

Community Spirit Church, UCC
United Church of Christ
Bylaws

Adopted Sunday, January 16, 2022

Revised Sunday, March 27, 2022

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Community Spirit Church Bylaws

Article I. Name

The name of the church will be Community Spirit Church, UCC, United Church of Christ.

Article II. Introduction

- A. Community Spirit Church will be a member congregation of the Western Association of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ.
- B. These bylaws are a statement of the church's ministry, mission, and core values. Members are to make decisions under these bylaws with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the spirit of the community to further the church's ministry and mission.
- C. In all matters decided by the church, the congregation will be the final authority.
- D. Gathered by the Spirit, enlivened by progressive Christian faith, aching to make a difference in the world, our mission is:
Be the church, wherever we are, working for the common good of the whole, as faithful followers of Christ, in community with one another and others.
- E. The guiding principles of our progressive Christian faith include but are not limited to the following:
Love Wins—Hate, fear, or injustice do not get the last word; God's love does.
This World/Life Matters—Our faith calls us to acts of justice and compassion here and now.
Learning and Thinking Is Vital—Keen, questioning minds enliven, rather than threaten, our faith.
Spirituality and Tradition Uphold Us—Alive and dynamic, scripture and tradition support our experience of and relationship to the Divine.
All Are Welcome—We support each person in being, becoming, and honoring their authentic, God-blessed self.

Article III. Members

- A. Any person who wishes to live in covenant with the church may become a member. Membership is renewed in worship on Pentecost each year or upon request.
- B. Becoming a member is to enter into a covenant between the church and its members, sustained by our willing participation with God. Members covenant with one another to:
- Pray regularly for the church and its Pastor.
 - Support the church financially and conveying this commitment by way of pledge card
 - Worship regularly
 - Participate in the programs, ministries, and mission of the church

- e. Serve the church in life-giving ways and as the Spirit leads
- f. Live into our Relational Covenant (*see appendix*)

C. Membership rolls will be updated on an annual basis immediately following the member covenanting service on Pentecost Sunday.

D. Those unwilling to uphold the Relational Covenant and/or member covenantal promises may be asked to leave. [Note to reader: This process will be more fully articulated when bylaws are reviewed in 2024.]

E. Members participate in the decision-making of the church by voice and vote. Non-members are granted voice but no vote.

Article IV. Leadership Ministry Team Officers

A. Moderator

The Moderator is the key lay leader of the congregation and will serve a two-year term as Vice Moderator before serving as Moderator. He or she will act as the president of the corporate body. The Moderator will preside at all business meetings of the congregation. In conversation with the Pastor, the Moderator will set the agenda and preside at all Leadership Ministry Team meetings. Through email, postal mail, and/or church newsletter, the Moderator will communicate to the congregation the agenda of each Leadership Ministry Team meeting, Annual Meeting, and specifically called meeting. In a timely manner, the Moderator will then report the outcomes of those meetings through email, postal mail, and/or church newsletter. In consultation with the Treasurer, the Moderator will oversee the creation of an annual budget/spending plan and will appoint a team to carry out an annual stewardship campaign; if needed, the Moderator will assist in this campaign's successful completion. The Moderator will be a covenanted member of the church, work collaboratively with the Pastor, and will be accountable to the Leadership Ministry Team and the congregation. Two members may serve together as Co-Moderators. When the Pastor is absent, the Moderator is responsible for church affairs.

B. Vice Moderator

In the absence of the Moderator or in the event of the Moderator's inability to act, the Vice Moderator will perform the duties of the Moderator. The Vice Moderator will perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Moderator or members of the Leadership Ministry Team. Excepting extenuating circumstance, this individual will be nominated to serve as Moderator.

C. At-Large Member #1

Elected in even-numbered years for a two-year term, this individual is one whose duties and responsibilities are not fixed but instead vary according to the needs of the church and the Leadership Team. This leadership team member attends Leadership meetings, as well as serves as a liaison between church membership and the Leadership Ministry Team. He/she has the same rights and general responsibilities as other members of the Leadership Ministry Team.

D. At-Large Member #2

Elected in odd-numbered years for a two-year term, this individual is one whose duties and responsibilities are not fixed but instead vary according to the needs of the church and the Leadership Team. This leadership team member attends Leadership meetings, as well as serves as a liaison between church membership and the Leadership Team. He/she has the same rights and general responsibilities as other members of the Leadership Ministry Team.

E. For legal purposes, the officers of the church are Moderator, Vice Moderator, At-Large Member #1, At-Large Member #2, Treasurer and Pastor.

Article V. Ministry Teams

A. Leadership Team

Guided by the church's mission and core values, the Leadership Team is responsible for the health of the church and endeavors to support the on-going work of each of the church's ministry teams. It will be responsible for the church's financial, business, and operational affairs, the administration of church funds, will make decisions concerning the expenditure of church funds, when necessary, enters into contracts, when necessary, calls and coordinates Congregational Conversations/Meetings and is accountable to the congregation. It also bears responsibility for personnel-related matters. Meetings will be at least monthly, publicized in the church newsletter, and open to all except when a matter is confidential or otherwise privileged.

Those eligible to serve must be covenanted, voting members of the church. They are elected at an Annual Meeting and serve for two years. Their terms cannot be renewed. After a one-year absence, they will be eligible for re-election. At-Large Members will be elected in alternating years.

B. Finance Ministry Team

The Finance Ministry Team includes the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. This team reports to and works collaboratively with the Leadership Team, serving as a resource in budget creation and revision.

1. Financial Secretary is elected for a 2-year term (renewable).

The Financial Secretary is responsible for maintaining accurate financial records of the church, which includes but is not limited to: depositing and recording all funds received by the church; overseeing the payment of all bills, Western Association and Rocky Mountain Conference dues and pledges, special offerings, honoraria, and pastoral compensation; and managing cash, savings, and dedicated accounts. All recordkeeping will be conducted using QuickBooks online.

The Financial Secretary receives and records annual estimates of giving, and produces and distributes quarterly giving statements, as well as year-end statements. She/he also prepares the pastor's W-2 and handles year-end financial and attendance reporting to the wider church.

On a monthly basis, this individual provides Leadership with the most current financial statement and reviews this report at Leadership's monthly meeting. The Financial Secretary recommends to Leadership policies and procedures related to her/his tasks.

2. **Treasurer** is elected for a two-year term (renewable).

The Treasurer is responsible for the monthly review of transactions and recordkeeping done by the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer also collaborates with those responsible for creating and implementing the church's annual season of stewardship.

C. Other Ministry Teams

With the exception of the Nominating Team who is elected by the congregation and the Stewardship Team who is appointed by the Moderator, the following ministry teams do not require approval or vote of the congregation. Members serve in response to a sense of call. These ministries are meant to be flexible enough to change as needs and opportunities evolve. They function to give faithful expression to the vision and values of the church as a whole. Collaboration is encouraged and support is provided by the Pastor and the Leadership Team.

1. **Communications**

The Communications Team provides direction and consistency of messaging related to the weekly newsletter, public Facebook page, website, and other public-facing efforts.

2. **InReach/OutReach**

The InReach/OutReach Ministry Team identifies needs within and beyond the church and invites the congregation to join forces with this team in using our hands and feet to share God's love to respond to these needs. As appropriate, InReach/OutReach partners with other churches and/or like-valued organizations to respond to unmet needs in the community.

3. **Nominations**

This team recruits and vets members for the Leadership Team, as well as those serving as Delegates. It also fills elected vacancies until the next Annual Meeting. Team members will be selected by the Leadership Team and affirmed by congregational vote at an Annual Meeting for terms of three years, initially staggered as the team may decide. This team is to be chaired by a previous Moderator or, if unavailable, a previous member of the Leadership Team.

4. **Pastor/Parish Relations Team**

The Pastor/Parish Relations Team is to consist of three to five members of the church, appointed by the Leadership Team and with the Pastor's endorsement. If possible, one member will have some conflict resolution experience or training. Length of term is three years and can be renewed once. The PPR Team is meant to serve as a sounding board and place of support and encouragement. It also offers a place of confidentiality for the Pastor when dealing with challenges, serves in an advisory capacity, and is meant as a place to support the work of reconciliation when members have concerns about or issues with the Pastor, and vice versa. Matters of grave concern related to the Pastor's words or actions will be brought to the attention of the Moderator, and when needed and with the Moderator's knowledge, the PPR Team will consult with the UCC Rocky Mountain Conference Minister and/or Chair of the Church and Ministry Committee.

The PPR Team may also be called upon to address situations between members and friends of the church in which one has acted against the expectation of covenantal respect and honor due each person as reflected in the Relational Covenant. (*See appendix.*)

5. Peace and Justice

The Peace and Justice Team will consist of at least three members and/or friends of Community Spirit Church. They will offer the church educational opportunities regarding racial, economic, social, and environmental justice.

The Peace and Justice Team will also build deep partnerships with other community organizations that produce collective social action. The Peace and Justice Team will be invitational as well as self-reflective, engaging the church in the internal work of welcoming radical difference and truth-telling against systems of oppression that have held God's beloved people captive. The Peace and Justice Team will embrace, and aid the church in embracing, the struggle for collective liberation as a path toward being the Body of Christ in the world.

6. Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Ministry Team offers itself in service to those within and beyond the church who request prayer. A condition for participation is a stated commitment to adhere to the Prayer Team Covenant. (*See appendix.*)

7. Stewardship

Working closely with the Pastor and/or Moderator, the Stewardship Team exists to nurture a spirit of generosity with regard to the sharing of time, talent, and treasure. It is expected that members of this team will develop and implement an annual stewardship campaign in time for the forthcoming year's budget/spending plan to be created. Stewardship Team members also assist in educating the church about and encouraging it to participate in the United Church of Christ's special offerings. Members are appointed by the Moderator, as indicated in Article IV.A.

8. Wider Church Involvement (Delegates)

Elected for two-year terms (renewable once), two covenanted members will represent the church and participate in denominational business at Western Association and Rocky Mountain Conference meetings. Following these wider church gatherings, delegates will share with the congregation vital information and outcomes.

9. Worship and Faith Formation

The Worship and Faith Formation Ministry Team works alongside the Pastor to create and offer meaningful, transformative worship and generative faith formation experiences for all ages.

Article VI. Pastor and Staff

A. The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church and will be called for an indefinite time by a 2/3 vote of the congregation present at a regular or special church meeting. The Leadership Team will follow the

procedures of the United Church of Christ to fill a vacancy when a Settled Pastor leaves, including the choice of interim, the creation of a Search Committee, and the presentation of a final candidate who has standing (or pending) in the United Church of Christ.

The candidate proposed by the Search Committee will be presented for election at a properly called meeting of the congregation. When a Pastor has been called/elected by the congregation and has accepted this call, the Pastor will become a member of the church and of the Western Association and be installed without haste. While the term of the Pastor will be indefinite, after consultation with the Leadership Team, his or her resignation may be requested at a special meeting of the congregation specifically called for this purpose. With proper notice, a decision will be determined by a 2/3 vote of those present at the meeting called for this purpose. Resignation should be in effect within sixty days. Should the pastor wish to leave of his or her own volition, 90-day notice will be given. In the event that the pastor has lost his or her ministerial standing, any and all relationship with the church ceases immediately.

The Pastor is a member of the Leadership Team, shares in its discernment and decision-making works, and provides guidance as needed. He or she may vote on matters before the Leadership Team but is not required to do so. He or she also provides resourcing and support to the church's other ministry teams as requested and as time allows.

The Pastor is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church, seeks to enlist people as disciples of Christ, preaches the Gospel, and administers the sacrament of baptism and communion. The Pastor has freedom of the pulpit. Except in times of emergency, the Pastor is responsible for filling the pulpit and securing pastoral care coverage in his or her absence.

The Pastor is accountable to the congregation.

B. Staff.

The Leadership Team serves in lieu of a personnel committee whenever it becomes necessary to secure paid assistance, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Article VII. Services and Meetings

A. Worship

1. Services.

Services of worship will be held at stated hours each week, most typically on Sundays.

2. Sacraments.

The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at such times as the Pastor and Worship and Faith Formation Team may determine. Baptism will be administered at such times as the Pastor may decide, most typically during a Sunday service.

3. Other Services

Other services of worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the Pastor, in consultation with the Worship and Faith Formation Team, and with the support of the Leadership Team.

B. Faith Formation

The church will offer programming to help all ages understand what it mean to be a Christian in the context of this community and world, and to actively nurture each person's faith.

C. Business Meetings

1. Annual Meeting

The fiscal year of the church will begin January 1. Called by the Leadership Team, an Annual Meeting will be held each year no later than January 31. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to review and celebrate the progress of the church during the previous year, to consider direction for the coming year, to adopt the annual budget/spending plan, to hold elections, and to transact any other business that may be necessary.

2. Special Meetings

Special meetings for business will be called at the request of the Pastor, the Leadership Team, the Moderator, or by written request of five or more members of the church. The nature of the business must be stated at that time and any other business germane to purpose of the meeting may come before the meeting. The call for a meeting will be communicated by email or postal mail at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting. Announcements in worship and in the church newsletter are appropriate but do not constitute official notification. Matters unrelated to the stated purpose of the meeting may not be added to the agenda from the floor.

3. Voting

Elections and voting will be by written ballot if requested by any member at the meeting. Otherwise voting will be indicated by ayes/nays or by raised hands. A majority vote of those members present, and voting will be decisive, except when these bylaws provide for a different margin. For purposes of voting, a member is a person defined by Article III of these bylaws. There will be no allowance for proxy voting. However, a member who will not be present at a called meeting of the church may submit a question or comment to be read and addressed at that meeting; this must be directed to the Moderator and must be in writing and bear a signature.

4. Quorum

For all business meetings of the church a quorum will be 30 percent of the church's membership.

Article VIII. Procedure for Dissolving the Church

By vote of at least 80 percent of members who are present at a specially called meeting, the church may be dissolved. In that event, all assets will become the property of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, after payment of any indebtedness, subject only to any limitations as may be required by any bequests or other gifts making up the invested reserves of the church.

Article IX. Procedure for Disaffiliating with the United Church of Christ

By vote of at least 80 percent of members who are present at a specially called meeting, the church may disaffiliate from the United Church of Christ.

Article X. Amendments

These bylaws may be altered or amended by a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting, provided the proposed amendment be presented to the Leadership Team for its consideration in advance. However, the Leadership Team cannot prevent the proposed amendment from being considered and voted on by the congregation. The Moderator will provide text of the amendment to the congregation and notify the congregation of a pending amendment as provided for notice of congregational meetings.

Article XI. Review and Revision of Bylaws

A. Review of Bylaws

Following adoption, these bylaws will be reviewed each even-numbered year by the Leadership Team or an ad-hoc team gathered for this purpose.

B. Revision of Bylaws

Should changes to the bylaws be warranted, these will be presented to the congregation for consideration and vote, following the special meeting requirements outlined above in Article VII, C, 2.

Community Spirit Church (UCC)
Congregational Covenant

We, of Community Spirit Church (United Church of Christ), make an intentional choice to embrace this covenant as an essential part of our faith journey. The following are ways in which we will work together to reach our highest potential as individuals and as a community.

We covenant to work together to build the common good by:

- * sharing of our time, talent, and treasure in ways that reflect our earnest, heart-felt desire to contribute to the life of the church, both within and beyond its walls.

We covenant to embrace and celebrate the individuality within our own congregation and the wider community by:

- * providing opportunities to share diverse experiences and ideas in a safe place.

We covenant to practice openness, honesty, and respect in our communications by:

- * listening so as to understand;
- * taking responsibility for our own thoughts, feelings, and needs (even as they may differ from others);
- * taking responsibility for communicating in caring, respectful ways;
- * recognizing the sacred nature of community, choosing to refrain from gossip or verbal speculation about the thoughts, feelings, and needs of others.

We covenant to participate actively and responsibly in decision-making and the work of the congregation by:

- * seeking clarity rather than drawing conclusions;
- * speaking directly with those with whom we disagree;
- * seeking peaceful and constructive resolution of differences;
- * supporting decisions made by the congregation, even when our own desires might be otherwise.

Affirmed by the congregation on September 7, 2014.

This is a living document. It is our intention to revisit and refine this covenant.