

# ELON COMMUNITY CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

"We whose names are hereunto affixed, members as we trust of the body of Christ having exercised repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, being desirous of associating ourselves together as a Church, agree to be governed by the following principles:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.
2. Christian is a sufficient name for the Church.
3. The Holy Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character is a sufficient test of fellowship and of church membership.
5. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience is a right and a privilege that should be accorded and exercised by all.
6. The purposes of this Church will be consummated in the reformation of the world and the union of all Christians.

Furthermore, we accept and adopt the following Church Covenant: Thankful for God's everlasting mercy and for his great gift of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, we covenant and agree together to seek to know and to do his holy will and to promote, so far as in us lies, the triumph of our Savior's God and that they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, and that Christian freedom requires us to accept the Bible as our supreme standard of faith and duty and to recognize as Christian and worthy of our fellowship all who devoutly love the Lord Jesus Christ and sustain a life of vital piety as taught in the Word of God. Anxiously desiring that all differences that separate Christ's people may be removed and that there may be One Flock and One Shepherd, we covenant together to lay aside all distinctive and party names and, taking our title from the Great Head of the Church, to be known simply and only as Christians.

And furthermore realizing that the success of each local church depends upon the consecration of its individual membership we covenant together to attend the services of the church, to contribute according to our means for its support, to labor together to maintain its peace and harmony and so far as possible in every way to promote its temporal and spiritual welfare, looking for our reward to the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and to the crown of rejoicing laid up for all who love Christ's appearing."

This preamble is essentially the statement adopted on April 19, 1891, when the Elon College Christian Church was founded.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church shall be Elon Community Church of the United Church of Christ.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity with this church and the Church universal; to render loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

## ARTICLE III. POLITY

1. This church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ, and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ through the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Eastern North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ, and the portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of those organizations relating to local churches.
2. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. The final authority in this church shall rest in its membership.

## ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and who has been confirmed or who has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

1. Responsibilities: Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship services of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and community.
2. Transfers: Any member may request and be granted a letter of transfer. If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member requests in writing to be released from membership obligations, the church shall patiently endeavor to continue fellowship with the member; but failing in such effort, the request shall be approved by the Senior Minister and the Board of Deacons, and the Secretary of the Church shall issue the appropriate letter of release.
3. Voting Members – A voting member is defined as a member of the church who is on the active roll.
4. Inactive Non-Voting Members: A member whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two years, despite spiritual care, has neither attended the church's worship nor contributed to its support may be placed on the inactive roll. Inactive status can be reversed at any time by member request.
5. Associate Members. Any person meeting the requirements of church membership, but desiring to retain membership in a home church, may be received as an Associate Member. Associate Members shall have all the rights and privileges of membership in the church. In reporting the total membership, the number of Associate Members will not be included.

## ARTICLE V. GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting, as defined in Article XVII herein. A quorum shall consist of 10 percent (10%) of the voting members. A majority vote of the members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church.

## ARTICLE VI. COUNCIL

1. Membership: The Council shall be a representative coordinating body for the church. It shall be composed of the minister(s) [Ex officio], at least one but no more than two members from each of the boards, one member from each of the *active* fellowships, and four officers elected by the congregation. Groups naming persons as representatives to the Council shall provide for continuity in representation.

Officers of the Council shall be the Moderator, who shall serve as chair, the Moderator-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer, as described in Article XIII herein. The Secretary and Treasurer may serve as long as elected to their respective offices.

2. Purpose: The Council shall be the executive body of the church, transacting the business of the church, establishing policy, publicizing its activities, promoting public relations, and coordinating the entire church program. It shall be responsible for annual performance reviews of the minister(s). It shall consider the proposed budget and slate of nominees in advance of congregational votes. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings and report to the congregation at the regular meetings of the church. All acts of the Council are subject to approval or modification by the membership of the church in regular business meetings.

3. Meetings: The Council shall meet at least quarterly. In the event an action needs to be taken and the Council cannot meet in person, an electronic vote (email) of the Council members may be taken and recorded by the Secretary. Additional Council meetings may be called by the Moderator and/or the ministers.

4. Committees: The Council shall establish a Budget Committee, a Stewardship Committee, a Personnel Committee, an Endowment Committee, a Pastoral Relations Committee, an Audit Committee, and a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee (Article XII herein) shall submit nominations to the Council for election to membership to all committees and boards, as well as church officers and the church historian. The Council may, from time to time, establish other committees as needed for other purposes.

## ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DEACONS

1. Membership: The Board of Deacons shall consist of nine (9) ordained Deacons elected by the church for terms of three years. They may not succeed themselves but are eligible for re-election after being off the board for one year. The Board of Deacons shall elect annually a chair, vice chair and secretary.

2. Purpose: The Deacons shall assist and support the minister(s) in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall have concern and responsibility for regular and special services of worship including broadcasts and recordings, pulpit supply, ushers, acolytes, music, liturgists, and communion. They shall oversee the conditions of church membership through a designated Membership Secretary, in accordance with Article IV herein. They shall labor to strengthen the spiritual life of the members through faith. They shall minister to the general well-being of the membership, visit the sick, and provide a ministry to the bereaved. They shall report regularly to the Church Council.

3. Meetings: The Deacons shall meet monthly for the transaction of business or as needed. Special meetings are subject to the call of the chair or the ministers.
4. Committees: This Board may establish subcommittees, composed of board members and/or other members of the congregation, to assist in worship, music, community service and lay visitation. It may, from time to time, establish other committees as needed for other purposes as sanctioned by Council.

#### ARTICLE VIII. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. Membership: The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine (9) trustees elected by the church to terms of three years. Members shall be eligible to be elected to a second consecutive three-year term. The Trustees shall elect annually a chair, vice chair, and a secretary.
2. Purpose: The Board of Trustees, in the name of the church, may sue or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise, own, hold, invest, re-invest or dispose of property, both real and personal, for such work as the church may undertake; may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purpose of the church. They may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and re-invest the same and make any contracts promoting the objectives and purposes of the church. All such actions of the board shall be subject to the approval of the Council.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to arrange surety bonds for the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and others who may be elected or employed to handle funds for the church.

The Board of Trustees shall have concern and responsibility for fiscal oversight, authorization of expenditures from any church treasuries. It shall work with the Budget Committee to prepare the annual proposed budget and review any independent audits. It shall receive reports from the Church Treasurer who also presents financial reports to the Church Council.

The Board of Trustees shall carry the appropriate property and liability insurance and shall oversee the operation and maintenance of church equipment and furnishings. It shall care for the buildings and grounds and determine appropriate ways and means of serving the wider community through use of church facilities and furnishings. It shall also solicit, select, accept, and recognize memorial gifts.

3. Meetings: Trustees shall meet monthly for the transaction of business or as needed. In the event an action needs to be taken and the Trustees cannot meet in person, an electronic vote (email) of the Trustees may be taken and recorded by the Board Secretary. Special meetings are subject to the call of the chair or the ministers.
4. Committees: This Board may establish sub-committees, composed of board members and/or other members of the congregation, to assist in matters such as memorials/designated gifts. It may, from time to time, establish other committees as needed for other purposes as sanctioned by Council.

## ARTICLE IX. THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Membership: The Board of Christian Education shall consist of nine (9) members elected by the Church for terms of three years. Members may not succeed themselves but are eligible for re-election after being off the board for one year. The Board of Christian Education shall elect annually a chair, vice chair, and secretary.
2. Purpose: The Board of Christian Education shall have concern and responsibility for planning and implementing various approaches to Christian Education including, but not limited to, the church school, youth fellowship, family life programming, adult education, bible study, vacation church school, scouting, recreation, camps/conferences, and retreats. It shall report regularly to the Church Council.
3. Meetings: The Board of Christian Education shall meet monthly for the transaction of business or as needed. Special meetings are subject to the call of the chair or the ministers.
4. Committees: This Board may establish sub-committees, composed of board members and/or other members of the congregation, to assist in matters such as Christian education, church school, and family life programs. It may, from time to time, establish other committees as needed for other purposes as sanctioned by Council.

## ARTICLE X. BOARD OF MISSIONS & OUTREACH

1. Membership: The Board of Missions & Outreach shall consist of nine (9) members elected by the Church for terms of three years. Members may not succeed themselves but are eligible for re-election after being off the board for one year. The Board of Missions & Outreach shall elect annually a chair, vice chair and secretary.
2. Purpose: The Board of Missions & Outreach shall have concern and responsibility for planning and implementing various approaches to missions, both home and foreign, including, but not limited to, promotion of benevolent giving, Our Church's Wider Mission, missionary education, community service, emergency benevolent assistance, and studies and actions on social issues. It shall report regularly to the Church Council.
3. Meetings: The Board of Missions & Outreach shall meet monthly for transaction of business or as needed. Special meetings are subject to the call of the chair or the ministers.
4. Committees: This bBoard may establish sub-committees, composed of board members and/or other members of the congregation, to assist in matters such as stewardship, and missionary education. It may, from time to time, establish committees as needed for other purposes as sanctioned by Council.

## ARTICLE XI. BOARD OF EVANGELISM

1. Membership: The Board of Evangelism shall consist of nine (9) members elected by the church for terms of three years. Members may not succeed themselves but are eligible for re-election after being off the board for one year. The Board of Evangelism shall elect annually a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary.
2. Purpose: The purpose of this board shall be to plan and implement marketing strategies to reach the unchurched and new residents of Elon and the surrounding community. It shall serve as liaison to university students, faculty, and staff. It shall be instrumental in developing relationships with potential

new members and oversee their orientation to the church. The Board shall train and schedule greeters for regular worship services. It will work with other boards and committees to enhance evangelistic outreach.

3. Meetings: The Board shall meet monthly for the transaction of business, or as needed. Special meetings may be called by the chair or the ministers.
4. Committees: The Board may establish sub-committees, composed of board members and/or other members of the congregation to assist in the work of evangelism and as needed for other purposes as sanctioned by Council.

## ARTICLE XII. COMMITTEES

1. Nominating Committee. This Committee, consisting of the Senior Minister and six (6) persons, shall be elected annually by the congregation. Members of the committee shall be named to two-year terms with three (3) members beginning new terms each year. No person shall serve more than two successive terms. The Moderator, in consultation with the Senior Minister, shall appoint the chair of the Nominating Committee.

This Committee will present to the Council a slate of nominees for the positions of all officers, board members, committee members and historian. It shall be the duty of the Committee to communicate with and to secure the consent of the persons who are to be nominated before presenting their names for vote.

2. Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee, consisting of six (6) persons, shall be elected annually by the congregation. Two (2) members shall be elected each year and serve for terms of three years. The Committee shall meet quarterly or as needed.

It shall be the duty of the Committee to:

- a. Recommend personnel policies for the church and to monitor the implementation of the policies.
- b. Consult with the Senior Minister on the hiring and the termination of staff members; the annual performance review of the staff; and recommendations for salaries for staff members. The committee shall conduct an annual review of the compensation of the minister(s) and make recommendations to the Council for salary changes.
- c. Act as a Board of Review for any staff grievances that cannot be settled by normal channels.
- d. Continue to seek ways that will improve working conditions and promote the use of good church business practices.

3. Pastoral Relations Committee. This Committee, consisting of six (6) persons, shall be elected annually by the congregation. Members of the Committee shall be named to two-year terms with two members beginning new terms each year. No person shall be elected to serve more than two successive terms.

This Committee supports and maintains an open relationship between the minister(s) and members of the congregation. It helps the minister(s) and members of the church to share ideas, hopes, dreams, and interpretations of mission. It keeps the minister(s) informed about what the members are thinking and provides an atmosphere in which potential conflict can be resolved creatively. The Committee will meet as needed.

4. Stewardship Committee. The Stewardship Committee, consisting of five (5) persons, shall be elected annually by the congregation. The terms of office shall be two years. The Committee shall meet quarterly, or as needed.

It shall be the duty of the Committee to:

- a. Learn about the mission of the denomination and of the local church and to plan and coordinate a program

of stewardship education and development throughout the year.

b. Plan and oversee the activities involved in securing pledges and raising funds to finance the program of the church.

5. Budget Committee. The Budget Committee, consisting of five (5) persons, shall be elected by the congregation to two-year terms. This Committee shall, under the direction of Council and with the guidance of the Trustees, prepare a budget for presentation to the Council, and report on the financial condition of the church.

6. Endowment Fund Committee. This Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Past Moderator, Treasurer, Senior Minister, and three (3) persons elected annually by the congregation who shall each serve for a three-year term and shall be eligible for re-election without limitation of terms. This Committee will develop the endowment fund to provide earnings to support missions and capital needs.

7. Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will be appointed annually by Council to review the financial condition of the church. It shall be comprised of individuals not directly involved with the financial operations of the church and will report its findings to the Council.

#### ARTICLE XIII. OFFICERS

1. Moderator. The Moderator shall be elected annually by the congregation for a term of one year. At least one year must elapse before a person who has served as Moderator is eligible to be re-elected to that position. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church, serve as chair of the Church Council, represent the church at official functions, and assist the minister(s) in leading the church.

2. Moderator-Elect. The Moderator-Elect shall be elected annually by the congregation for a term of one year with the expectation that, subsequently, the person will be nominated for the office of the Moderator. The Moderator-elect shall serve as a member of the Church Council and shall act for the Moderator in the Moderator's absence.

3. Secretary. The Secretary shall be elected annually by the congregation for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election without limitation of terms. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the church and of the Church Council and shall serve as official custodian of the records of the church.

4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the congregation for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election without limitation of terms. The Treasurer shall disburse all funds of the church for current expenses and benevolences in accordance with the adopted budget of the church and under the direction of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer may act as Moderator in the absence of the Moderator and Moderator-Elect.

#### ARTICLE XIV. SENIOR MINISTER

1. Responsibilities: The Senior Minister shall serve as the spiritual leader of the congregation. Being called to preach and teach, to administer the rites and sacraments of the church, and to exercise pastoral care and community leadership, the Senior Minister shall have the responsibility for seeing that these tasks are done. While they may be delegated or shared, the Senior Minister is basically responsible. The Senior Minister shall coordinate all phases of church life and program; direct and supervise the other members of the church staff; and, perform all such duties as belong to the position of Senior Minister as outlined in his/her job description.

In the event the Senior Minister is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities, the Associate Minister will temporarily assume the role of Senior Minister if instructed by Council.

2. Process of Call: The Senior Minister shall be called for an indefinite period. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Minister, the congregation shall elect a Search Committee to seek a candidate to fill the vacancy. The pastoral vacancy shall be reported to the Associate Conference Minister of the Southern Conference. In filling the vacancy, the Search Committee will request the Southern Conference Minister of Church Affairs to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.

The Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the church constitutes a call.

In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Ministers' Health Insurance Program, and other terms agreed to between the candidate and the church. The minister, the church, the Association, and the Conference Minister shall each receive a copy of the call.

3. Installation: When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and the minister shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association, and by the Conference Minister, and a copy shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ.

4. Pastoral Discipline: Pastoral discipline shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ and the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ. In instances where difficulties occur, the Pastoral Relations Committee will attempt to resolve those differences and may seek support, advice and wisdom of the Eastern North Carolina Southern Conference Minister, or the Association Church and Ministry Committee. In the event of impasse, a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present at a special congregational meeting can terminate the employment of the Senior Minister.

5. Termination: In order to terminate this relationship, either party shall give a 90-day notice, or other terms as mutually agreed upon. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ. When either the church or the Senior Minister decides to terminate the relationship, notice of the termination shall be sent by the Council to the Conference Minister and to the Eastern North Carolina Association for appropriate action.

#### ARTICLE XV: ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT MINISTER

The church may at its own discretion choose Associate or Assistant Minister(s).

1. Responsibilities: The Associate Minister shall serve as one of the spiritual leaders of the congregation, being called to preach and teach, to administer the rites and sacraments of the church, and to exercise pastoral care and community leadership as directed by the Senior Minister of the congregation.

The Associate Minister shall perform the duties as outlined in his/her job description and shall be available to provide full ministry in the event the Senior Minister cannot fulfill his/her duties until an interim minister is called.

2. Process of Call: The Associate Minister shall be called for an indefinite period. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Associate Minister, the congregation shall elect a Search Committee to seek a candidate to fill the vacancy. The pastoral vacancy shall be reported to the Associate Conference Minister of the Southern

Conference. In filling the vacancy, the Search Committee will request the Southern Conference Minister of Church Affairs to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.

The Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the church constitutes a call.

In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Ministers' Health Insurance Program, and other terms agreed to between the candidate and the church. The minister, the church, the Association, and the Conference Minister shall each receive a copy of the call.

3. Installation: When an associate minister accepts a call to this church, the church and the minister shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association, and by the Conference Minister, and a copy shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ.

4. Pastoral Discipline: Pastoral discipline shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ and the Manual on Ministry of the United Church of Christ. In instances where difficulties occur, the Pastoral Relations Committee will attempt to resolve those differences and may seek support, advice and wisdom of the Eastern North Carolina Southern Conference Minister, or the Association Church and Ministry Committee. In the event of impasse, a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present at a special congregational meeting can terminate the employment of the Associate/Assistant Minister.

5. Termination: In order to terminate this relationship, either party shall give a 30-day notice, or other terms as mutually agreed upon. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ. When either the church or the Associate Minister decides to terminate the relationship, notice of the termination shall be sent Conference Minister and to the Association for appropriate action when someone is needed to replace the Associate Minister's position.

## ARTICLE XVI. STAFF

On recommendation of the ministers, the Council shall have the authority and responsibility for employing staff on behalf of the church, consistent with the programs adopted by the church and within the limitation of the budget approved by the church.

## ARTICLE XVII. CHURCH MEETINGS

1. Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January. At this meeting, the minister(s), the Council, the officers of the church, and all church organizations and committees shall submit in writing their annual reports for the preceding year and their plans for the coming year. The ordination of deacons and the installation of officers and board members shall be included in a regular Sunday morning service in January.

2. Officer Election Meeting: A special congregational meeting of the church will be held each year in December for the purpose of electing officers, boards, and committees for the next year. A person will be eligible to serve on only one of the five major boards of the church simultaneously. Members of the boards will be elected for three-year terms except in the initial election when provision shall be made for staggered terms.

3. Called Meetings: Special church meetings may be called by the Moderator, or the ministers. Also, special meetings can be called by petition to the Church Council signed by not less than five percent (5%) of the voting members of the congregation. Such meetings will be held within three weeks from receipt of the petition. Notice of special called meetings shall be sent to the membership by the Secretary two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting and will include the specific proposals to be considered at the meeting.

#### ARTICLE XVIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.

#### ARTICLE XIX. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present. Public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) will be made two weeks prior to the meeting.

Adopted by vote of the congregation September 30, 1984, to be effective January 1, 1985. Amended December 6, 1992. Amended by vote of the congregation at the annual meetings on January 29, 1995, December 1996, January 11, 2004, January 20, 2008, January 21, 2018, December 2020.