

# Bylaws of Northwest Community Church, United Church of Christ

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## Summary of Updates

### Current Version

1. The Congregation voted to amend the bylaws Section 8.12.13 to set have Core Team set the date of the annual meeting between November 1 and December 15 each year.
2. The bylaws were renumbered using standard typographic convention ISO 2145 for reference clarity.
3. In Section 7. Officers, Titles were added to Sections 7.2 - 7.5 for reference clarity and are as follows: 7.2 Moderator, 7.3 Vice-Moderator, 7.4 Secretary, 7.5 Treasurer.
4. A Table of Contents was added along with bookmarks for some key sections to aid in reference some specific areas. These bookmarks are not intended as an exhaustive index.

# Bylaws

## Northwest Community Church, United Church of Christ

A non-profit corporation formed  
under the laws of the State of Nevada

The purpose of these bylaws is to set forth a guide by which the participants in this congregation may relate to each other and allow each person opportunities to serve, to lead and to speak. These bylaws further serve to guide this congregation as it relates to other congregations and organizations beyond itself.

If any circumstance or need arises which has not been anticipated by this document the congregation is commended to meet this circumstance or need in a manner which is consistent with the scope and purpose of this congregation. The scope and purpose of the congregation are defined by its mission statement: "Northwest Community Church is a progressive Christian faith community, seeking to spread the inclusive grace of God through innovative worship, spiritual nurture and the pursuit of social justice." The scope and purpose of the congregation are further defined by foundational values: Inclusiveness, Justice, Diversity, Spiritual Nurture, Healthy Relationships, Innovation, Progressive Thinking and Quality in All Aspects of Ministry.

This document shall avoid any attempt to define faith in God, though it is implicit throughout this document that this organization is a Christian church.

### 1. Organization

- 1.1. Registered office. The registered office of the corporation shall be situated at 7310 Smoke Ranch Road, Suite K, Las Vegas, NV 89128 and may, at a later date, be moved to such other location as the board of directors may from time to time designate.
- 1.2. Purpose. The corporation has been organized for the purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation.

### 2. Denominational Affiliation

- 2.1. This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the United Church of Christ or its successors, and of the Eastern Association, hereafter referred to as the "Association", of the Southern California Nevada Conference, hereafter referred to as the "Conference", or its successors.
- 2.2. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the United Church of Christ.

- 2.3. If a majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another church body, title to property, tangible and intangible, shall continue to reside in this congregation.

### 3. Dissolution

- 3.1. If this congregation chooses to dissolve, any net assets will be transferred to the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successors to disburse as they see fit.

### 4. Privileges and Responsibilities of Congregants

- 4.1. Privileges and responsibilities shall be extended to and borne by individuals who have covenanted by joining with this congregation.
- 4.2. Individuals who have covenanted with this congregation shall be described in these bylaws as “congregants”. Congregants are expected to express a willingness to abide within:
  - 4.2.1. The values of this congregation: Inclusiveness, Justice, Diversity, Spiritual Nurture, Healthy Relationships, Innovation, Progressive Thinking, and Quality in All Aspects Of Ministry.
  - 4.2.2. The life of the congregation through frequent presence at worship and contributions.
  - 4.2.3. the government and processes of the United Church of Christ or its successors.
- 4.3. Unless removed, congregants shall remain on record as congregants in one of three statuses:
  - 4.3.1. Voting Status is given to any congregant with at least 12 records of attendance within the last 12 month period prior to Congregational meeting excluding the day of the meeting.
  - 4.3.2. Active Status is given to any congregant with any record of contribution or attendance within the current or previous year.
  - 4.3.3. Inactive status is given to any congregant who lacks any record of contribution or attendance within the current or previous year.
- 4.4. A person’s status as a congregant may be terminated by any of the following:
  - 4.4.1. moved
  - 4.4.2. death
  - 4.4.3. request to be removed from the congregation’s records.
  - 4.4.4. disciplinary action: A person may be disassociated from the congregation for any reason sustained by a 2/3 vote of the Core Team or the congregation.  
Disassociation by the Core Team may not be appealed to the congregation.
- 4.5. A person may be recognized as a congregant while retaining a membership in another congregation as long as they have made a covenant with this congregation.

## 5. The Congregation

- 5.1. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- 5.2. The powers of this corporation are vested in the congregation when it meets according to the procedures provided in these bylaws.
- 5.3. The congregation is authorized to:
  - 5.3.1. a call a pastor;
  - 5.3.2. terminate the call of a pastor;
  - 5.3.3. approve the annual budget;
  - 5.3.4. elect its Core Team members, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the Bylaws;
  - 5.3.5. terminate its relationship with the United Church of Christ.
- 5.4. Authority and responsibilities not specifically retained by the congregation devolves to the Core Team.
- 5.5. The fiscal year of this congregation shall be January 1 through December 31.

## 6. The Core Team

- 6.1. The Core Team serves as the board of directors of the corporation.
- 6.2. A quorum shall consist of half of the total of all Core Team members (rounded up) plus one.
- 6.3. No member may be represented by proxy.
- 6.4. Members of the Core team (board of directors) or any committee designated by the board or the congregation may participate in a meeting by means of a telephone conference or similar method of communication by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participating in a meeting pursuant to this subsection constitutes presence at the meeting.
- 6.5. A majority vote shall consist of over half of the members present at a meeting of the Core Team.
- 6.6. The Core Team is made up of the pastor(s) and persons elected by the congregation.
  - 6.6.1. To be eligible for election to Core Team a congregant must have voting status and must be eighteen years of age as of the date of the election.
  - 6.6.2. The pastor(s) shall serve on this team as long as a call is issued to serve the congregation.
- 6.7. The responsibilities of the Core Team shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 6.7.1. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means unless acceptance of the gift is encumbered by an obligation to the congregation;
  - 6.7.2. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
  - 6.7.3. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its real estate property by any lawful means;
  - 6.7.4. invest and liquidate investments;

- 6.7.5. Authority to execute documents on behalf of the congregation shall be held by the pastor, the moderator, the vice-moderator, and the secretary or the treasurer.
  - 6.7.5.1. If the document contains any binding financial requirement, two of the above four people need to sign the document.
  - 6.7.5.2. If the document contains any binding financial requirement in excess of \$1,000.00 over the term of the agreement or a term of more than one year, two of the above four people need to sign the document after authorization is gained from the Core Team.
- 6.7.6. The privilege to negotiate funds in all the general financial accounts held by the congregation shall be held by at least two persons.
  - 6.7.6.1. One of these persons shall be the treasurer.
  - 6.7.6.2. The pastor shall have access to the general financial accounts, but need not be privileged to negotiate funds.
- 6.7.7. The Core Team is responsible for the oversight and management of the congregation in such a manner as to efficiently and comprehensively oversee all ministries and responsibilities of the congregation.
- 6.7.8. The Core Team may establish, implement and amend policies, standing committees and ad hoc committees.
- 6.8. The members of the Core Team are not elected by the congregation to any particular office or responsibility but share in the leadership of the congregation and support the responsibilities of the Core Team.
  - 6.8.1. Following the election of any new member to the Core Team areas of responsibility shall be reconsidered and assigned.
    - 6.8.1.1. Notice of these assignments shall be communicated to the congregation through announcement at worship, and posted conspicuously for the easy access of the congregation.
    - 6.8.1.2. These notices must include a means of contacting each member of the Core Team.
    - 6.8.1.3. When a significant shift in responsibilities occurs it shall be reported to the congregation according to the criteria specified in 6.8.1.1.
- 6.9. The Core Team shall consist of up to 9 members elected by the congregation including the senior pastor. If a vacancy occurs, it may, at the option of the Core Team, be left open until the next Annual Meeting or a congregant may be appointed by majority vote of the Core Team to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the congregation.
- 6.10. The Core Team may negotiate binding non-financial agreements within the scope of the purpose of the congregation. The scope and purpose of the congregation allows for the use of the property by organizations that may not be regarded as a ministry of the congregation; such as government, or non-government, sponsored agencies or services which will enhance education, health, or communication in the community.
- 6.11. The Core Team is responsible to complete the annual report to the conference.
- 6.12. The term of service to which a candidate is recruited may be one, two or three years.
  - 6.12.1. Vacant positions shall be recruited so that approximately one-third of the Core Team completes their terms each year.
  - 6.12.2. No person is eligible for a term which would result in that person serving more than six consecutive years on the Core Team.

- 6.13. Meetings of the Core Team
  - 6.13.1. Regular meetings of the Core Team will occur at the time and place of the choosing of the majority of the team. The date and time will be posted.
  - 6.13.2. Special meetings of the Core Team may be requested by the pastor or moderator and occur at the time and place of the choosing of the majority of the Team.
  - 6.13.3. The agenda of a Core Team meeting shall be drawn up by the moderator and distributed by the secretary prior to the meeting to include any item requested by any congregant or Core Team member. At the beginning of each meeting the agenda may be modified.
- 6.14. Removal from the Core Team
  - 6.14.1. A Core Team member may resign from the Core Team.
  - 6.14.2. Any Core Team member who ceases to be an active congregant of the congregation shall be removed from the Core Team.
  - 6.14.3. Any Core Team member who fails to maintain an average attendance of three out of four regularly called Core Team meetings may be removed from the Core Team by majority vote.
  - 6.14.4. Any Core Team member who fails to maintain an average attendance at worship of two services each month may be removed from the Core Team by majority vote.
- 6.15. Conflict of Interest
  - 6.15.1. Any member of Core Team who encounters a conflict of interest must declare that conflict and abstain from votes related to that conflict.
  - 6.15.2. A Core Team member may not also serve in a paid staff position.

## 7. Officers

- 7.1. The Core Team will meet following the annual meeting to elect officers from its members. All offices are vacated at the close of the annual meeting making all offices available for election. The pastor will preside until officers are elected. Those elected as an officer may only hold one office at a time. Election will be by majority vote.
- 7.2. Moderator: One member of the Core Team shall be elected to the office of moderator. This same person shall function as president of the corporation for legal purposes. He or she shall have and exercise general charge and supervision of the operations of the affairs of the congregation.
- 7.3. Vice-Moderator: One member of the Core Team shall be elected to the office of vice-moderator. This same person shall assist the moderator. The vice-moderator shall also preside at meetings when the moderator is absent.
- 7.4. Secretary: One member of the Core Team shall be elected to the office of secretary. This same person shall function as secretary of the corporation for legal purposes. The secretary shall have charge of such books, documents and papers as the Core Team may determine. The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, the minutes of all the meetings of the Core Team and of the congregation. The secretary shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of secretary, subject to the control of the Core Team, and shall do and perform such other duties as may be assigned to the secretary

- by the Core Team. The secretary may make use of the services of assistants in the performance of his or her duties.
- 7.5. Treasurer: One member of the Core Team shall be elected to the office of treasurer. This same person shall function as treasurer of the corporation for legal purposes. The treasurer shall have the custody of the congregational funds and other valuable effects, shall keep, or cause to be kept, full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursement in books belonging to the congregation and shall ensure that all moneys and other valuable effects are deposited in the name and to the credit of the congregation in such depositories as may be designated by the Core Team. The treasurer shall ensure that all disbursements of funds of the congregation are consistent with the approved budget or other directives of the Core Team, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements, and shall render to the moderator, pastor, or Core Team, whenever they may require it, an account of all his/her transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the congregation. The treasurer may make use of the services of assistants in the performance of the treasurer's duties.

## 8. Meetings of the Congregation

- 8.1. The secretary of the Core Team shall be responsible to verify, sign and maintain the minutes of all congregational Meetings.
- 8.2. At any meeting of the congregation, 30% of the congregants, with voting status, represented in person, shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of congregants. The congregants present at a duly organized meeting may continue to do business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of congregants during said meeting leaving less than a quorum than in attendance.
- 8.3. Each congregant, with voting status, shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of the congregants.
- 8.4. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- 8.5. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except otherwise provided in these Bylaws in keeping with the rules of order.
- 8.6. At the annual meeting of the congregation, Core Team shall submit a ballot of candidates to the congregation to fill positions of retired Core Team members as well as any vacancies.
- 8.7. Nominations for Core Team may be accepted from the floor only if the nominee is present, is eligible for nomination, and accepts the nomination.
- 8.8. No one shall be declared elected unless that person has received a majority of the votes cast. If more than one ballot is required in an election, a motion shall be in order to limit the balloting after the first ballot to the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot; and after the second ballot to limit the balloting to the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.
- 8.9. The meeting shall be presided over by an appointee of the Core Team.
- 8.10. Roberts Rules of Order, the most recent edition, shall be followed in general and may be strictly invoked at the discretion of the presiding person.



- 8.11. Voice shall be granted to any active congregant age 14 or over. The presiding person may recognize younger congregants for voice at his or her discretion.
- 8.12. Annual Meetings of the congregation.
  - 8.12.1. a at least one official meeting of the congregation shall take place each year. This shall be known as the annual meeting of the congregation.
  - 8.12.2. Annual meetings must be announced in advance to the congregation during at least four Sunday Services prior to the meeting.
  - 8.12.3. The date of this meeting shall be set by the CORE team between November 1 and December 15.
  - 8.12.4. The Core Team shall determine the agenda for this meeting.
- 8.13. Special meetings of the congregation
  - 8.13.1. A special meeting of the congregation may be called by any of the following:
    - 8.13.1.1. The pastor(s) in conjunction with the moderator and a Core Team member.
    - 8.13.1.2. A majority of the Core Team .
    - 8.13.1.3. A petition carrying the signatures of at least 5% of the Voting congregants.
  - 8.13.2. The specific purpose of any special meeting must be declared when the meeting is called and may not be expanded upon at a special meeting.
  - 8.13.3. Special meetings must be announced ten days in advance to the congregation, as follows.
    - 8.13.3.1. Verbally during at least two Sunday Services prior to the time of the meeting, including the day of the meeting, and,
    - 8.13.3.2. By mail to all voting congregants on or before the first Sunday on which the meeting is announced at services.
  - 8.13.4. The meeting may take place no sooner than following the second Sunday service at which the meeting is announced.

## 9. The Pastor

- 9.1. Calling a senior or solo pastor
  - 9.1.1. When this church is served by one pastor the title of "pastor" shall suffice in these bylaws. If more than one pastor is called, one shall be known as the senior pastor.
  - 9.1.2. Any candidate for pastor must be an authorized minister in the United Church of Christ or have certified Privilege of Call from a UCC Association, or have certification from the Eastern Association Church & Ministry committee that they would be eligible for Dual Standing, if called.
  - 9.1.3. A special meeting of the congregation attended by a representative appointed by the conference shall be called to nominate and elect a search committee to solicit, consider and recommend a candidate to the congregation.
    - 9.1.3.1. The search committee shall invite the advice and help of a conference minister.

- 9.1.3.2. The search committee shall require a supermajority of two-thirds of its membership to pass its final recommendation.
  - 9.1.3.3. All scenarios cannot be anticipated in the call process. Therefore, the search committee is empowered to negotiate any matter, financial or otherwise, which bears upon a candidate becoming available for a call.
  - 9.1.3.4. The search committee shall recommend a single candidate to the congregation and make available to the congregation a detailed summary of all compensation and benefits negotiated by the search committee at the time the special meeting is called.
  - 9.1.3.5. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called by the Core Team to consider the candidate and the candidate's compensation and benefits as negotiated by the search committee and vote on calling this candidate to become the pastor.
  - 9.1.3.6. If a member of the search committee ceases to serve for any reason, that member will not be replaced.
  - 9.1.3.7. If the search committee cannot recommend any candidate it shall meet with the Core Team for consultation. If after this consultation no consensus can be reached the search committee shall disband and the Core Team will call a new special meeting of the congregation to create a new search committee.
- 9.2. Calling an additional pastor
- 9.2.1. All procedures and powers delineated in 9.1 shall be observed.
  - 9.2.2. The senior pastor shall sit on the search committee.
- 9.3. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote of Voting congregants present and voting at a special meeting called for that purpose.
- 9.4. Duties of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which must be approved by the Association.
- 9.5. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors and the Core Team. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through similar consultation.
- 9.6. Termination of a pastor by the congregation.
- 9.6.1. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which, except in the case of the death of the pastor, shall be terminated by the congregation only following consultation with the conference minister and majority vote of the congregation and for the following reasons:
    - 9.6.1.1. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
    - 9.6.1.2. the physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
    - 9.6.1.3. disqualification of the pastor through discipline by the Eastern Association on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;

- 9.6.2. Other reasons a pastor's call may be terminated include: mutual agreement to terminate the call; if a call was made for a specific term, the completion of that term; the resignation of the pastor; or the dissolution of the congregation.
- 9.6.3. If a conference minister or the Church and Ministry committee expresses a desire to mediate the situation, the Core Team shall allow at least one attempt by the conference minister or the Church and Ministry committee to mediate the situation before proceeding with a congregational meeting.
- 9.6.4. This mediation may require that a congregational meeting be postponed.
- 9.6.5. If a conference minister declines to mediate, or, if in the judgment of a 2/3 majority of the Core Team, the attempts at mediation are ineffective, it may schedule a special meeting for the purpose of terminating the pastor according to the rules for scheduling a special meeting of the congregation.
- 9.6.6. A period of 60 days or any mutually agreed period shall be observed in ending the relationship between a pastor and the congregation.
  - 9.6.6.1. A9.6.f.i Some causes for termination or investigation may require that the pastor step away from all duties immediately if terminated or until any investigation recommended by a conference minister is concluded.
  - 9.6.6.2. A9.6.f.ii In the event of an immediate termination, and in consultation with a conference minister, the congregation may decline any financial support of the pastor beyond the date of termination.
  - 9.6.6.3. A9.6.f.iii In the event of an investigation called for by a conference minister or the Association Committee on Ministry, the pastor shall continue to receive salary and benefits even if s/he has stepped away from all duties pending the conclusion of the investigation.
- 9.7. The senior pastor has authority to request the resignation of a subordinate pastor. This may be done only after consulting with a conference minister and the Core Team to verify that this course of action is merited by the circumstances of the dismissal, and that any applicable laws are observed. The senior pastor may overrule the objections of the conference minister and/or Core Team, but may not neglect a legal barrier to dismissal.
- 9.8. An interim pastor may be appointed by the Core Team in consultation with a conference minister at a time of pastoral vacancy.
  - 9.8.1. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a Supply pastor with the consent of the Core Team.
  - 9.8.2. An interim pastor may not guide, consult or participate in the search process or the selection of a new pastor.
- 9.9. A pastor and the congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations before the last day of the call.
- 9.10. Each pastor shall become a congregant of the congregation if s/he accepts the letter of call.
- 9.11. The pastor has the authority to request the resignation of any paid non-clergy staff, only after consulting with the Core Team to verify that this course of action is merited by the circumstances of the dismissal, and that any applicable laws are observed.

## 10. Information Access to Records of the Congregation

- 10.1. It is recognized that the congregation, in the pursuit of its regular duties, may acquire information sought by others for purposes of their own. Everyone with access to records in this congregation are responsible to:
  - 10.1.1. a provide reasonable access to information within the congregation and the United Church of Christ.
  - 10.1.2. prevent any access from outside the congregation or the United Church of Christ.
  - 10.1.3. report to the pastor(s) or Core Team any attempt to access records by anyone for any reason the custodian of those records deems to be suspect.
- 10.2. Access to composite records of the congregation is granted to members of the Core Team.
- 10.3. Access to individual member records or individual financial records of the congregation is granted to:
  - 10.3.1. the pastor or any member of the staff or Core Team specifically approved by the pastor.
  - 10.3.2. the congregant.
  - 10.3.3. the legal parent or guardian of a minor congregant.

## 11. Amendments

- 11.1. Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by:
  - 11.1.1. at least one third of the active congregants; or
  - 11.1.2. a majority of the Core Team.
- 11.2. Proposals must be filed in writing and submitted to the Core Team 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose.
- 11.3. The Core Team shall notify the congregation of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- 11.4. Any amendments to these bylaws shall be sent to the Conference at least 30 days prior to voting as an opportunity for advice and guidance. This is also an opportunity to affirm that the amendments are congruent with the constitution and bylaws of the United Church of Christ, the Conference or the Association.
- 11.5. Any amendment to these bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation.
- 11.6. If an amendment to these bylaws previously approved by the conference is significantly altered in the course of a congregational meeting and debate it may not be implemented until the conference minister has been consulted and the conference minister concurs with the alterations as being congruent with the constitution and bylaws of the United Church of Christ, the Conference or the Association.