

**CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

SILVER SPRING, MD

Revised June 7, 2009

ARTICLES

I	NAME	1
II	OBJECT	1
III	POLITY	1
IV	DOCTRINE	2
V	COVENANT	2
VI	MEMBERSHIP	3
VII	SERVICES	3
VIII	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	3
IX	MEETINGS	4
X	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	4
XI	BOARDS	5
XII	OFFICERS	7
XIII	NOMINATING PROCESS	9
XIV	ELECTED DELEGATES	9
XV	AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS	10
XVI	FINANCES	10
XVII	FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE YEARS	11
XVIII	BYLAWS	12
XIX	AMENDMENTS	12
XX	APPLICABILITY	12
XXI	DISSOLUTION OF CCC	12

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be Christ Congregational Church. It is incorporated under the laws of the state of Maryland.

ARTICLE II - OBJECT

The church shall endeavor to build a fellowship in the name and spirit of Christ. It shall at all times indicate that a welcome awaits everyone. A program of Christian education shall be presented for all ages.

ARTICLE III - POLITY

SECTION 1 - ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds its guidance in matters of faith and discipline

in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by Divine Spirit through reason, faith and conscience.

SECTION 2 - GOVERNMENT

The government of the church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs.

SECTION 3 - JUDICATURE

While the church is amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, comity and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, and it pledges itself to share its aims and work.

ARTICLE IV - DOCTRINE

SECTION 1 - SCRIPTURE

- a. The church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship.
- b. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of personal conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

SECTION 2 - FAITH

The following statement of faith is not a test, but is an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God:

We have faith in God the Creator, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love; in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us, renewing, comforting and inspiring our souls.

ARTICLE V - COVENANT

The public acceptance of this Covenant shall be a requirement for membership in this church:

We covenant with one another as a community of faith grounded in God, the source of all life. We seek to walk in the ways of God's abiding love, made known or to be made known to us through the Holy Scriptures, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and worship. Affirming that all persons are created in the image of God, we honor and celebrate people of all races, cultures, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities. In our life together we endeavor to support each other on our spiritual journeys with open minds and loving hearts. We hold it to be the mission of the church to embody the good news of God's love for all people by laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, and the reign of peace. We work and pray for the transformation of ourselves and all creation into realms of God's compassion; and in faith we place ourselves in God's hands, in death as in life.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 - QUALIFICATIONS

The members of this church are persons who have made public acceptance of its Covenant, on the basis of:

- a. confession of faith and baptism,
- b. presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches, or
- c. reaffirmation of faith.

SECTION 2 - PROCEDURE

The procedure for reception, termination and restoration of membership shall be provided for in the bylaws.

SECTION 3 - PRIVILEGES

Only members of the church may be elected to offices or positions on boards of the church.

SECTION 4 - CHARTER MEMBERS

Charter members are those who were received into membership between December 3, 1944 and April 1, 1945.

ARTICLE VII - SERVICES

SECTION 1 - WORSHIP

Services of worship shall be held each Sunday, the hours to be determined by the Board of Deacons. Other services of worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held as determined by the deacons or the ministers.

SECTION 2 - THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such times as the deacons shall determine.

SECTION 3 - BAPTISM

The baptism of adults and the baptism of children shall be administered at such times as the minister may appoint. Ordinarily, this will be at the weekly services of worship.

ARTICLE VIII - CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SECTION 1 - PROGRAM

The church shall conduct an educational program through a church school and such other activities as may be desirable.

SECTION 2 - PURPOSE

It shall be the purpose of the educational program to educate all participants toward an increasing experience of fellowship with God and in the development of a character which shall be genuinely and consistently Christian in all human relationships. It will endeavor to develop interest in the church and a growing desire to participate in its full life and work.

SECTION 3 - SUPERVISION

The administration of the educational program for children, youth, and adults shall be under the general supervision of the Board of Christian Education.

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS

SECTION 1 - ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the church shall be held in late May or June, as determined by the Executive Council, to receive the yearly reports of the boards, officers, organizations and departments; to elect officers and new board members; to adopt the budget for the next fiscal year; to transact other business; and to plan for the new year. Notices of the annual meeting shall be given on the two preceding Sundays.

SECTION 2 - SPECIAL MEETINGS

The clerk shall call special meetings on the recommendation of the Executive Council, the deacons, the trustees, a minister, or on written requests of twenty-five members of the church. The call must state the nature of the business to be transacted, and the date, time, and place as determined by the council. A meeting on routine matters may also be held in conjunction with worship or other service.

SECTION 3 - QUORUM

A quorum for all annual or special meetings of the church shall consist of 10 percent of the membership.

SECTION 4 - VOTING

Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive, and all members of the church are entitled to vote. Nonmembers who contribute regularly to the support of the church may vote on financial matters. A mail ballot may be authorized by a majority vote at a duly called meeting of the church. Upon request by 20 percent of those present, voting shall be by written ballot.

ARTICLE X - THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SECTION 1 - COMPOSITION

The Executive Council, herein referred to as the "Council," shall consist of the moderator as the chair, the clerk as the secretary, the clerk of the rolls, the moderator-elect, the last past moderator available, the ministers (including interim ministers), program staff as designated by vote of the Executive Council each year, the communications officer, a youth member, the treasurer, the financial secretary, the chairs of the boards or their designees, and three (3) members at large elected at the annual meeting for staggered three

year terms. An at-large member shall be ineligible to serve in that capacity for one year after serving one full three-year term. The youth member shall be elected annually.

SECTION 2 - FUNCTIONS

The Council shall provide leadership for the church's Christian mission by engaging in long-range planning, overseeing the entire program and organization of the church, recommending church-wide priorities to the congregation, advising with the ministers and moderator on the general direction of the church's activities, and providing opportunities for leadership training. All officers, boards, standing committees and auxiliary organizations shall present their plans and programs to the Council for its information. The Council may create action groups or task forces outside the structure of the boards for particular projects or purposes. The Council may propose amendments to the church Constitution and Bylaws as appropriate.

SECTION 3 - MEETINGS

The Council shall meet monthly or as the moderator or the Council determines. Twelve members shall constitute a quorum, except with respect to Article XIX, Section 2.

SECTION 4 - POWERS

- a. The Council is empowered to fill any vacancy in an elected position or office for the unexpired term, except in the case of ministers. It shall receive and consider the recommendation of the Nominating Committee for such vacancies.
- b. The Council may establish and appoint such committees as it deems necessary.
- c. When necessary, the Council shall implement the decisions made at the annual meeting and special meetings of the church, and shall act for the church as authorized or directed. It may make recommendations to the church on all matters.

ARTICLE XI - BOARDS

SECTION 1 - TERMS

Elected members of all boards will serve for terms of three years. One third of such members shall be elected annually. After serving two full or partial terms in succession such elected member shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection to the same board.

SECTION 2 - BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Board of Christian Education shall have supervision and direction of the church school, youth programs, and summer camps, with full power to appoint and remove teachers and other school officers, determine policy, approve programs and provide guidance to the staff. The board shall also oversee a program of adult education.

SECTION 3 - BOARD FOR CHURCH LIFE

The Board for Church Life shall coordinate and initiate church events and activities that enhance the sense both of community within the church and of knowing and enjoying one another.

SECTION 4 - BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons shall cooperate with and advise the ministers as to the spiritual nurture of the church and community. The Board shall assist in the preparation and administration of the ordinances and in caring for the poor, sick, sorrowing, and indifferent, and shall advise those standing committees having responsibilities for various aspects of the worship services.

SECTION 5 - BOARD OF OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Board of Outreach and Engagement shall organize and lead a program to inspire interest in the Christian gospel and this church, extend the opportunities of church membership to those persons who may wish to participate in the fellowship of the church, and assist new members in becoming actively involved in church life.

SECTION 6 - BOARD FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

The Board for Social Witness shall organize and lead a program to encourage and support our church's Christian witness in the world, wherein our church undertakes to labor for the progress of knowledge, the assurance of responsible freedom for all persons, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the support of mission needs. The Board shall lead and coordinate action and advocacy on social justice and peace issues; educate the congregation about mission emphases and needs of the denomination; identify service opportunities for social justice and human service needs; and allocate financial support for appropriate missions, organizations, and activities related to these needs.

SECTION 7 - BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

The Board of Stewardship shall promote and solicit the giving of time, talent and resources by the members to meet the mission of the church and shall maintain a continuing program of organization and education of the congregation in Christian principles of stewardship.

SECTION 8 - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- a. Except as otherwise provided, the Board of Trustees shall have the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its legal and financial affairs, including preparation of the unified budget and its presentation to the church. The board shall also oversee the development and implementation of all personnel policies.
- b. All trustees of the church are also trustees of the church corporation; and the chair, vice-chair, and secretary of the board shall also serve as president, vice-president, and secretary, respectively, of the corporation. All actions of the Board of Trustees are subject to the laws of the state of Maryland.
- c. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the appointment and termination of all staff except for the ministers called by the congregation. The board shall seek the counsel of the moderator, moderator elect, and the most recent past moderator available when considering the termination of acting or interim ministers and major program staff such as a director of music or director of Christian education. Action to terminate employment may be appealed to the Executive Council by the staff member affected and shall be effective 30 days after a written notice to the employee by the board or at such other time as the board or the Executive Council, in case of an appeal, shall designate.

ARTICLE XII - OFFICERS

SECTION 1 - MINISTERS

- a. Ministers shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of a called meeting of the church. When a vacancy occurs, the Council shall appoint a committee which, after seeking the guidance of the Divine Spirit, shall, with the cooperation of the ministers of the conference and others, make a canvass of available ministers, select, recommend, and introduce to the congregation the one who appears to be the best qualified, and at a church meeting propose that a call be issued.
- b. When a minister has accepted the call, if it is mutually agreeable, the Potomac Association shall be invited to sit as an ecclesiastical Council for installation. Ministers shall become members of the church and of the association.
- c. While the term of a minister shall be indefinite, the church may at any time, by a majority vote at a meeting called for the purpose, request a resignation for cause effective in thirty (30) days. A minister shall give sixty (60) days notice of intention to resign.
- d. The ministers, with the assistance of the deacons, shall be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. They shall seek to enlist followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, have under their care all services of public worship, and direct and coordinate the activities of the church in conjunction with the various boards and committees.
- e. They shall be *ex officio* members of all boards and committees.

SECTION 2 - DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The director of music shall be employed for an indefinite period. In the event of a vacancy, the Council is authorized to select and appoint a qualified person, after first obtaining the advice of the trustees, and after receiving a report from a representative committee appointed to canvass and study eligible candidates. The director shall coordinate and supervise music programs under the guidance of the ministers. The director of music shall give thirty (30) days notice of intention to resign.

SECTION 4 - MODERATOR

The moderator shall preside at all meetings of the church and Council and shall, in cooperation with the ministers, determine their agenda. The moderator shall give particular attention to church-wide issues, to coordination, and to long-range planning for the church. The moderator cannot serve two successive terms. In the absence of the moderator, the moderator-elect shall preside.

SECTION 5 - MODERATOR-ELECT

The moderator-elect shall serve one year, becoming moderator for the succeeding year; endeavor to become thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the church program in preparation for succession to the position of moderator; and be a member of the Executive Council. Should the moderator be unable to complete a full term, the moderator-elect shall become Moderator and a new moderator-elect shall be elected.

SECTION 6 - COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The communications officer, working with the communications committee, shall be responsible for planning and implementing activities to improve communications within the church in order to ensure that

all are aware of its activities and programs and to build a sense of participation and for planning and implementing communications activities to inform the wider community and the general public as appropriate. The officer shall be elected for a term of two years, serve as the chair of the communications committee, and work closely with the staff and the Executive Council.

SECTION 7 – CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk, elected for a term of one year, shall: keep a record of the proceedings of the church and Council; file all communications and written official records; notify all persons elected to offices, boards, and committees; give notices on all church and Council meetings; conduct correspondence not otherwise provided for; and perform such other duties as usually pertains to the office of church clerk.

SECTION 8 – CLERK OF THE ROLLS

The clerk of the rolls, elected for a term of three (3) years, shall: keep a register of the members of the church, recording their addresses and dates and modes of reception and removal; keep a record of baptisms, marriages, and deaths; issue letters of transfer when requested; as well as an accurate record of total church membership; and record the number in attendance at all worship services. At the end of the year, the clerk of the rolls shall prepare a report of all membership actions taken during that year. In cooperation with the ministers, the Board of Deacons and the Board of Outreach and Engagement, the clerk of the rolls shall prepare a list of members to be removed from the church rolls. This list shall be voted on at the annual meeting of the church.

SECTION 9 - FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The financial secretary, elected for a term of two (2) years, shall receive all payments to the unified budget and other offerings, keep accurate account of each pledge, and furnish each person pledging with periodic statements. The financial secretary shall deposit all monies to the church's bank account, except monies received for the Board of Deacons, which shall be delivered to the treasurer of the deacons.

SECTION 10 - ASSISTANT FINANCIAL SECRETARIES

The assistant financial Secretaries, each elected for a term of two (2) years, shall assist in the duties of the financial secretary.

SECTION 11 - TREASURER

The treasurer, elected for a term of two (2) years, shall pay the bills of the church as directed by the trustees, keep account of all of the receipts and disbursements, and give such bond as the trustees shall prescribe. The treasurer, with the approval of the trustees, may contract with trust companies, national banks, the conference, or the Corporation of the General Synod, to invest endowments, legacies, trust funds, and securities in such accounts as are legal investments for trust funds in the state of Maryland. The treasurer shall maintain financial accounts of all assets under control of the Planned Giving Committee and shall be empowered to sign checks and all other documents on behalf of the Planned Giving Committee.

SECTION 12 - ASSISTANT TREASURER

The assistant treasurer, elected for a term of two (2) years, shall assist in the duties of the treasurer and shall assume these duties during the inability of the treasurer.

SECTION 13 - AUDITOR

The auditor shall examine the accounts of the treasurer and the financial secretary and report in the annual report at the annual meeting.

SECTION 14 - CHURCH HISTORIAN

The church historian shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and shall keep an account of important events in the life of the church, with special attention to historic services and meetings, which shall appear in the annual report.

SECTION 15 - ARCHIVIST

The archivist shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and shall maintain, revise, update, and publicize the archives of the church.

SECTION 16 - OTHER OFFICERS

Other officers may be elected as need shall dictate.

SECTION 17 - TERMS

Unless otherwise stated in this article, each officer shall be elected for a term of one year.

ARTICLE XIII - NOMINATING PROCESS

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate candidates are nominated for all elected positions in the church at the annual meeting, and throughout the year as necessary. The committee for the ensuing year shall consist of thirteen (13) members: five (5), including the chair, to be elected at the annual meeting, the moderator-elect, and the chair or designated representative of each of the seven boards. The committee shall prepare a slate of nominated candidates, selected from the membership of the church, for all offices, boards, delegates, the Planned Giving Committee, at-large members of the Executive Council and the Personnel Committee, and the chair and other at-large members of the nominating committee for the annual meeting. In making such nominations the committee shall give due consideration to representation among the nominees of a broad range of congregational views. Such nominations shall be posted at the church not later than two Sundays prior to the annual meeting. Church members may make additional nominations from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall work closely with the moderator and the Executive Council to propose a candidate at the next meeting of the Council if a vacancy occurs in an elected position during the year. The Nominating Committee may, to the extent it so desires, make recommendations to the Council for appointments to standing committees.

ARTICLE XIV - ELECTED DELEGATES

SECTION 1 - ORGANIZATIONS

At the annual meeting of the church, delegates shall be elected to the following in numbers as provided for by the named organizations:

- a. General Synod of the United Church of Christ (when appropriate)
- b. Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ
- c. Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ
- d. Other such religious activities in which the church may vote to participate on a continuing basis

SECTION 2 - REPORTS

A representative of each group of delegates shall report on meetings of the activity concerned to the Council and shall summarize activities in the Annual Report of the church.

ARTICLE XV - AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1 - CHURCH GROUPS

Church groups not specifically provided for herein may be established as the Council directs.

SECTION 2 - NON-CHURCH GROUPS

All other organizations using the church and its equipment are under the general supervision of the Board of Trustees, which may establish a schedule of charges for use of the church.

ARTICLE XVI - FINANCES

SECTION 1 - OFFERING FUNDS

- a. The church, in seeking financial participation from its members and friends, shall adhere to the principles of Christian stewardship.
- b. Opportunity shall be offered to all members and friends of the church to make pledges.
- c. The church shall operate on a unified operating budget and may establish a capital budget, with all individuals and groups invited to contribute thereto.
- d. At least ten (10) percent of the total unified operating budget of the church shall be given for the apportionment program of the denomination.
- e. The designation of monies for current expenses, the apportionment, benevolences and specific objects shall be under the plans approved by vote of the church after consideration by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may make minor adjustments in the designation of monies when necessary, reporting such adjustments to the Council at its next regular meeting.
- f. An offering for the deacon's fund shall be made at services as designated by the Board of Deacons.
- g. Special offerings for benevolence purposes requested by the denomination shall be designated and administered by the Board for Social Witness. Such offerings may be received at worship services subject to the agreement of the Board of Deacons with regard to timing and placement in the service.
- h. The Executive Council may authorize occasional special fund-raising efforts for particular projects or purposes of the church.

SECTION 2 - APPORTIONMENT

The church will cooperate with the Potomac Association, the Central Atlantic Conference, and the national

boards of the United Church of Christ in the apportionment plan. The unified budget shall include the contribution to the association, the conference, and the General Synod.

SECTION 3 – ENDOWMENT FUND

- a. Planned gifts by will, trust, life insurance, or otherwise, and substantial, non-recurring donations shall be set aside in an Endowment Fund. Memorial funds shall not be included. The Board of Trustees shall by resolution define "substantial" and "non-recurring" for the purposes of this section. The Endowment Fund shall be kept separate from the general funds of the church and shall be invested by the treasurer under the direction of the Planned Giving Committee pursuant to powers and authorities delegated by the Board of Trustees. All assets are to be held in the name of the Christ Congregational Church Endowment Fund.
- b. The object of the Endowment Fund shall be to strengthen the long-term ministry of Christ Congregational Church by creating and building financial assets to help CCC develop significant new ministries beyond what would otherwise be possible through the church's operating budget and to enhance the facilities of the church. Expenditure of the principal and capital appreciation of the unrestricted (not designated by the donor) portion of the Fund shall be made by the Planned Giving Committee only upon approval by two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a properly called meeting of the church. Expenditure of the restricted portion (funds specifically designated by the donor and accepted by the Planned Giving Committee) shall be made by the Planned Giving Committee in accordance with the donor's wishes. Interest and dividend income earned by the Fund shall be expended or retained by the Planned Giving Committee according to a plan developed by the Planned Giving Committee and approved annually by majority vote of those present and voting at a properly called meeting of the church.

SECTION 4 - MEMORIALS

- a. A general memorial fund shall be established by the Board of Trustees to which all memorial gifts shall be added when the use of such gifts has not been designated by the donor. This fund shall be administered by the trustees and shall be used for special projects or items that have been approved as appropriate memorials by the Executive Council.
- b. Memorial gifts may be designated by the donor to be used for specific projects or items that have been approved as appropriate memorials by the Executive Council. Funds received for such designated purposes shall be held by the treasurer and disbursed at the direction of the Board of Trustees.
- c. The Board of Deacons, in consultation with the church staff, the various boards, and the committees of the church, shall prepare and revise annually a list of appropriate purposes for which memorial gifts may be used, and this list shall be approved by the Executive Council. It shall be made available to all members and friends of the church. A Memorial Book shall also be maintained by the Board of Deacons and shall contain a record of the donor and the person memorialized as well as an indication of the purposes for which memorial funds have been used.

ARTICLE XVII - FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE YEARS

SECTION 1- FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church and corporation shall begin July 1.

SECTION 2 - DUTIES

Unless otherwise provided herein, all elected officers and members of boards and committees shall assume their duties at the conclusion of the annual meeting and serve until their successors are elected or appointed.

ARTICLE XVIII - BYLAWS

The Council is empowered and directed to adopt bylaws for the orderly administration of church activities consistent with this constitution.

ARTICLE XIX - AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1 - CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting of the church; provided that, for Articles I-VII inclusive, and for this Article XIX, the proposed amendment shall be presented to the members in writing at least two months and shall be read before the congregation on three consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting; provided further, that, for other articles a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment be printed in the church bulletin for two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting. Amendments may be adopted as proposed or altered by a two-thirds vote at the meeting at which they are considered.

SECTION 2 - BYLAWS

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at a meeting of the Council, or by a majority vote at a meeting of the church. For this purpose, a quorum of the Council shall be 18 (eighteen) members.

ARTICLE XX - APPLICABILITY

No provision of this constitution or bylaws shall be operative which is contrary to the corporate charter or the pertinent laws of the state of Maryland.

ARTICLE XXI – DISSOLUTION OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

In the event that Christ Congregational Church ceases to exist, either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of its assets, including the Endowment Fund, shall be at the discretion of the congregation in a duly called meeting in conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws of the church and in consultation with the staff of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ. Disposition of the church's assets must be to qualified nonprofit charities or religious organizations.