

**Accepted By All Church Vote June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018**

**St. John's United Church of Christ  
of Belvidere, Illinois**

**Article I. Name**

The name of this church is St. John's United Church of Christ of Belvidere, Illinois, (hereafter referred to as "we", "our", "the church") in full relationship with the denomination of the United Church of Christ (UCC).

**Article II. Purpose**

Our avowed purpose is to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship, unity and the Church Universal; render loving service toward all people; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace. This purpose is firmly attested by the creeds, our mission statement and the UCC Statement of Faith.

**Article III. Membership**

Our membership shall be open to all those who propose to live a Christian life. Any person may become a member upon recommendation of the Pastoral Leadership and Council, confession of faith and baptism, letter of transfer from another church or by reaffirmation of faith. New members will be received at a service of worship as determined by Pastoral Leadership and Council. Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to Christian life, partake in our services and missions and contribute regularly for our local and world-wide benevolences.

A member may request a letter of dismissal or transfer to another church. We shall patiently endeavor to secure that member's continuance in our fellowship; failing to do so, such requests will be duly honored and granted by a vote of Council.

**Article IV. Worship and Meetings**

Worship shall be held each Sunday, except when suspended for proper cause by a recommendation from the Pastoral Leadership and/or Moderator. Times shall be recommended and approved by the Pastoral Leadership and Council. Other services or studies may be held as determined by the Pastoral Leadership and members of the congregation, as well as when sacraments such as communion and baptism will be administered.

There will be an Annual Meeting to hear reports of the Pastoral Leadership, Officers and our organizations; to elect officers, adopt an annual budget and transact business as necessary. Special meetings may be called by Council or the Moderator, the Pastoral Leadership, or by a petition of ten members. Meetings must be called within three weeks of petition date. Only business advertised as the purpose of the special meeting will be considered at that meeting. Special meetings will be announced two consecutive weeks prior.

Annual or special meetings shall have a quorum of twenty-five members. Unless stated, the vote of a majority of members present and voting shall be the action of the church. All members shall have voice and vote; however, no members under eighteen shall vote on matters pertaining to real estate (its sale, acquisition, or mortgage). Robert's Rules of Order shall be generally abided at these meetings, unless waived by a majority of those present for an exceptional reason.

### **Article V. Pastor and other Staff Personnel**

We shall only consider pastoral candidates who have standing or eligibility in the Prairie Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. When either the Pastor or we decide to end this relationship, three months notice will be given by either party unless otherwise agreed by mutual consent. This procedure will accord by the rules of the Prairie Association. Discipline of the Pastor is the responsibility of the Association. However, the final retention or dismissal of the Pastor is our choice. The Pastor shall be ex officio in Council.

**The Pastor**, with assistance of Council and the congregation, shall lead us in enlisting followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, and administer spiritual activities in cooperation with various task forces which can be created as needed. The Pastor shall be responsible to Council. Pastoral Leadership shall oversee the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

**A Pastoral Associate** may be called, in cooperation with the Pastor and the Council, and observing budgetary limitations. She or he will be responsible to the Pastor and Council. Pastoral Leadership shall oversee the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

**A Faith Community Nurse** may be called by Council, in concurrence with the Pastoral Leadership, and observing budgetary limitations. He or she must have an active, professional nursing license in the state of Illinois. This nurse shall assist the Pastoral Leadership in ministering to persons in crisis, especially in time of illness or death.

**Minister of Music, Church Organist, Choir Director, and other staff** may be called by Council, in concurrence with Pastoral Leadership, and observing budgetary limitations. Pastoral Leadership and other staff, with Council, shall approve these appointments and calls.

## **Article VI. Church Officers and Government**

We shall be governed by the membership assembled at Annual or Special Congregational Meeting.

**Council** shall be the church's policy-making body and administrative authority. All officers, task forces and organization shall periodically present their plans and program to Council. Council shall visualize the goal and task(s) of the church and advise and cooperate with the Pastoral Leadership and task forces to formulate a well-rounded program. It shall meet regularly, at least once a month, at a date of their choosing. These meetings may be suspended or rescheduled by a Council vote. Council shall decide after a six-week absence of Pastoral Leadership how to fill the Pastoral duties. All members of Council shall serve with voice and vote, except the Pastoral Leadership, who may voice opinions. Six members shall constitute a quorum. To enact a measure six positive votes are required.

**The below-listed officers of the church, comprising Council, may serve up to three, two-year consecutive terms, then having a one-year period of ineligibility from nomination or appointment to the same position. Task forces may be created by any officer of the church to complete the work of the church.**

**The Moderator** must be a member and shall preside at all Congregational meetings of the church and the Council, and shall be responsible for the preparation of an agenda and the scheduling for each such meeting to provide ample time for discussion. The Moderator, in cooperation with the Pastoral Leadership and the Church Clerk, shall prepare any required denominational and annual reports. He or she will work with the Vice-Moderator to oversee personnel. Elected on odd year.

**The Vice-Moderator** must be a member and shall preside at Congregational and Council meetings in the absence of, or at the request of, the Moderator, lead Pastor Parish Relations meetings and work with Moderator to oversee personnel. Elected on odd year.

**The Church Clerk** must be a member and shall keep the minutes of the business meetings of the church and Council. The Church Clerk shall keep the rolls of our members, recording all births, admissions, dismissals, baptisms, deaths, and marriages; shall issue letters of transfer when authorized, give notice of meetings when such notice is required, conduct correspondence as needed and perform other duties as necessary. The Church Clerk, in cooperation with the Pastoral Leadership and the Moderator, shall prepare any denominational reports. Elected on odd year.

**The Treasurer** shall oversee the checking accounts of the church, keep a record of disbursements and shall pay the bills of the church in consultation with the Council. The Treasurer must submit a financial report at each meeting and shall make available the

current financial status of the church whenever called upon by Council. Elected on odd year.

**The Financial Secretary** shall record the financial contributions, and any designated giving of the members and other friends of the church. Individual givers must be notified at least annually of their pledge and contributions and gifts. The Financial Secretary will provide the Treasurer with a total amount of receipts in a timely manner. Elected on even year.

**The Sexton** will oversee and facilitate the maintenance and security of the church building and grounds, including contacting service professionals and ensuring that annual (or periodic) repairs and assessments are accomplished. The Sexton will also be responsible for matters pertaining to insurance. Elected on even year.

**The Memorial Trustee** shall keep a record of all memorials, endowments, and shall update the Memorial Book on a regular basis and submit quarterly reports. Funds not designated for a specific purpose within six months may be used as deemed appropriate by Council. Every means will be attempted to satisfy the family's wishes. This trustee is responsible for proper handling of all memorials, endowments, and scholarship funds and transfers of property to the church. Elected on even year.

**The Faith Representative** must be a member and assist as support for Confirmation Classes, a Youth Sunday School, an Adult Sunday School, a Youth Group, organize preparation of sanctuary for all worship services, including display of appropriate paraments, communion, candles, flowers, and any other special items needed for the service. This officer will also assist Pastoral staff in overseeing special events and volunteers. Elected on even year.

## **Article VII. Duties, Special Tasks, Committees, Property**

**Personnel** hiring and firing will be done through the Council. Council will also develop and update, as necessary, written job descriptions for all staff and personnel. Accordingly, Council will discuss job descriptions with personnel and disseminate the job descriptions to personnel. Council will also evaluate personnel. The consensus of the evaluations will be conveyed and discussed with each employee regarding their annual performance review. If the reviews are negative, Pastor Parish Relations will be called to discuss the review with the appropriate personnel to find ways to improve as a community. Reviews will inform Council when approving annual salary for each employee and when making other job-related proposals, such as benefits, hours, etc. Moderator or Pastor Parish Relations shall convey to the employees the final decisions regarding salary and benefits based on the vote of Council. All salary recommendations from Council are dependent to final approval of the Congregation as part of the budget process. Council will mediate and advise in situations which affect the relationship between personnel and the church family. When deemed necessary or petitioned by three members, the Pastor Parish Relations committee will meet.

**Auditing** will be conducted by an independent accountant(s) hired by Council and will be conducted biannually.

**Pastor Parish Relations** shall function as a supportive line of communication between the Congregation, Officers, and Organizations, and the Pastoral Leadership to achieve and maintain an effective ministry in the church. Proceedings shall be kept in strict confidence by the members, except for those matters which they agree may be shared. Serves in an advisory capacity on conditions which affect the relationship between the Pastor and the Church family. Shall be comprised of four members as follows: Vice-Moderator as the Chairperson, Faith Representative, and two church members nominated by the Pastoral Leadership and approved by Council. Reports to Council and serves in an advisory capacity on conditions which affect the relationship between the Pastor and the church family.

**A Search Committee** will be appointed by Council whenever a vacancy occurs in the Pastoral Office to seek a candidate for the ministry of the church and shall determine the compensation package limits. The Committee will organize in such manner as best accomplishes the work to be done. The Committee must work in cooperation with the appropriate Prairie Association Executive of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ to secure the names of qualified pastoral candidates and relevant information about such candidates. Committee must unanimously agree on one candidate to be presented to the church for vote. The candidate must receive an affirmative vote of at least eighty-five percent of those members present and voting for a Call to be extended. If the required vote is not attained, additional candidates shall be presented one at a time until that vote is attained. The Committee may do whatever it deems right and necessary to determine the suitability of a candidate, including hearing the candidate in another environment, and it is empowered to request the Council for funds in pursuance of its duties. The Call to the Pastor shall state the terms of agreement between the Pastor and the church.

**Bequeathals:** All gifts and bequests donated to the church shall become the property of St. John's United Church of Christ of Belvidere, Illinois. Upon dissolution of this church, its assets and all property and interest of which it shall be possessed, including any devise, bequest, grants or gifts contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such a dissolution, shall be transferred to the Prairie Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ, unless otherwise stated. Should irreconcilable division occur within the church membership, all parties shall submit the question of the right of property to the Prairie Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ.

**Amendments to this document may occur with a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation present at official Annual or Special Meeting, and members will be given due notice of such prospective amendments.**