

First Congregational Church of
TWINSBURG United Church of
CHRIST



Constitution & Bylaws
Revised June 2018

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CONSTITUTION

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TWINSBURG

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church is First Congregational Church of Twinsburg, United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God, to advance the Realm of God both at home and abroad, and to make God's will and love dominant in the lives of people, individually and collectively, especially as set forth in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III – GOVERNANCE

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures guidance in matters of faith and discipline. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of self-control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted to it by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio on December 21, 1830, and as amended. While this church is self-governing, it recognizes the mutual cooperation and counsel with the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share in their common goals and missions. This constitution shall be the governing document for this church organization.

This church recognizes the Bible as the principle rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Each member shall have the right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of his/her own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

- Adopted by the United Church of Christ in 1981.
- Adopted by First Congregational Church of Twinsburg, United Church of Christ on May 2, 1999.

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 own 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 your 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 - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A – STATEMENT

Membership in this church shall be open to any person who expresses a sincere desire and intent to live a Christian life, and who acknowledges the Statement of Faith as given in Article 4. Membership files shall be reviewed annually during the fourth quarter of the church year through church office by comparison to financial secretary's records and/or church participation, and then recommendations for any change shall be forwarded to the Diaconate Chair. This review shall be completed prior to the annual meeting in January.

SECTION B – APPLICATION

Application for membership shall be made to the pastor or the Diaconate Chair. Persons applying for membership shall meet one of the following requirements:

- (1) Through confession of faith and/or confirmation.
- (2) By letter of transfer of membership from another Christian church.
- (3) By reaffirmation of faith.

At such time as is mutually convenient, the applicant shall be instructed by the Pastor and/or Moderator, representative of the Diaconate Chair and representatives from other committees as available in the beliefs, history, membership requirements, and organization of this church. The applicants then shall be received into the membership of this church. New members will be added to the official roll during a vote at the next council meeting

SECTION C – REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Active members should participate regularly in the life and work of this church to the extent each is able:

- (1) by attendance at scheduled worship services.
- (2) by participation in its sacraments.
- (3) by trusting in God and following the way of life that Jesus Christ lived and taught.
- (4) by supporting this church and its benevolence financially and/or through other gifts of time and talent.
- (5) by seeking to improve the spiritual welfare of themselves, the membership and the community.
- (6) by written acknowledgement of the desire to continue membership.

SECTION D – RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACTIVE MEMBERS

Active members shall have the right, privilege, and responsibility of sharing in the governing of this congregation. Each active member present at congregational meetings of the whole will have one vote as outlined in this constitution. Active members may be called upon to serve on one of the church's various standing or special committees.

SECTION E – INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Members who for a period of one year have not:

1. communicated continued membership interest with this church,
2. supported the church ministry through financial giving, time, talent, or prayer
3. MET THE REQUIREMENTS OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

may be transferred to a roster of inactive members. At least 30 days prior to the transfer to inactive status, members shall be notified in writing of the pending change in membership status and will be given 30 days to respond in writing. From the date of transfer to the inactive roster, these persons will cease to be reported on the active membership roll. Inactive members will not have a vote at congregation meetings. Membership may be reactivated through church participation in one of the three ways as described in this section. Names to be considered for movement to or from the inactive list will be submitted to the Diaconate Chair, and then forwarded to Church Council prior to change of membership status. The membership list should be reviewed annually by the Diaconate Chair.

SECTION F – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP BY TRANSFER

Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of transfer to another Christian church is entitled to receive said letter, whereupon such person's membership in this church shall be terminated. Letters of transfer shall be prepared by the Pastor and acted upon by the Diaconate Committee.

ARTICLE VI - SERVICES AND CONGREGATION MEETINGS

SECTION A – WORSHIP

Services of worship shall be held regularly at stated hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by the Pastor or Moderator.

SECTION B – SACRAMENTS

The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be administered at least four times each year. The Sacrament of Baptism for adults and children shall be administered at such times as the Pastor and/or Diaconate may arrange.

SECTION C – ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting shall be held during the month of January each year with date, time, and location being determined by Church Council.

The call to the Annual Meeting shall be read at two successive Sunday worship services immediately prior to the annual meeting. During this two-week notification period, all active member households shall be notified of this meeting by written communication. Such notice shall contain the date, time, location, and special items of business to be considered.

During the Annual Meeting, officers will be elected from the slate of proposed officers or

nominees from the floor, the annual report reviewed, and other business transacted as may come before the church. New officers shall assume office on February 1. The first meeting of new officers will be in March where they will establish goals for the coming year and report on those goals at the March Council meeting.

SECTION D – SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings for business may be called by the Pastor, Moderator, Diaconate, Trustees, Church Council, or by request of five percent of the active membership of this church.

The person or persons calling such a meeting shall have the call read at two successive Sunday worship services prior to the meeting. Such a call shall contain date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting. There shall also be written communication to the active membership as is done for the Annual Meeting.

SECTION E – QUORUM MEETING REGULATIONS

All active members who are present are entitled to vote; fifteen percent (15%) of the active members shall constitute a quorum for all congregational meetings. All congregational and committee meetings shall be open except when personnel matters are being discussed. A time limit may be placed during grievance periods to allow time for anyone present to state his/her opinion. Unless otherwise specified, a simple majority of members present will serve to ratify any motions submitted for approval.

SECTION F – CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Communication to the congregation and within committees that is designated as “written” may be made using alternative, printable technology such as email in lieu of a physical document or letter.

SECTION G – DELEGATES

Delegates for United Church of Christ meetings where our church is entitled to representation shall be chosen from the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Chair of Trustees, Chair of Deacons, or another interested member of the Congregation.

ARTICLE VII- PASTOR

SECTION A – DESCRIPTION

The pastor shall nourish the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Diaconate. The Pastor shall seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, oversee all services of worship and participate in the administration of the activities of the church in cooperation with the various officers, church chairs and committees as needed.

SECTION B – SELECTION, RETENTION OR DISMISSAL OF PASTOR

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Moderator, with the approval of the Church Council, shall immediately appoint a search committee, which shall proceed to seek another pastor. During the search, an interim minister may be considered; the Trustees, with the approval of the Church Council, shall set the terms and conditions for the employment of the interim minister. The assistance of the larger United Church of Christ may be sought.

The congregation shall call to be its pastor only a person who has qualified for ministerial standing. After a study of the qualifications and abilities of the various candidates, the search committee shall recommend a candidate to the Church Council who shall, upon agreement, recommend his/her election at a special meeting of the church. The meeting will take place following a Sunday morning worship service at which the recommended candidate has preached. A three-fourths majority vote of active members present shall be necessary to approve his/her election.

The Trustees shall prepare a written agreement outlining the terms of the call. This agreement shall be submitted to the Church Council. The Pastor shall answer a call to service as specified in the ministerial contract. The calling of the Pastor may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. The Pastor may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Church Council. The Pastor may be dismissed by a two thirds vote of the active members present at a meeting duly called for that purpose. In the case of a loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, the Pastor's employment shall cease at once.

Rules of the Annual Meeting, Article Six, Section C, will be observed. Two thirds majority is required for an affirmative vote. The votes shall be tabulated at the meeting with results presented to those present before adjourning. Up to two consecutive votes can be taken to determine an affirmative vote. If a vote is not two thirds affirmative, then a vacancy in the pastorate is declared; the process to select a new pastor is initiated.

SECTION C – INSTALLATION OF THE PASTOR

Within six months of the Pastor beginning service, the Diaconate shall arrange an installation service.

SECTION D – PASTOR / CONGREGATION RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the committee shall be:

- Promoting clear lines of communication, interpretation and understanding throughout the congregation.
- Defining areas of conflict or potential conflict within the congregation.
- Maintaining objective, open communications with the congregation regarding ministry.

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of five active members (one of which shall be the Moderator or Co-Moderator) who shall be appointed by the joint agreement of the Moderator and the Pastor. The committee shall be appointed for a period of two years, ending at the Annual Meeting, with the option of replacing 2 members. The committee shall select its chairperson and shall hold meetings at least quarterly. Special Meetings may be called by the Pastor, Moderator or any member of the committee at any time.

The committee shall receive comments from individuals or groups on any matter regarding pastor or congregation relationships, and the chairperson shall give a reply to the individual or group.

ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS/CHAIRS/COMMITTEES

Each Officer, chairs and/or committees are responsible to communicate their activities and concerns each month with the church council.

SECTION A - OFFICERS/CHAIR AND/OR COMMITTEE TERMS

<u>OFFICE/ POSITION ELIGIBILITY</u>	<u># IN OFFICE</u>	<u>TERM</u>	<u>RE-ELECTION</u>
Moderator	1	2 years	One succeeding term and again after 1-year lapse.
Assistant Moderator	1	2 years	Same as Moderator. re-election after two-year lapse
Treasurer	1	4 years	Four succeeding terms and again after one-year lapse.
Financial Secretary	1	4 years	Same as Treasurer
Clerk	1	2 years	Same as Treasurer
Trustees			
Building & Grounds	1	2 years	One succeeding term
Personnel & Contracts	1	2 years	
Benevolence Chair	1	2 years	
Christian Education Chair	1	2 years	
Council-at-Large /			
Leadership Development	1	2 years	
Diaconate Chair	1	2 years	
Fellowship Chair	1	2 years	
Living Memorial	1 chair 2 members	2 years (1 elected each year)	
Stewardship Chair	1	2 years	

SECTION B – CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall consist of the following members who will take office on February 1 of the election year:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Moderator | Clerk |
| Assistant Moderator | Treasurer |
| Pastor | Financial Secretary |
| Trustees – Building & Grounds | Stewardship |
| Personnel & Contracts | Benevolence |

Diaconate
Council-at-Large
Chairperson or a designated alternate

Christian Education
Living Memorial
Fellowship

Each member or representative must be an active church member in order to have a voting right at council meetings. A quorum at council meetings will consist of a minimum of 9 of the total eligible council membership.

The Church Council shall establish regular monthly meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator upon request of any one of the church council members. Notification of special meetings shall be announced at a worship service prior to the meeting, except in the matter of personnel issues. Should the need for an emergency meeting arise between worship services, the moderator shall notify all members the details of meeting.

It shall be the function of the Church Council to visualize the entire task of the church, to cooperate with the Pastor in planning its programs, and to coordinate the programs of the various chairs, committees, and auxiliary organizations of the church.

The Council shall fill vacancies in office and committees between annual meetings. The Council shall have the power to declare any office or committee membership vacant due to non-attendance. The Council shall review, approve, and revise the church budget and submit the same to the congregation for approval. It shall approve institutional representatives to the Boy Scout unit, which it sponsors. It shall approve or disapprove the appointments made by the Moderator to the, Search Committee and special committees.

The establishment review and amendment policy on matters not covered by this document shall be the responsibility of Church Council.

Budgetary spending approval will be responsibility of the Council and not the individual committee chairs. Emergency budgetary spending can be made by each committee chair not to exceed \$50, 1 time per quarter of the church calendar.

SECTION C – MODERATOR/ASSISTANT MODERATOR

MODERATOR: The Moderator shall be chairperson of all church business meetings. The moderator shall be chairperson of the Church Council, a member ex-officio of all chairs and committees, and shall have a vote only in the case of a tie. He or she shall be responsible for notifying each church member of the annual meeting two weeks prior to the date.

The Moderator shall be responsible for ensuring that the committees and organizations serving this church fulfill their duties as defined in these working rules, and he or she shall also be responsible for coordinating and delegating responsibilities to the congregation and committees to meet those needs.

The Moderator, with council approval, is empowered to create special committees and appoint members to special committees. Such committees shall serve to do research and feasibility studies or fulfill other needs of the church and its congregation as identified by the Church Council or Moderator. Special committees shall complete their work within a specified time limit and submit a written report of the findings to the Moderator who shall in turn share the report with the Church Council and congregation.

ASSISTANT MODERATOR: The Assistant Moderator will assist where needed and would assume duties of Moderator if the Moderator was unable to fulfill his or her obligations. The Assistant Moderator will verify membership and distribution of ballots at congregational meetings. The two offices may serve as “co-moderators” with shared duties and responsibilities, provided they agree to do so, and declare the same prior to their election.

SECTION D – TREASURER

The Treasurer shall be responsible for all financial record keeping of church funds and shall disburse them:

- by vote of the Trustees.
- by vote of the Congregation,
- by vote of the Church Council,
- or after being presented with a purchase order by a church committee drawn against its budget.

The amount of the purchase order may be up to but not exceed the year-to-date accrual of said committee’s budget, and only to the extent to which the Church’s actual collection of operating income compares against budgeted or projected income. This policy may be temporarily suspended at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer, along with Trustees approval, will establish rules for allocating general contributions to committees. Benevolence funds shall be disbursed under the direction of the Benevolence committee or by vote of the congregation.

The Treasurer shall be bonded at the expense to the church; shall keep separate accounts of funds received by the treasurer for the operation of the church, its benevolences, and for all other funds to be used or allocated for specific purposes; shall render a monthly statement to the Board of Trustees, covering all funds handled by the treasurer; shall present treasurer’s report to the annual meeting; and shall close all books at the end of the fiscal year and submit books and vouchers to the Trustees, for certification after the December monthly statement.

SECTION E – FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall collect and keep an account of all funds deposited by the church and shall keep a record of the source from which each is received.

The Financial Secretary shall deposit all funds in the church bank accounts as directed by the Board of Trustees and shall give weekly notification to the Treasurer of all deposits.

The Financial Secretary shall be bonded at the expense to the church and shall also issue quarterly statements showing the status of all pledge accounts and special gifts, and on a monthly basis to be presented to Council.

SECTION F – CLERK

The Clerk shall keep an account of the proceedings at all business meetings of the church and shall be Secretary of Church Council and the corporation. The Clerk shall be responsible for reading or seeing that the call to the annual meeting is read at the two successive Sunday Worship services immediately prior to the meeting.

The Clerk shall be responsible for collecting and filing the minutes of all committee meetings in

digital format and/or printed copy.

SECTION G – COUNCIL-AT-LARGE/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Council-At-Large/Leadership Development person shall represent the congregation by bringing their input to Church Council meetings and by speaking for church members who are not otherwise represented at Church Council.

The Council-At-Large/Leadership Development person is also responsible for submitting to Church Council for approval a roster of at least one willing nominee to fill each vacancy on every standing committee of this church as needed. They shall also be responsible for submitting to Church Council the nominations for the appointive positions.

SECTION H – DIACONATE

The Diaconate Chair, along with the Pastor, shall be charged with the spiritual care of the church congregation through preparing, serving, and recording the sacraments and ordinances. Sacraments are communion and baptism; ordinances are confirmation, marriage, visitation of the sick, and burial. The Diaconate shall be responsible for the care of the sacrament elements.

The Diaconate shall be responsible for the cultivating, receiving and shepherding our members.

SECTION I – TRUSTEES

A - Buildings & Grounds

Trustees Chair shall act in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation of the First Congregational Church of Twinsburg, United Church of Christ and shall be subject to the regulations prescribed by the laws of the State of Ohio.

The Trustees shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the church's physical assets and shall approve all bills. Expenditures for major improvements or expansions not covered in the annual budget shall be made only upon specific approval of Church Council if exceeding 5% of the annual budget, or the congregation if exceeding 15% of the annual budget. The Trustees shall not have authority to buy, sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer church real estate property without specific approval of the church membership.

B - Personnel & Contracts

The Trustees Chair shall hire, set terms of employment, and evaluate all employees of the church with the exception of ministerial. Trustees shall make recommendation for approval of the ministerial contract to Council and administer the contract during its term. Job descriptions will be maintained by the Trustees. Trustees shall be responsible for bonding of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer positions.

Trustees shall appoint person(s) to conduct an unqualified audit annually of the Treasurer's records; verify account balances, church investments, and other financial records that are usually

reviewed in an Audit. A written report of the audit will be presented to Church Council.

SECTION J – MUSIC

The following duties will be absorbed into the responsibilities of the Director of Music

The Music Director, in cooperation with the pastor and organists, shall have charge of all regular and special music for worship services. The director shall be responsible for maintenance and repair of all musical instruments.

SECTION K – STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Chair shall encourage and develop the sharing of time, talent and financial resources among the church members.

Stewardship Chair shall prepare a budget in cooperation with all other council members and conduct the necessary campaign to fund the budget. This budget shall be reviewed by the church council and submitted to the vote of the congregation. Stewardship shall be consulted by any members appointed by Church Council for the funding of building programs and capital improvements.

SECTION L – CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The purpose of Christian Education is to provide for a Christian educational ministry to all ages in the congregation by providing thought-provoking and challenging materials and programs and giving support to children and adults to cope with spiritual and secular challenges.

To fulfill this purpose, Christian Education Chair is responsible for:

- Organizing and supervising church school and confirmation classes, which include choosing and ordering curriculum and supplies, recruiting teachers, and maintaining attendance records.
- The church library for which the committee selects the librarian(s) and also maintains and updates materials.
- Relations with youth group programs. At least one member of the committee shall have a direct connection with the Youth Group. Selecting and organizing additional spiritual and education programs relating to season and other selected Christian topics.

SECTION M – BENEVOLENCE

The Benevolence Chair will continually educate itself and the congregation about the outreach and missions of the church at the local/area level, denominational level, and international level. It will request that part of the church annual budget be appropriated for Benevolence, sponsor special offerings, and prayerfully disburse all Benevolence funds including designated gifts. Benevolence will keep the

congregation informed about committee activities and the disbursement of funds throughout the year. Selected projects will be offered periodically to allow the congregation opportunities to participate in Christian service and outreach.

SECTION N – LIVING MEMORIAL

Living Memorial receives, acknowledges, and records gifts made in memoriam. Requests for purchases with memorial funds shall be presented for consideration. They shall recommend to Church Council for discussion the memorial gift(s) to be purchased that exceed \$1,000.00. Gifts less than \$1,000.00 will be reported to Council, the amount to be disbursed, and the name of the person(s) to be remembered. A dedication for memorial gifts shall be arranged at least every two years. Acknowledgment of memorial gifts, and items purchased shall be made known to the families of persons for whom the gifts were given.

SECTION O – FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship Chair shall be responsible for the preparation, administration, and presentation of programming designed to develop and enhance the social relationships that bind us together in Christian faith. Responsibilities are to plan weekly fellowship following the regular Sunday worship services and design a series of activities to blend the diversity of people into one congregation.

SECTION P – APPOINTIVE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

INVESTMENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Investment Financial Management Committee (IFMC) shall be responsible for establishing an Investment Plan for the monetary assets of the church. This plan shall be approved by Church Council. IFMC, in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, has the authority to invest funds of the church in compliance with the plan and/or any statutes or regulations that apply to the church. The IFMC is comprised of two elected members plus the Treasurer, Moderator and a Trustee. The Investment Plan shall be on file in the church office.

ARTICLE IX- AMENDMENTS/CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

This Constitution may be amended at the annual meeting or at any special meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present. Announcement of the proposed amendment shall be made at two regular church worship services prior to such meeting. Copies of the proposed amendment shall be available at those meetings. This constitution shall be reviewed at least every five years by a committee appointed by the Moderator.

ARTICLE X - WORKING RULES BYLAWS

Working rules can be amended at the second council meeting after the amendments have been

introduced at the previous months council meeting, a simple majority vote will carry those said changes. Proposed changes to the working rules / bylaws must be made known to the congregation through the monthly council's agenda distributed to the congregation 1 week prior to the meeting. The agenda will be available through electronic distribution or in the church narthex.

ARTICLE XI – PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and/or its By-Laws.

ARTICLE XII - DISSOLUTION

Prior to actual dissolution of First Congregational Church of Twinsburg, United Church of Christ, a committee of church members shall be elected by the Congregation to provide for disbursement of church assets. After all liabilities are met including costs of dissolution, the committee shall disburse the remaining assets to chosen tax exempt institutions as defined under existing Internal Revenue codes.