

**PLAN OF UNION/CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY
Normal, Illinois**

I. NAME AND PURPOSE

The name of the organization shall be New Covenant Community, a union congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ. Its purpose is to provide a progressive Christian ministry that includes worship, education, social justice advocacy, and pastoral care and nurture to the Normal/Bloomington community and to those involved in and concerned for higher education.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the congregation, as part of the church universal, is open to all who seek to follow Christ and are committed to sharing this ministry. Membership may be by transfer of membership from other Christian churches, by baptism, by affirmation of faith, or by student affiliation.

Student affiliate shall have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of other members. They may continue to retain membership in their home churches.

III. INCORPORATION

The congregation is incorporated in accordance with the "General Not-for-Profit Corporation Act" of Illinois in force January 1, A.D. 1987. The Articles of Incorporation were filed in the office of the Secretary of State on the 15th day of April, 1993, and recorded in the office of the McLean County Recorder as document file number 5727-502-2.

IV. ELECTED LEADERSHIP OF THE CONGREGATION: THE STEERING COMMITTEE

SECTION A: Membership

The following shall be elected from the Community membership at its annual meeting to form the Steering Committee (Board): The minister(s) shall also serve as members of the Steering Committee.

1. **Officer:** Chairperson, whose duties will include presiding at congregational and Steering Committee meetings, and serving as an ex-officio member of all committees.
2. **Officer:** Vice-Chairperson, whose duties will include attending the meetings of the Steering Committee, and acting as chair in lieu of the chairperson.
3. **Officer:** Secretary, whose duties will include: attending the meetings of the Steering Committee; keeping records of business at congregational and Steering Committee meetings; maintaining membership rolls; and notifying the congregation of annual and special meetings.
4. **Officer:** Treasurer, whose duties will include responsibility for: attending the meetings of the Steering Committee; the receipt, deposit and disbursement of all monies; providing an authorized signature on checks and savings accounts; reporting regularly to the congregation about its finances; and informing and working with appropriate committees.
5. Four At-Large Members, whose duties will include attending the meetings of the Steering Committee, and serving on task forces as appointed by the Chair.

SECTION B: Election Procedures

At the Fall Congregational Meeting, the congregation will elect a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will consist of two members of the congregation at-large, and one member of the current Steering Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Steering Committee. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of the above listed officers and at-large members for election at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. Election shall be by majority vote. Officers will be elected to serve a one-year term and will be eligible to serve additional terms as officers while serving as elected members of the Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee will be elected to serve two-year staggered terms, beginning January 1 of each year. They will be eligible for election to one additional consecutive two-year term. Any Steering Committee member who has served two full consecutive terms shall not be eligible to serve again for at least one year. If a member of the Steering Committee resigns before the end of his/her term, the congregation will elect another person to complete the unexpired term. The installation of the Steering Committee will be acknowledged with prayer and thanksgiving in a public service of worship.

SECTION C: Roles and Functions

The Steering Committee shall determine the docket for congregational meetings and have authority to act between congregational meetings when necessary. The Steering Committee shall be the Trustees of the corporation.

Steering Committee oversees responsibilities in the following areas: Fiduciary, Planning, Personnel, Facilities and Equipment, Communication and Scheduling, Denominational, Education and Spiritual Development, Committee Development and Support, Caring Community and Social Life. (A detailed list of these responsibilities are available in the Steering Committee Job Description.)

The Steering Committee will ordinarily meet monthly.

SECTION D: Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of a majority of the Steering Committee. Decisions will be made by majority vote.

V. FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

1. Standing Committees:

A. A Pastor/Parrish Relations Committee will serve as a liaison between the congregation and the pastor(s). There will be at least four members of this Committee, appointed by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the pastor(s).

B. An Endowment Committee will oversee the investments in the Endowment Fund. Members of this Committee will include the Treasurer of the congregation and at least two other Members of the congregation elected by the congregation. The pastor(s) will serve as an ex-officio member.

C. A Partners in Mission Committee will research and evaluation organizations for consideration of budgeted mission dollars and make recommendations to the Steering Committee for approval. Members are appointed by the Steering Committee.

D. The Jim and Gwen Pruyne Lectureship in Progressive Christianity Committee will plan and execute events that offer an alternative vision of Christianity: inclusive, compassionate, and open to contemporary scholarship. Members are appointed by the Steering Committee.

2. Other Committees:

A. The congregation and/or the Steering Committee may from time to time endorse or appoint other committees or task groups to fulfill specific functions. These groups may include but are not limited to: children/youth; social justice; worship planning; and adult education.

VI. MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

SECTION A: Annual Meeting

The congregation shall hold a business meeting within thirty days prior to the beginning of the calendar year. The purposes of this meeting shall be to elect officers for the coming year, to approve the Community budget and to care for special items of business.

SECTION B: Notice of Meetings

Notice and purpose of congregational meetings shall be made at two regular Sunday morning worship services and by mail (via Newsletter, email, or other mailing) to members at least ten days prior to the meeting.

SECTION C: Other Meetings

The congregation will meet three times a year, Winter, Spring, and Fall, including the annual meeting, to conduct congregational business unless the congregation and/or the Steering Committee deem a meeting unnecessary. Additional special meetings of the congregation shall be called by the Steering Committee when it deems necessary or when written request for such a meeting is signed by at least 10% of the members listed on the active rolls. Business to be acted upon at special meetings shall be limited to that which is stated in the announcements for such meetings.

SECTION D: Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business shall be ten per cent of the active membership or ten members, whichever is larger. Decisions will be made by majority vote.

VII. DENOMINATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

SECTION A: Affiliation

The New Covenant Community will hold responsible membership in the Presbytery of Great Rivers, Presbyterian Church (USA), in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Illinois/Wisconsin and in the Eastern Association of the Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ, and be subject to the constitutions of the participating denominations.

SECTION B: Membership

One-third of the membership will be counted for the annual per capita contribution to the Presbytery of Great Rivers. A like amount will be paid to the Christian Church and to the United Church of Christ for administrative expenses.

SECTION C: Support for Mission

Equal support will be given for general missions and special offerings to the three denominations.

SECTION D: Property

Property of New Covenant Community shall be owned by the corporation formed in Part III of the Bylaws. In the event of dissolution of the New Covenant Community, all assets will be divided equally among the three denominations.

SECTION E: Representation

Elected Steering Committee members are eligible to serve as commissioners or representatives to the governing bodies.

VIII. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED CAMPUS CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION (UCCF)

SECTION A. Affiliation

New Covenant Community (NCC) is a congregation created at the initiative of UCCF around a common commitment to ministry and mission in Higher Education. NCC and UCCF will retain separate corporate entities, but NCC will be responsible for maintaining the financial and legal responsibilities of UCCF. Additionally, the NCC Steering Committee shall elect three members to serve on the Board of UCCF, and provide volunteers or paid staff to run the UCCF programming.

SECTION B. Campus Religious Center (CRC)

NCC is a full, charter member of the Campus Religious Center Corporation (CRC). The CRC owns and maintains the facility in which NCC and all its ministries are housed. NCC shall appoint five representatives to the CRC Board, and approved by the NCC Steering Committee. Appointed members shall serve not more than two consecutive three-year terms. NCC representatives on the CRC board shall report to the NCC Steering Committee.

IX. MINISTER(S)

SECTION A: Search Process

When the church is without a pastor, the Steering Committee shall consult with representatives of the three denominational governing bodies in devising a search process.

SECTION B: Termination

The pastoral relationship may be terminated with not less than ninety days notice by either minister or congregation and in accordance with the constitutions of the represented denominations.

SECTION C: Jurisdiction

A minister of the New Covenant Community shall be under the jurisdiction and discipline of the denomination in which he or she has primary standing.

SECTION D: Ministerial Standing

The pastor(s) shall seek appropriate ministerial standing in each denomination with which New Covenant Community is affiliated.

X CHURCH YEAR

The church program and fiscal year shall begin January 1.

XI. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any congregation meeting by a majority vote of the members present and voting, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment and the meeting at which the vote will be held has been sent through the mail to members of the congregation at least ten days prior to the time the vote is taken.

[Originally adopted May 2, 1993. Amended May 15, 1994, July 20, 1994, March 24, 1996, April 19, 1998, September 27, 1998, September, 2009, October 2010, May 2012, September 2015]