain and separation forever.
5. We believe every person is the divine offspring of God, created in the image of the Heavenly Parent of all; and that every person is destined to be raised up from imperfection to maturity according to the pattern of the archetypal Christ, the Son of God, the Perfect Human in whose image all humanity shall be transformed.
6. We believe in mysterious spiritual phenomena, such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which transcend materialistic views of reality.
7. We believe that God's Holy Spirit has inspired numerous prophets, saints, philosophers, and mystics throughout history, in a variety of cultures and traditions; and that by reading the Bible (the authoritative textual basis of our faith) and other great texts of spiritual and moral wisdom with a discerning mind, and meditating to connect to the Spirit within, we may all gain a greater understanding of truth, which should be applied for the betterment of ourselves and our world.

Just as Jesus welcomed everyone to his table, so we too welcome everyone to worship with us and to be an equal member of our community regardless of their race, gender, gender identity, age, class, nationality, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or any other characteristic of human diversity.

## **ARTICLE V: GOVERNANCE**

The governance of this church is vested solely in its members, hereinafter called “the congregation,” who in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws exercise the right of control in all its affairs. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, cooperation, and fellowship with other Universalist churches. This church will cooperate with and mutually work with the Christian Universalist Association.

## **ARTICLE VI: NON-PROFIT STATUS**

The church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, unless any law shall be repressive in scope and/or nature, that it is our duty to democratically oppose it on the basis of the right of free exercise of religious beliefs and peaceable assembly. The church is formed for any lawful purpose or purposes under the laws of the State of Texas, including any purpose described by Section 2.002 of the Texas Business Organizations Code.

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 3. No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the church shall

not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of its purposes.

## **ARTICLE VII: DISSOLUTION**

Upon discontinuance of this church by dissolution or otherwise, any assets lawfully available for distribution are to be transferred to one or more organizations qualifying as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, by a majority of members attending at a duly called congregational meeting.

# **Bylaws**

## **ARTICLE 1 - MEMBERSHIP**

### **1.1 MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA**

Membership in this church shall be open to any person who affirms our statement of faith.

### **1.2 CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the church shall be either active or inactive. Only active members will be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. All members are considered to be active unless officially designated as inactive.

### **1.3 JOINING THE CHURCH**

Those who wish to become members of the church shall submit a written request for church membership to the pastor or the church council. All membership requests must be approved by a majority vote of the church council.

## **1.4 CARE GROUPS**

In order to make certain that every member and family in the church experiences the love and support of the whole congregation, each active member and friend of the church shall be placed into a care group. While the number of active church members and friends of the church is less than twelve (12), there shall be only a single care group under the care of the pastor. Once the number of active church members and friends of the church exceeds twelve (12) the church shall divide the active members and friends of the church into multiple care groups each under the care of a deacon.

## **1.5 CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Each year the pastor, the active deacons, and the church clerk will make a list of members who have not participated in any aspect of the life of the church for at least one year. At a church council meeting prior to the annual congregational meeting this list shall be presented with a recommendation that these people be designated as inactive members. The change in status from active to inactive shall be effective upon approval by the church council. An active member may also request to be considered inactive. This change in status shall be effective upon the receipt of such a request in writing.

An inactive member shall be restored to active status if they resume participation in the life of the church.

The pastor will make an effort to contact each inactive member at least once a year.

Any member, whether active or inactive, may remove themselves from membership by written request.

## **1.6 FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH**

Persons who are not members of the church but who choose to participate in the life of the church shall be considered "friends of the church" and shall have all privileges of members of the church, except that of voting in congregational meetings and that of holding office in the church.

# **ARTICLE 2 - CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF**

## **2.1 GENERAL**

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be the pastor, a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, the deacons, and the trustees. The staff of this church shall be those persons employed by this church. The person or persons serving as pastor, church treasurer, and church clerk at the time these constitution and bylaws are adopted shall be considered as elected by the church pursuant to the appropriate provisions of these bylaws.

## **2.2 PASTOR**

### **2.2.1 Role of the Pastor**

The pastor will lead the church, church officers, staff, and organizations to accomplish the mission of the church.

The pastor is the leader of the pastoral ministries of the church. As such, the pastor will work with the staff to:

1. Lead the church to engage in fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application.
2. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
3. Care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

The pastor must be an ordained minister and should hold standing in the Christian Universalist Association. The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs.

### **2.2.2 Scriptural Foundation**

Church pastors, also called ministers, elders, or presbyters, have existed since the earliest churches appointed elders to oversee and serve the needs of the local church. Paul wrote about the requirements of such church leaders in his letters.

*“This saying is reliable: if anyone has a goal to be a supervisor in the church, they want a good thing. So the church’s supervisor must be without fault. They should be faithful to their spouse, sober, modest, and honest. They should show hospitality and be skilled at teaching. They shouldn’t be addicted to alcohol or be a bully. Instead, they should be gentle, peaceable, and not greedy. They should manage their own household well—they should see that their children are obedient with complete respect, because if they don’t know how to manage their own household, how can they take care of God’s church? They shouldn’t be new believers so that they won’t become proud and fall under the devil’s spell. They should also have a good reputation with those outside the church so that they won’t be embarrassed and fall into the devil’s trap.” (1 Timothy 3:1–7, CEB)*

*“The reason I left you behind in Crete was to organize whatever needs to be done and to appoint elders in each city, as I told you. Elders should be without fault. They should be faithful to their spouse, and have faithful children who can’t be accused of self-indulgence or rebelliousness. This is because supervisors should be without fault as God’s managers: they shouldn’t be stubborn, irritable, addicted to alcohol, a bully, or greedy. Instead, they should show hospitality, love what is good, and be reasonable, ethical, godly, and self-controlled. They must pay attention to the reliable message as it has been taught to them so that they can encourage people with healthy instruction and refute those who speak against it.” (Titus 1:5–9, CEB)*

In the past, these verses have sometimes been used to discriminate against individuals in the church. As a diverse community of faith we wish to embrace this scriptural description of the pastorate and at the same time expand it so that we can also embrace the realities of modern life while maintaining the intent of the original authors. As such, we wish to clarify that pastors in our church should be trustworthy, sincere, and faithful people. They should not lie or be two-faced. They should be trustworthy with money. They should assume good intentions, communicate directly, and not spread gossip or hearsay. They should be faithful to the commitments they have made to their romantic and/or sexual partners, whatever those commitments might be. They should not bully or use intimidation to achieve their goals. They should be good public speakers and be skilled at teaching. They should show hospitality, love what is good, and be reasonable, ethical, godly, and self-controlled. They should be welcoming of all and understand that all human beings are children of God. They should have faith in the universal salvation of all people through Jesus Christ and they should encourage

people through instruction in the faith and refute those who speak against it.

In addition, our church shall not discriminate against pastors on the basis of race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, or any other aspect of human diversity.

### **2.2.3 Pastor Selection Committee**

Upon the office of pastor becoming vacant, the church council shall nominate church members to serve on a pastor selection committee. The church, by a majority vote of those voting members present, shall elect the members of the pastor selection committee.

The pastor selection committee shall seek out a suitable candidate for pastor. Any church member may make recommendations to the pastor selection committee. The pastor selection committee's recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate at a time. The election shall take place at a church meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice to the church has been given. The election shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of at least three fourths (3/4) of those voting members present shall be necessary to extend a call to a candidate for pastor. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated either by their request or the church's request.

### **2.2.4 Recall of Pastor**

The pastor may be recalled by the church at a church meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks' notice to the church has been given. The recall vote shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of three fourths (3/4) of the voting members present shall be necessary to recall the pastor at which time the office of pastor shall be declared vacant.

A recall meeting may be called by a written petition signed by not less than one fourth (1/4) of the active members. The moderator for this recall meeting shall be the church clerk, or in the clerk's absence or refusal to serve, another church member shall call the church to order and preside over the election of an acting moderator. The pastor will not serve as the moderator for this meeting. In the event the pastor is recalled, termination will be immediate and the church may provide severance pay to the pastor of not more than one



twelfth (1/12) of their total annual compensation, such severance pay being payable within thirty (30) days of termination. In the event the pastor is recalled for gross misconduct, as may be solely determined by the voting members of the church, then such severance pay shall be considered forfeited.

### **2.2.5 Pastor Resignation**

If the pastor wishes to resign from their position, it is requested that they give at least one month's notice.

### **2.2.6 Supply and Selection of Interim Pastor**

During such time as the church is without an elected pastor, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The church council shall be responsible for obtaining pulpit supply (a person to fulfill the preaching ministry of the church).
2. The church council may offer in nomination to the church a person to be named to the position of "interim pastor."

## **2.3 CHURCH STAFF**

This church shall call or employ only such staff members as the church shall need. When the need for staff members is determined, the church council shall prepare a job description for each staff position. Upon recommendations by the church council, such staff positions will be created after being approved by the church. The staff shall operate under the supervision and auspices of the pastor. During any such time as the church is without a pastor, the church council shall designate a staff member to assume the personnel responsibilities ordinarily assumed by the pastor.

Staff members shall be employed by majority vote of those voting members present at a church meeting called for that purpose, upon recommendation of the church council and pastor. These staff members may be terminated by a majority vote of the voting members present at a church meeting called for that purpose, upon recommendation by the church council and pastor, or upon presentation of a written petition signed by not less than one fourth (1/4) of the resident voting members.

## **2.4 MODERATOR**

The moderator shall be the pastor except when otherwise specified in these bylaws. In the absence of the pastor, either the chairperson of the diaconate shall be the moderator or if unavailable the church clerk shall call the church to order and preside over the election of an acting moderator.

## **2.5 CLERK**

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of each congregational meeting of the church; shall give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary as prescribed in these bylaws; shall prepare the annual church letter to the association; shall keep a register of the names of members with dates of admission, baptism, dismissal, and death; shall preserve on file all official written communications and reports; shall perform any other duties assigned by the church. All records of the church are considered church property. The pastor, upon recommendation by the church clerk, may assign certain clerical duties of the church clerk to a staff member.

## **2.6 TREASURER**

The church shall elect annually a treasurer as its financial officer. The treasurer shall be elected for a period of one (1) year and shall not serve more than three (3) consecutive years. The treasurer shall be bonded, the church paying for a bond, a copy of which shall be filed with the church.

Church financial records shall generally be maintained to the maximum extent practical in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Segregation of financial duties to the maximum extent practical to ensure good internal control over church finances is an integral part of the accounting system.

The treasurer and pastor jointly may assign clerical duties of the treasurer to church staff (or church member volunteers) to help ensure maximum safeguards of the church finances. The church council should review the procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure such procedures are at all times adequate for the church size and growth.

The following finance functions are the overall responsibility of the treasurer (or their delegates):

1. Deposit of all church receipts.
2. Payment of all authorized church expenses.
3. Maintenance of accounting records to support all receipts and disbursements.
4. Preparation of all financial reports.
5. Presentation of financial reports at regular congregational meetings for church approval.
6. Preservation of all financial reports and records as a part of the permanent church records.
7. Making all records available annually for audit (either by an internal committee and/or outside independent auditors).

## **2.7 DEACONS**

### **2.7.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the deacons shall be serve the church, assisting the pastor in caring for the spiritual, pastoral, and physical needs of church's members and other persons in the community.

### **2.7.2 Scriptural Foundation**

The office of deacon has existed since the early years of the church. The word "deacon" comes from the Greek word "diakonos" meaning "servant". As such, deacons are first and foremost to be servants of the church. The apostles ordained the first deacons to help minister to members of the church so that the apostles could focus on teaching and preaching the gospel. Likewise, we ordain deacons to help care for the pastoral needs of the congregation so that the pastor may focus more time on preaching and teaching and so that the needs of the church members are not forgotten or ignored.

*“About that time, while the number of disciples continued to increase, a complaint arose. Greek-speaking disciples accused the Aramaic-speaking disciples because their widows were being overlooked in the daily food service. The Twelve called a meeting of all the disciples and said, “It isn’t right for us to set aside proclamation of God’s word in order to serve tables. Brothers and*

*sisters, carefully choose seven well-respected men from among you. They must be well-respected and endowed by the Spirit with exceptional wisdom. We will put them in charge of this concern. As for us, we will devote ourselves to prayer and the service of proclaiming the word.” This proposal pleased the entire community. They selected Stephen, a man endowed by the Holy Spirit with exceptional faith, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. The community presented these seven to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. God’s word continued to grow. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased significantly. Even a large group of priests embraced the faith.” (Acts 6:1–7, CEB)*

The early church also laid out requirements for those who were chosen to be deacons. They were to be dignified, sincere, and faithful people who were not heavy drinkers, greedy for money, or gossipy. They were also to be faithful to their spouses and manage their households well.

*“In the same way, servants in the church should be dignified, not two-faced, heavy drinkers, or greedy for money. They should hold on to the faith that has been revealed with a clear conscience. They should also be tested and then serve if they are without fault. In the same way, women who are servants in the church should be dignified and not gossip. They should be sober and faithful in everything they do. Servants must be faithful to their spouse and manage their children and their own households well. Those who have served well gain a good standing and considerable confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 3:8–13, CEB)*

In the past, these verses have sometimes been used to discriminate against individuals in the church. As a diverse community of faith we wish to embrace this scriptural description of the diaconate and at the same time expand it so that we can also embrace the realities of modern life while maintaining the intent of the original authors. As such, we wish to clarify that deacons in our church should be trustworthy, sincere, and faithful people. They should not lie or be two-faced. They should be trustworthy with money. They should assume good intentions, communicate directly, and not spread gossip or hearsay. They should be faithful to the commitments they have made to their romantic and/or sexual partners, whatever those commitments might be. They should have faith in the universal salvation of all people through Jesus Christ and they should be willing to share their faith with other church members when asked.

In addition, our church shall not discriminate against deacons on the basis of race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, or any other aspect of human diversity.

### **2.7.3 Membership**

Deacons shall be classified as either active or inactive. Active deacons must also be active members of the church.

Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the assigned term of office of approximately one third (1/3) of the number of active deacons shall expire and an election shall be held to fill vacancies. In case of death, resignation, reclassification, or termination the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be classified as an inactive deacon and shall be eligible for reelection to active status only after the lapse of at least one year. Deacons may also be classified as inactive if they have work obligations or health concerns that make service as a deacon impossible or impractical, either by their own request or by a majority vote of the active deacons.

### **2.7.4 Nomination and Election**

At least thirty (30) days before the annual congregational meeting each year, a deacon election committee shall be formed to determine if additional deacons are needed. The committee shall have as voting members the deacon officers and three lay members nominated by the church council. The deacon election committee shall also include the pastor as a nonvoting ex officio member who shall serve to give advice and consultation to the voting members.

If additional deacons are needed, the deacon election committee shall select, interview, and receive permission to place in nomination a number of qualified nominees, if available, equal to twice the number of new deacons required.

The committee shall determine if each individual meets the following qualifications:

1. That the candidate meets the scriptural qualifications of a deacon;
2. That the candidate is sufficiently grounded in the doctrines accepted by

this church;

3. That the candidate has been a member of the church for at least six (6) consecutive months;
4. That the candidate agrees to fulfill the responsibilities of the deacon as outlined by these bylaws.

The committee shall then prepare in ballot form the list of nominees selected in the above-described manner and provide that ballot to all active church members at least two (2) weeks before the annual congregational meeting.

Voting members that are present at the annual congregational meeting will be given a ballot and an opportunity to vote for one nominee for each new Diaconate Member needed. The nominees (equal to the number of active deacons to be elected) who receive the most votes shall be considered as elected as active deacons.

Once the election is complete, the deacon election committee shall dissolve.

### **2.7.5 Ordination**

All those elected to be active deacons who have not been previously ordained as deacons shall be ordained by the church. The pastor and the other active deacons shall plan and conduct the ordination service.

### **2.7.6 Responsibilities**

1. The deacons shall meet at least once a month. All active deacons are expected to be in attendance at all monthly deacons meetings. A deacon may request to be excused from a meeting if they are unable to attend. Deacons who are absent (unexcused) from three (3) consecutive deacons meetings or who are absent (unexcused) from one half (1/2) of the deacons meetings for the calendar year should request to be classified as an inactive deacon.
2. Each active deacon shall be assigned a care group and they shall meet with the members of their care group at least once a month. They shall assist the pastor in caring for the spiritual, pastoral, and physical needs of the members of their care group and they shall keep the pastor up to date on the overall well being of those members.

### **2.7.7 Officers**

The deacons shall elect annually to one (1) year terms a minimum of the following officers: chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The deacons may elect other officers as they deem necessary. All deacon officers must be active deacons. No deacon officer shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in any one office.

### **2.7.8 Termination**

The church may remove any deacon by a majority vote of the voting members present at a congregational meeting.

## **2.8 TRUSTEES**

### **2.8.1 Duties**

Three (3) or more trustees, elected by the church, will serve as legal officers of the church. They shall hold in trust the church property and shall serve as directors of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents on behalf of the church involving the purchase, sale, mortgage, rental, or transfer of property, or to other legal documents where the signatures of trustees or directors are required.

### **2.8.2 Selection of Trustees**

The church council shall place and church members may place at an appropriately held congregational meeting names in nomination for office of trustee. Duly elected trustees shall serve 3-year terms on a rotating basis with one third (1/3) of the trustees being elected each year.

No church employee or their relative may serve as a trustee. For the purpose of the trustees, relative means “spouse; parents of either spouse; children of either spouse”.

Upon adoption of this constitution and bylaws, the current trustees shall continue to serve in that capacity until such time as the church council has nominated and the church has elected its new church trustees. The first trustees shall rotate off the board alphabetically, by the last name, at the end of the first, second and third year.

## **ARTICLE 3 - CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **3.1 PURPOSE**

The church council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations. The primary functions of the church council shall be to:

1. Help the church define its mission and define its priorities.
2. Coordinate studies of church and community needs.
3. Recommend to the church coordinated plans for ministry.
4. Coordinate the church's schedule of activities.
5. Evaluate progress in terms of church objectives and goals.

Any decision, recommendation or policy adopted by the church council is subject to review by the members of the church, and may be overruled by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a regular congregational meeting.

### **3.2 MEMBERS**

The church council shall be composed of the pastor, clerk, treasurer, trustees, staff members, diaconate officers, the chairpersons of any standing committees, and the elected leaders of any church programs.

### **3.3 QUORUM**

A quorum shall consist of no fewer than four church council members and must include the pastor, deacon chairperson, or clerk.



# ARTICLE 4 - COMMITTEES

The committees of this church will consist of standing and non-standing committees. Standing committees shall be created to serve specific ongoing needs of the church. A standing committee may be dissolved by a majority vote of church members at a properly called congregational meeting when the church decides that its services are no longer warranted. A non-standing committee may be created by the church to serve a specific temporary need of the church. A non-standing committee shall be dissolved by a majority vote of church members at a properly called congregational meeting when the committee's original purpose has been accomplished. A list of all standing and non-standing committees shall be maintained by the church clerk.

Members of all church committees will be chosen from the membership of the church. No committee, standing or non-standing, shall consist of less than three (3) members. After serving a complete term, a committee member must rotate off the committee for one (1) year before being eligible for reelection to that committee.

Each committee shall elect a chairperson who shall serve as a member of the church council. The chair shall be a member of the church and shall be elected from among the committee members for a term of one year, may serve for no more than two consecutive terms in the same office, and may not be elected again to the same chairpersonship until a full one-year term has elapsed. Elections shall take place to the extent possible so that chairpersons may be recognized at the yearly meeting at which officers are elected and recognized.

Meetings of all standing committees shall be open to all members and friends of the church, with the exception of all meetings of the pastoral relations and pastor search committees, which shall be closed, and select meetings of the church council, as determined by the council. The committees holding closed meetings may invite other members and friends of the church to consult with them as needed.

Each committee shall be responsible for a report of its activities to be included in the church's annual report.

# **ARTICLE 5 - CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The church shall maintain programs necessary to achieve its mission. All organizations of the church shall be under church control, and shall report regularly to the church. The church shall elect annually from its membership persons to fill the various offices and places of leadership and instruction within these church organizations.

## **ARTICLE 6 - CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **6.1 WORSHIP SERVICES**

Regular meetings for worship shall be held on Sundays and at such other times as deemed appropriate by the pastor(s) in consultation with the church council. The meetings will be open for the entire congregation and membership of the church, and for all people, and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or as the church may direct under Article 2, Section 2 of these bylaws.

### **6.2 SPECIAL SERVICES**

Any other meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar as desired.

### **6.3 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

The church shall hold an annual congregational meeting for the election of officers, the approval of the budget, the amendment of the constitution and bylaws, and any other business that needs to be conducted. An agenda shall be published and distributed to the all active members at least two (2) weeks prior to the annual congregational meeting. The congregation shall be notified of the time and place of the annual congregational meeting at least thirty (30) days in advance. Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, all officers, deacons, trustees, elected committee members, and other members

of the church council shall assume the duties of their positions at the close of the meeting at which they are elected and shall serve until their successors are elected.

## **6.4 SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings of the congregation shall be called when requested by the pastor, any three officers or members of the church council, or at least one fourth (1/4) of the active members of the congregation. The time and place of the meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted shall be announced at a regular Sunday service at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting and also in writing to all members of the church unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical or unless otherwise specified by these bylaws.

## **6.5 QUORUM**

A quorum shall consist of no fewer than five active members or 25% of the active membership 12 years of age and older, whichever is larger. In the absence of a quorum the meeting shall be suspended until it can be reconvened on another date. All active members 12 years of age and older may participate in the decision-making process at any meeting of the congregation.

## **6.6 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS, OFFICERS, ETC.**

Unless otherwise specified by these bylaws, all church officers, church committee members, deacons, trustees, officers of various places of leadership, etc., shall be elected by a majority vote of the voting members present at an appropriately held annual congregational or special congregational meeting.

# **ARTICLE 7 - CHURCH FINANCES**

## **7.1 BUDGET**

The church council shall annually prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by item the amount needed for all local and other expenses.

It is understood that membership in the church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts. At least annually, each member shall be given an opportunity to indicate support of the church's unified budget.

## **7.2 HANDLING OF FUNDS**

The treasurer shall account for all church receipts as set forth in Article 2, Section 6.

Deposits of funds shall be made by the treasurer or appointed trustees of the church.

All funds thus received will be subject to audit as set forth in Article 2, Section 6.

## **7.3 FISCAL YEAR**

The church fiscal year shall begin on April 1 and end March 31 of each year.

# **ARTICLE 8 - AMENDMENTS**

The constitution and these bylaws may be amended, modified, or repealed only by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present at any duly convened congregational meeting of the church, provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented to the church in writing at any regular or duly called congregational meeting of the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the date established for voting on said amendment. When an amendment is proposed and has been rejected by the church, that

amendment, or any amendment embodying the substance thereof, shall not be proposed again for at least six months from the date of the rejection of such amendment. Any amendments to the constitution or bylaws shall immediately go into full force and effect from and after their adoption.