

THE CONSTITUTION

Lakewood Congregational Church (*United Church of Christ*)
Lakewood, Ohio

ARTICLE I - NAME

Sec. 1. The name of this church is “Lakewood Congregational Church” (United Church of Christ), and its location is the City of Lakewood, Ohio.

Sec. 2. Where used herein, the word “church” refers to this church and the word “Church” refers to the larger Church of our Lord Jesus Christ unless otherwise clearly indicated.

ARTICLE II – MISSION STATEMENT

We strive to be a welcoming, worshipping community of faith, helping people discover and deepen their relationship with God, growing as disciples of Christ, and reaching out in faith and loving service.

ARTICLE III – OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

In keeping with the spirit of our Mission Statement, Lakewood Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, is an Open and Affirming congregation. We welcome people of all sexual orientation, ages, differing abilities, and ethnic, economic, and racial backgrounds into the full life and ministry of our church. We declare this in the name of the Still Speaking God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, welcomed all people into God’s circle of grace.

ARTICLE IV-COVENANT

The Covenant by which this church exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

Believing that the Hand of God is upon us, and that the place whereon we stand is holy ground, we confess that the chief end of our lives is to glorify God and enjoy God forever. In this faith, we associate ourselves in a Christian Church, and as the Lord's free people declare our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known. Repenting of sin and confessing Jesus Christ as our Teacher, Savior and Lord, we together seek light through the Word, guidance by the Spirit, strength in Prayer and joy in Service. Invoking the aid of God, we do now covenant and agree with each other to maintain this church, promising to attend its meetings, give to it of our substance and take each one his share in its work. We undertake this Covenant in the power of an endless life, praying that, loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may be prepared while we dwell together on earth for the perfect Communion of the Saints in heaven. Amen.

ARTICLE V - STATEMENT OF FAITH

This church commends to its members the following Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ as a testimony of common faith for use in worship, in private devotions, and for purposes of study:

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen.

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT AND POLICY

Sec. 1. The government of this church is vested in its members, depending, as we have in the past, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth.

Sec. 2. In fellowship with other churches both within and outside the United Church of Christ and its appropriate entities, this church has a God-given responsibility toward the whole Church of Jesus Christ, its labors and its extension, even as the larger Church has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the well-being and needs and aspirations of local churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

Sec. 3. Written policies and procedures, consistent with this Constitution, shall be adopted and maintained by the Executive Team and shall be available in the church office for review by the church membership. These policies include, but are not limited to, the following examples: Employment Policy and Rules, Leasing Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Safe Church Policy and Non-Harassment Policy. Each policy will address how it may be amended, and whether such changes require a vote of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 1. Membership in this church is open to any person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and is committed to participate in the purpose of this church.

Sec. 2. A person may become a member of this church (a) upon confession of faith, (b) by presenting a letter of transfer from another church, or (c) by reaffirmation of faith when one is or has been a member of another church and a letter of transfer cannot be obtained. Each member shall pledge to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and work of the church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

Sec. 3. A member of this church may terminate membership by written request for transfer to another church or by termination. A member may be placed on a conditional list if, for a period of two years, the member has not participated in the work and worship of this church. This action shall be the responsibility of the Executive Team. At the end of a maximum period of one year, the member may be reinstated by the Executive Team, with the recommendation of the Senior Minister, or terminated if no change in the member's participation has occurred. Membership may be terminated by the Executive Team if a member appears seriously and persistently to violate the character and spirit of Christian discipleship. The member may request, and shall be granted, a hearing before the Executive Team, and the Executive Team may grant the member a year to make amendment for the offending violations.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH MEETINGS

Sec. 1. The governing body of this church is the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of its members present and voting at a church meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of no less than 10% of the membership; all members are entitled to vote, and a member who cannot attend a meeting may vote by written proxy through another member.

Sec. 2. The Annual Meeting of this church shall be held during the month of February on such date as determined by Executive Team. Notice thereof, stating the object of the meeting, shall be provided to the membership in writing and shall be posted in a prominent place in the church building at least seven days before the day of the meeting and shall be read from the pulpit at least once within a two-week period prior to the meeting.

Sec. 3. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator or by the Administrative Board whenever occasion requires, or when a request in writing is presented by seven members of the church. Notice of the special meeting will be given in the manner provided for the Annual Meeting.

Sec. 4. In the business meetings of the church the following order shall be observed unless another order has been stated in the call of the meeting:

- a) constituting prayer
- b) approving records of previous meeting
- c) reports
- d) unfinished or deferred business
- e) new business
- f) closing prayer, worship or hymn

For procedural issues not addressed herein the church may rely on guidance from Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE IX – EXECUTIVE TEAM

Sec. 1. The Executive Team is the permission-giving body of this church with responsibility for monitoring the ministry and administrative issues to ensure that everything enhances the mission of the church.

Sec. 2. The Executive Team shall consist of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the Moderator, Senior Minister, Treasurer, three Ministry Team liaisons; all of the above are voting members; in addition the Clerk and the professional church staff members participate but are not voting members.

Sec. 3. The Operations Team shall consist of the professional staff, Chair of Building and Grounds, and the Executive Team Vice Chair who shall serve as liaison to the Executive Team. The Aesthetics Committee shall be part of this team as necessary.

Sec. 4. The Personnel Committee shall consist of the Chair of the Executive Team, the Vice-Chair and the Moderator who shall act as Chair of this team. They shall have responsibility for establishing personnel policies and procedures and conducting annual performance reviews for paid staff of the church in consultation with the Senior Minister. The Personnel Team shall have the authority to hire and terminate employees of the Church, except where otherwise dictated by the Constitution.

Sec. 5. The Executive Team shall normally meet once a month, as called by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, and may meet more or less frequently as required. This Team shall receive reports from officers, ministry teams, and committees as the Chairperson or the Executive Team may determine. A quorum, defined as the majority of those present, and no less than five (5) voting members, shall be necessary for a vote on any church business. The Executive Team may appoint whatever committees it deems necessary or advisable and shall designate the ministry team, if any, within which each shall function.

Sec. 6. The Nominating Committee shall have six members. Nominating Committee members will have a two-year term and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. New members will be nominated by the existing Nominating Committee and shall be elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Terms will be staggered to allow for the continuity of leadership, with at least two members being elected each year.

Sec. 7. Any vacancies occurring during the year in offices (other than that of Ministers), ministry teams, or committees may be filled for the balance of the term by the Executive Team with nominations from the Nominating Committee, except vacancies in the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the Executive Team without such nomination.

Sec. 8. The Executive Team shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage or transfer real property without first having secured authorization at a church meeting duly called for the consideration of the subject. Said authorization shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the church who are present and voting at such meeting.

Sec. 9. The Executive Team shall make a report of its actions to the church at each Annual Meeting. It shall prepare a financial statement which shall be available to the congregation not later than the Sunday before the Annual Meeting. It shall approve an annual budget for consideration by the church.

Sec. 10. Except as otherwise specified by the Executive Team, all contracts, stock powers, bond powers, notes, bank accounts or other instruments authorized by the Executive Team may be executed and delivered on behalf of the church by any two of the following: Senior Minister, Chairperson of Executive Team, Vice Chairperson of Executive Team, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Bank accounts may only require one signature for checks up to \$7,500.00 and shall require two signatures for checks over that amount.

Sec. 11. No member of the Executive Team shall be eligible to serve concurrently as a member of the Administrative Board.

ARTICLE X – ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

Sec. 1. The Administrative Board shall hold the Executive Team accountable for the flow of ministry within the church, ensuring that all activities and staff within the church are enhancing the ministry of the church.

Sec. 2. The Administrative Board shall consist of at least five members but not more than seven members elected at each Annual Meeting to serve two-year terms. Terms will be staggered to allow for continuity of leadership, with at least two members being elected each year.

Sec. 3. The Administrative Board shall meet at least twice a year or as often as needed, with the Chairperson of the Executive Team and the Senior Minister, to be informed of the flow of ministry within the church. The Chair of Executive Team will schedule the regular meetings, and meetings can also be called at any other time by the Chair, the Senior Minister or by any member of the Administrative Board.

Sec. 4. The Administrative Board shall have the power to call a congregational meeting. The Administrative Board may recommend to the congregation that any member serving on the Executive Team be replaced if it is determined that that person(s) is acting outside of the mission of the church.

Sec. 5. No member of the Administrative Board shall be eligible to serve concurrently as a member of the Executive Team.

ARTICLE XI-OFFICERS

Sec. 1. The officers of this church shall be the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Executive Team, Senior Minister, Moderator, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer(s), who shall, with the exception of the Senior Minister and Assistant Treasurer, be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve two-year terms, and whose duties shall be those usually associated with such offices including any duties specified in this Constitution. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Moderator shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Sec. 2. At the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present a list of nominations for officers for the ensuing year(s) and for such other positions as this Constitution may prescribe or the Executive Team may request this list to be posted at the same times and in the same places as is the notice for the Annual Meeting. A plurality of votes shall constitute election.

Sec. 3. Any church member may present a nomination from the floor for any office or position to be filled at the Annual Meeting in addition to the nominations presented by the Nominating Committee, provided that any such nomination must receive the prior consent of the nominee.

Sec. 4. The Chairperson of Executive Team shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Team and shall have such responsibilities as may be assigned to the Chairperson of the Executive Team including meeting with the Administrative Board to report on the flow of ministry. The Chairperson of the Executive Team shall be an ex-officio member of all ministry teams.

Sec. 5. The Vice Chairperson of the Executive Team shall perform the duties of the Chairperson during the Chairperson's absence or disability and shall have such other responsibilities as may be assigned to the Vice Chairperson by the Executive Team. The Vice Chairperson of the Executive Team shall also serve as the Executive Team liaison to the Operations Team.

Sec. 6. The Moderator shall give notice of and preside over all meetings of the church membership. He/she shall be a member of the Executive Team and shall chair the Personnel Committee.

Sec. 7. The Clerk, while not an Officer of the church, shall keep the minutes of all duly-called church meetings, notify all officers and committees of their election and appointment, and conduct all correspondence which the Executive Team shall order. The Clerk shall ensure that a record is kept of the names of all members, with the time of admission and removal, and the names of the baptized of the church with the dates of baptism. The Clerk shall have such other powers and duties as may be assigned to the Clerk by the Executive Team, and shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Team.

Sec. 8. The Treasurer shall receive all money which may be paid or contributed to the church, and deposit the same in the name of the church in any depository approved by the Executive Team; keep an account of all money received and disburse the same under the direction of the Executive Team; shall make monthly financial reports at Executive Team meetings; shall assist in the preparation of the annual budget; and shall provide a detailed report to the membership at each Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall also have the custody of all papers relating to the property of the church, and shall give such bond for the faithful discharge of the Treasurer's duties as the Executive Team may require. The Treasurer shall provide the books to be audited from time to time at the request of the Executive Team. The Treasurer shall have such other responsibilities as may be assigned to the Treasurer by the Executive Team.

Sec. 9. The Assistant Treasurer (s) shall perform the duties of the Treasurer during the Treasurer's absence or disability and shall have such other powers and duties as may be assigned to the Assistant Treasurer(s) by the Treasurer or the Executive Team.

ARTICLE XII – MINISTRY TEAMS

Sec. 1. Ministry teams and other organized groups within the church shall be grouped insofar as practical into three areas for purposes of ministry flow and with the enhancement of the church's mission at the center of all activities.

Sec. 2. The Ministry Teams shall be:

- Welcoming Ministries
- Nurture/Growth Ministries
- Outreach Ministries

Sec. 3. Each Ministry Team shall be represented on the Executive Team by a liaison to the Executive Team. This person shall be elected by the church at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term. No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms in this position. This person has the responsibility of meeting on a quarterly basis with the Leaders of the Ministry Teams and reporting back to the Executive Team on the work of the teams.

Sec. 4. Ministry teams within each core ministry shall be established in order to meet the mission of that ministry. The team leader positions shall be filled by the Executive Team based upon the spiritual gifts of each person.

Sec. 5. The Core Ministries of the church are established as follows:

1. Welcoming Ministries shall encompass the following general functions:
 - a) Hospitality-greeters, ushers, worship, guest follow-up, weddings, funerals, meals, child care
 - b) Marketing-advertising, direct mail, TV, publicity, public relations, Website, multi-media
 - c) New Member Orientation
 - d) New Member Integration
2. Nurture/Growth Ministries shall encompass the following general functions:
 - a) Worship and the Arts-flowers, music, Festival Arts
 - b) Education and Spiritual Development-adult education, Sunday School, youth activities, Confirmation, prayer groups, library
 - c) Stewardship
 - d) Membership Development-Circles, special interest groups, men's ministry, women's ministry fellowship groups, special activities.
 - e) Record-keeping—The Historian shall be the custodian of and shall maintain the church's historical records and shall submit an annual report to the membership.

3. Outreach Ministries shall encompass the following general functions:

- a) Mission
- b) Service
- c) To identify needs of the community beyond our church—local, national and worldwide—to which the church can respond.

These ministry teams are only recommendations and it is expected that additional teams will be established as members are called to new ministries.

ARTICLE XIII-OFFICE OF MINISTER

Sec. 1. The Senior Minister shall be the spiritual leader of the church and its chief administrator. The Senior Minister shall be an ex officio member of each Ministry Team and all other organized groups within the church.

Sec. 2. Call of the Senior Minister. Among the steps involved in calling the Senior Minister shall be these:

- a) The Executive Team shall appoint a Search Committee which shall be comprised of seven to fourteen members.
- b) The Diaconate shall arrange for such temporary supply of the pulpit and pastoral ministry as is needed, preferably by means of an Interim Minister.
- c) The Search Committee, in consultation with the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Western Reserve Association, and other appropriate agencies, shall study the records of selected candidates and by investigation, personal interviews, and observation of their conduct of public worship, determine their capacity for the work of the ministry of this church. When the Search Committee has reached a decision, it shall invite the candidate to preach in the church and meet the members and shall arrange to call a special meeting of the church to act upon a call to the pastorate. Prior to serving, the candidate shall have ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ.

Sec. 3. This church may call one or more Associate or Assistant Minister following a procedure similar to that set forth for calling the Senior Minister, except that any such committee shall reach a decision on a candidate in consultation with the Senior Minister.

Sec. 4. The duties of an Associate or Assistant Minister shall be determined by the Senior Minister in consultation with any appropriate ministry team or committee and with the concurrence of the Executive Team.

Sec. 5. Termination of Ministry

a) By Resignation: In case of the resignation of a Minister, the Minister shall submit a letter of resignation to the Executive Team, which shall accept the resignation and thereafter notify the congregation.

b) By Vote of the Congregation: In case of proposed dismissal of a Minister, the Executive Team shall consider the case at a meeting called specifically for that purpose, prior to which the Minister shall have been given at least 10 days notice in writing of the pending action and the church shall have sought the counsel of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ or of its Association. The Minister may attend such meeting of the Executive Team and shall be given full opportunity for a hearing. Then the Executive Team shall consider the subject in executive session without the Minister being present. If a majority of the Executive Team votes for dismissal of the Minister, a special meeting of the church shall be called at which the recommendation of the Executive Team shall be presented, the Minister shall be given ample opportunity to comment, and any appropriate action may be taken. If the majority of members present and voting favor dismissal, the ministry shall terminate at once or as the meeting may determine, and the action shall be reported promptly to the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ and its Association.

Sec. 6. This church may engage such other professional staff members as it may determine and such other employees as may prove necessary or desirable, all such staff members and employees to be subject to the supervision and direction of the Senior Minister under plans approved by the Executive Team. All professional and support staff of the Church shall be subject to an annual evaluation procedure arranged for by the Chair of the Personnel Committee in concert with the Senior Minister.

Sec. 7. Before consummating the employment of any individual covered by this Article, terms of employment are to be negotiated and finalized by the Personnel Committee in conjunction with the Treasurer, and an employment contract may be prepared if appropriate.

ARTICLE XIV - DIACONATE

Sec. 1. The Diaconate shall consist of approximately twelve persons. It shall elect its own Chairperson annually, may elect a Vice Chair and shall meet at the call of the Senior Minister or its Chairperson not less often than quarterly.

Sec. 2. Approximately six Deacons shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve two-year terms. No person may serve more than two consecutive two-year terms.

Sec. 3. The Diaconate shall assist the Ministers in the overseeing of worship, the preparation and administration of the Sacraments, the winning of persons to Christ, the securing of new members, the maintenance of high standards of church membership, the faithful practice of discipleship, the fulfillment of the requirements of membership, and the ministry of compassion to any and all, but particularly to those in need, those infirmed, and those aggrieved. The Diaconate may be assisted in any of its activities by persons whose terms of service as Deacons have expired, by other interested members and by the youth of the church.

Sec. 4. The Diaconate may recommend and the church may elect at any church meeting to the status of Deacon Emeritus/Emerita any member who has reached the age of seventy years and who has served the church with distinction at any time at any time for a total of twelve years or more.

ARTICLE XV- AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1. This Constitution shall be reviewed approximately every five years, or as deemed necessary, by a committee convened by the Executive Team. This committee shall submit its recommendations for revisions to the Executive Team for approval to present to the church membership. This Constitution may be amended at an Annual or Special Meeting of the church by a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting.

Sec. 2. In addition to the review committee's recommendations, other motions to amend this Constitution may be submitted by members of the congregation. They must be put in writing and shall be presented to the Executive Team no later than the meeting prior to the Annual Meeting or one month prior to the date of the Special Meeting, pursuant to the rules regarding church meetings shown in Article VIII. The Executive Team shall present all proposed Amendments to the Constitution, with any comments, at the appropriate Church Meeting, for approval or disapproval as set forth in Article VIII. However, the proposed Amendment can be modified by members at the Church meeting and voted for approval without prior submission to the Executive Team.

ARTICLE XVI-EFFECTIVE DATE

The amended Constitution shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the membership of this church.

Our Mission Statement proclaims our common goal.

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worshipping community of faith,
helping people discover and deepen
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