

**URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**BYLAWS**

*(Revised June 2004 [Addition of Article XV])*

*(Revised June 2005 [Changed Article VII to read “associate”])*

# URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## BYLAWS

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### Article I. NAME

The name of this church is the Urbandale United Church of Christ.

### Article II. PURPOSES

The purposes of this church are to worship God, preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, celebrate the sacraments, experience Christian community within this church and the church universal, render loving service, and strive for justice and peace.

### Article III. OUR MISSION COVENANT

The Urbandale United Church of Christ is a community of people who covenant with God and one another to walk together in the way of the Christian faith, responding to and rejoicing in the cost and joy of discipleship. Together, we commit ourselves to:

- affirm the tenets of the Christian faith
- celebrate the good news that God has come and remains among us
- proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed, and
- embody God's love and justice in all that we do and share with the world.

We covenant to be a community which remains open to the challenges of the Christian faith. We welcome into this community of faith, and affirm the participation in all aspects of church life, persons of every age, race, gender, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. We will continue our efforts toward inclusiveness, and stand against all forms of discrimination. We will empower ourselves, our children, and one another to be fully present in the world, living in Christ's image and striving for justice and peace.

To accomplish this mission we will provide opportunities for the members and friends of the Urbandale United Church of Christ to participate in:

- worship and celebration
- life-span education and exploration of faith
- fellowship and nurture
- social action and service
- stewardship of time, talent, treasure, and trust
- outreach and growth.

#### **Article IV. POLITY**

The congregation shall be a member of the United Church of Christ, and it shall sustain that relationship in accordance with the constitutional bylaws of the United Church of Christ, as adopted by the General Synod.

As a congregation of the United Church of Christ, the government of this church is vested exclusively in the congregation. The congregation consists of all members and associate members in good standing. This church is in communion with all churches which follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge special obligation to other congregations which are a part of the United Church of Christ. We pledge ourselves to share in their common religious and educational work, particularly as represented by the Central Association, the Iowa Conference, and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

#### **Article V. FAITH COVENANT**

This 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 Christian covenant. Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility as members to look to the Word of God in the scriptures, and to the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit to nurture and guide our creative and redemptive work in the world. We claim as our own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant reformers. We affirm the responsibility of each generation to make this faith its own. It is our responsibility as members to attempt in all ways to stay true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will make every effort in our lives to give witness to the spirit of God, worship God, and act in every way to fulfill the divine commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22: 37,39)

#### **Article VI. MEMBERSHIP**

##### **A. Full Membership**

Membership in the Urbandale United Church of Christ is available to all persons.

New members may be received by the Congregation by one or more of the following:

1. Letter of transfer from another church
2. Re-affirmation of Christian Faith
3. Affirmation of Christian Faith
4. Confirmation of Christian Faith.

New members received by transfer, re-affirmation, or affirmation of Christian faith are expected to complete a membership orientation class.

Good standing shall be provided any person who becomes a member of this congregation. Responsibility of maintaining good standing shall lie with each member and shall include:

1. Attending worship,
2. Partaking in the Lord's Supper, and
3. Supporting the work of the church through contribution of time, talent, treasure and prayer.

If, after a period in excess of two years, a member has not fulfilled these obligations, the Membership Team may contact that member and encourage active participation in the church. After the Membership Team has made such contact, if the member's relationship to the church does not change within one year, the Membership Team may recommend to the Leadership Team that said member be placed on the inactive rolls.

The Membership Team shall update the church membership annually by adding new members and removing deceased members. The Membership Team may also remove members by:

1. Granting letters of transfer to other churches, or
2. Accepting resignations, or
3. Retiring to inactive status those members who have not been in good standing for a period in excess of three years.

### **B. Associate Membership**

The church anticipates that most persons seeking to join the Urbandale United Church of Christ will desire full membership. However, in the following circumstances, new members may join as Associate Members:

1. Persons who maintain more than one residence and desire membership in the Urbandale United Church of Christ during the times they live in central Iowa while retaining a membership in their other church.
2. Clergy who are members in a church of another denomination, but desire membership in the Urbandale United Church of Christ in order to maintain dual standing in our denomination and the other denomination.
3. Full members who move away but desire to maintain a close relationship with Urbandale United Church of Christ while transferring their membership to a church outside of central Iowa.

New Associate members may be received by the congregation after completing a membership orientation class by one or more of the following:

1. Affirmation of Christian faith, or
2. Re-affirmation of Christian faith.

Good standing for associate members shall be maintained by:

1. Attending worship when they are in central Iowa
2. Partaking in the Lord's Supper wherever they worship, and
3. Supporting the work of the Urbandale United Church of Christ through contribution of time, talent, treasure, and prayer.

Associate members are encouraged to participate in ministry teams, but may not hold office or serve as ministry team liaisons and shall have voice without vote.

### **Article VII. THE PASTOR(S)**

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Leadership Team shall appoint a special committee formed for the purpose of filling the vacancy. This committee may seek the cooperation of the executive head of the state conference and others. The committee will search for an available pastor; settle upon one who, in its judgment, should be called to the pastorate; and at a duly called congregational meeting, propose his or her election. The committee may consider more than one person to fill the position in a job-sharing arrangement. In such a case, the committee shall submit the names of the persons and the job-share proposal to the congregation as specified.

A pastor shall be called for an indefinite period by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at a duly called meeting of the church congregation.

In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the pension fund of the United Church of Christ, the United Church of Christ health insurance program, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the committee. The pastor(s), the church, the association, and the conference executive shall each receive a copy of the call.

When a pastor has been elected and has accepted the call, if it is agreeable to the pastor and the congregation, the association to which the church belongs shall be invited for the purpose of installing or recognizing the pastor in accordance with established procedure. At the first opportunity, the pastor shall become a member of the church and of the association of which the church is a member.

While the term of a pastor shall be indefinite, the church may at any time by a two-thirds affirmative vote at a meeting called for that purpose, request a resignation with the expectation that it will be presented and become effective within ninety days. Similarly, a pastor shall be expected to give the Leadership Team at least ninety days notice of the pastor's decision to leave the church, unless otherwise agreed upon by both the pastor and the Leadership Team.

The pastor(s) has charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. The pastor(s) seeks to enlist persons as members of the church, preaches the Gospel, coordinates the ministry of the church in cooperation with the various organizations thereof, serves as an ex-officio member of the Leadership Team, and serves as an ex-officio advisory member to all other organizations within the church. The pastor(s) also invites participation in and supports the CENTER/LEARN programs (Christian Educators Nurtured, Trained, Enriched and Resourced / Lay Education for Adults in Religion for Now and the future). The pastor(s) encourages participation and supports the Pilgrimage program, and any special training programs in ministry, including serving as a mentor and source of support for seminary students and candidates for ordination.

Upon a two-thirds affirmative vote at a meeting called for that purpose, the church may choose to hire one or more associate or assistant pastor(s). The same procedure used to call a pastor will be used to call an associate or an assistant pastor.

## **Article VIII. GOVERNANCE**

The work of this church shall be carried out by the following Ministry Teams: Leadership, Christian Growth, Outreach and Nurture, Worship, Ad-Ministry, Small Group, and Personnel. Ministry Teams may create other task groups under their direction to further the work of the church. Ministry Team members will serve two-year terms and may be re-elected. Ministry teams shall meet 6 times per year or more frequently as needed.

The final authority for settling all questions that may arise as to the policies or organizations of this church shall rest in the members of the congregation.

Any member of the church in good standing is eligible for election or appointment to any team or office. Team members are elected as provided in these bylaws and take office at the annual meeting.

If any team member resigns, the team shall recommend a person to fill the vacancy, and the Leadership Team may approve that person to fill the vacancy until the next election.

## **Article IX. LEADERSHIP TEAM**

### **A. Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the church. It defines policies, implements programs through its duly elected or appointed members or teams, and conducts all other necessary business of the church.

The Leadership Team shall consist of the Liaisons of the following ministry teams:

1. Ad-Ministry Team
2. Worship Team
3. Christian Growth Team
4. Small Group Team
5. Outreach and Nurture Team

Additional members of the Leadership Team shall include the following officers elected by the congregation:

1. Moderator
2. Vice-Moderator
3. Treasurer
4. Financial Secretary
5. Recording Secretary

In addition, the congregation shall elect three At-Large Members of the Leadership Team.

The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Leadership Team.

A quorum of the Leadership Team shall be seven persons, and the Moderator shall not vote except as needed to resolve tie votes.

Action of the Leadership Team shall be by majority vote of those present, unless otherwise specified.

Ministry Team Liaisons shall attend Leadership Team meetings regularly. In the unusual case that a team Liaison cannot attend a Leadership Team meeting, the Liaison may designate a representative to attend and vote.

Additional functions of the Leadership Team shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Appointing a nominating task group
2. Calling special congregational meetings
3. Determining annually the salary and expenses of the pastor(s) and other members of the staff
4. Hiring and terminating all church staff except the pastor(s)
5. Receiving and approving the various budgetary proposals of the Stewardship and Mission Interpretation Team (part of the Ad-Ministry Team)
6. Appointing persons, teams, or groups to aid in the accomplishment of the aims and goals of the church, including appointments to denominational and ecumenical groups
7. Approving changes made to the Ministry Team Guidelines.

The Leadership Team shall meet regularly each month or more frequently as it shall determine. All meetings are open to allow any interested persons to attend, and teams may specifically invite representatives of any groups or boards to attend, as it deems necessary.

The Leadership Team has the authority, upon a two-thirds vote of its membership, to go into closed session for the benefit of the church as a whole. Ordinarily, closed sessions would be reserved for discussion of sensitive legal or personnel matters. However, the Leadership Team may need to go into closed session for other reasons, and may do so if prior to moving into closed session, the Moderator states generally the reason for going into closed session, and why it is beneficial to the church as a whole to do so.

## **B. Officers of the Church**

All officers and Ministry Team Liaisons shall be covered by relevant liability insurance policy(s) carried by the church.

### **Moderator and Vice-Moderator**

It is the responsibility of the Moderator, with assistance from the Vice-Moderator, to coordinate the work of the various parts of the church organization in cooperation with the pastor(s). The Moderator will conduct all congregational meetings. In addition, as presiding officer of the Leadership Team, the Moderator shall be responsible for conducting all meetings of the Leadership Team. The Moderator shall be the alternate signatory person on church bank accounts. The Vice-Moderator shall preside in either of these roles in the absence of the Moderator.

A Vice-Moderator shall be elected each year for a two-year term. The first year, (s)he shall assist the Moderator in fulfilling the responsibilities of that office. The Vice-Moderator shall succeed to, and become the Moderator during the second year of the term. The Vice-Moderator has the responsibility to give a copy of the Bylaws to each member of the Leadership Team at the beginning of his or her term.

The Vice-Moderator shall convene and lead the Pastor-Parish Relations Team. The Pastor-Parish Relations Team serves to support and advise the pastor(s) and to maintain an open relationship between the pastor(s) and members of the congregation. The Pastor-Parish Relations Team shall work in cooperation with the pastor(s) to determine the appropriate use of time and funds for continuing education. Members of the Pastor-Parish Relations Team shall serve terms of indefinite length.

### **Recording Secretary**

A Recording Secretary shall be elected to a two-year term, and may be re-elected. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a record of the proceedings and actions of all congregational and Leadership Team meetings; preserve on file all communications to the Leadership Team; and maintain the Official Bylaws of this Corporation and a copy of the Articles of Incorporation.

### **Treasurer**

A Treasurer shall be elected to a two-year term and may be re-elected. The Treasurer shall:

- maintain detailed books of accounts
- pay all bills
- maintain adequate payroll records
- keep an accurate record of all such disbursements
- record receipt of all monies deposited by the Financial Secretary
- be authorized to open and maintain checking and savings accounts and such various accounts as deemed necessary in the accomplishment of the Treasurer's duties
- invest excess funds in certificates of deposit or, upon obtaining the approval of the Leadership Team, in other investment media
- submit to the Leadership Team at each regularly scheduled meeting, a statement of all current account balances and statements of receipts and disbursements for the prior month, year-to-date, and yearly budget for comparison
- be the primary signatory person on all accounts
- have access to the church safe deposit box
- prepare and file tax returns as necessary, and
- administer the church budget subject to any specific directives from the Leadership Team.

### **Financial Secretary**

A Financial Secretary shall be elected to serve a two-year term and may be re-elected. The Financial Secretary shall take custody of all offerings, keep an accurate record of all pledge payments, and provide all members of the congregation with quarterly statements regarding the same. The Financial Secretary shall deposit all monies received by the church, submitting a receipt of deposit in a timely manner to the Treasurer.

## **Article X. AD-MINISTRY TEAM**

The Ad-Ministry Team will consist of smaller teams concerned with the needs of the physical and the fiscal aspects of the congregation. The Ad-Ministry Team consists of the following sub-teams:

1. The Building and Grounds Team (at least 6 members) will:
  - supervise the care and upkeep of the building
  - arrange for the beautification and upkeep of the grounds
  - keep the Leadership Team informed about special building-related needs or concerns.

2. The Kitchen Team (at least 3 members) will:
  - organize the church kitchen
  - purchase kitchen supplies
  - establish kitchen use policy
  - coordinate with the Building and Grounds Team.
  
3. The Stewardship and Mission Interpretation Team (at least 5 members) will:
  - oversee the financial needs of the congregation including planning and implementing annual opportunities for renewed stewardship
  - coordinate any additional fundraising efforts on the part of other teams
  - keep the Leadership Team informed of any concerns for the fiscal life of the congregation
  - perform as a minimum, an annual audit of the financial records of the church
  - keep the congregation informed about special funds and opportunities (e.g., endowment fund or building fund)
  - select and implement special offerings
  - appoint a memorial task group and endowment task group as needed.

One member of the Ad-Ministry Team shall act as liaison between the Ad-Ministry Team and the Leadership Team. The Ad-Ministry Team Liaison shall attend and participate in the meetings of the Leadership Team, All Team Night, and be available to sub-teams for advice, council, communication, and agenda setting. The Ad-Ministry Team Liaison will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected.

#### **Article XI. WORSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

The Worship Ministry Team shall be responsible for the spiritual life of the church. The Worship Ministry team consists of the following sub-teams:

1. The Music Team (at least 4 members) will:
  - advocate and support a strong music program within the church
  - recruit a variety of small musical groups to aid and support worship
  - encourage the development of enrichment options for the congregation, including a wide variety of music styles.
  
2. The Liturgy Team (at least 4 members) will:
  - provide support and planning for special services during the year
  - explore options for additional worship times, including weekday or evening opportunities or vesper services
  - oversee the decoration and set-up of the sanctuary
  - work with the pastor(s) to plan, prepare for, and deliver effective Sunday Worship services
  - inventory and purchase necessary worship supplies.
  
3. The Service Support Team (at least 2 members) will:
  - recruit and train those helping with the worship services
  - prepare for communion services held at least once each month.

One member of the Worship Ministry Team shall act as liaison between the Worship Ministry Team and the Leadership Team. The Worship Ministry Team Liaison shall attend and participate in the meetings of the Leadership Team, All Team Night, and be available to sub-teams for advice, counsel, communication, and agenda setting. The Worship Ministry Team Liaison will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected.

## **Article XII. CHRISTIAN GROWTH MINISTRY TEAM**

The Christian Growth Ministry Team shall be responsible for the administration of life span Christian education. The Christian Growth Ministry Team shall consist of the following sub-teams:

1. The Children's Ministry Team will:
  - study and make decisions about curriculum
  - plan and carry out teacher training at least twice per year
  - evaluate the program each year
  - recruit teachers
  - make arrangements for summer activities and vacation Bible school.
  - be responsible for decisions about class size, location, and ambiance
  - ensure availability of needed supplies
  - support any staff or volunteers assigned to Children's Ministry.
2. The Youth Ministry Team will:
  - be responsible for designing and implementing the youth program
  - plan any summer work/service trips, youth rallies, opportunities for general synod, and other possibilities that may arise
  - provide a Sunday morning educational opportunity for youth, as well as fellowship and service times
  - support any staff or volunteers assigned to youth.
3. The Adult Ministry Team will plan, implement, and evaluate a varied Sunday and weekday program for adults, taking into consideration the variety of needs and levels of faith development.

One member of the Christian Growth Ministry Team shall act as liaison between the Christian Growth Ministry Team and the Leadership Team. The Christian Growth Ministry Team Liaison shall attend and participate in the meetings of the Leadership Team, All Team Night, and be available to the sub-teams for advice, counsel, communication, and agenda setting. The Christian Growth Ministry Team Liaison will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected.

## **Article XIII. SMALL GROUP MINISTRY TEAM**

The Small Group Ministry Team facilitates the creation, support, and evaluation of small groups within the church. One member of the Small Group Ministry Team shall act as liaison between the small groups and the Leadership Team. The Small Group Ministry Team Liaison shall attend and participate in the meetings of the Leadership Team, All Team Night, and be available to small groups within the church for advice, counsel, communication, and agenda setting. The Small Group Ministry Team Liaison will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected.

## **Article XIV. OUTREACH AND NURTURE MINISTRY TEAM**

The purpose of the Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team is to reach out to prospective new members and visitors, and to nurture current members. The Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team shall consist of the following sub-teams:

1. The Membership Team (at least 4 members) will:
  - provide opportunities for visitors to learn more about the church
  - offer new members classes a minimum of 4 times per year
  - assist the Office and Ministry Gifts Coordinator or appropriate staff member in keeping membership records and in publishing the annual church directory.

2. The Community Concerns Team (at least 4 members) will:
  - plan and implement the special Christmas offerings
  - research and identify possible service projects for the congregation
  - identify and organize ministry projects to serve needs within the congregation
  - keep the congregation informed about opportunities for service in the wider church.
  
3. The Spiritual Gifts Ministry Team (at least 4 members) will:
  - seek to help church members discern their gifts for ministry and offer ways each church member can share their gifts for the good of the church and beyond
  - offer gift-sharing opportunities that will maximize people's gifts and help each church member serve efficiently and effectively
  - draw on the resources of the church membership to assist the process of filling leadership roles in the church
  - seek to find new and creative ways to carry out old tasks
  - be available to the Office and Ministry Gifts Coordinator or appropriate staff member for advice, counsel, and support.
  
4. The Social Team will provide regular intergenerational opportunities for fellowship.

One member of the Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team shall act as liaison between the Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team and the Leadership Team. The Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team Liaison shall attend and participate in the meetings of the Leadership Team, All Team Night, and be available to sub-teams for advice, counsel, communication, and agenda setting. The Outreach and Nurture Ministry Team Liaison will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected.

#### **Article XV. PERSONNEL TEAM**

The Personnel Team shall be responsible for providing advice, support and assistance regarding church staff employment issues to the pastor, staff, Leadership Team and other church teams. The Personnel Team is responsible for looking at what would be good for the church as a whole. The Personnel Team is not an advocate for the views of the staff, pastor, or any team in isolation. Working with the pastor, staff, and other appropriate teams, the Personnel Team develops and updates written employment policies and job descriptions for the employees of the church other than the pastor. Once written, employment policies and job descriptions are approved by the Leadership Team. The Personnel Team assists the pastor and other church teams with studies of salaries, benefits, and staff duties. The team functions in the staff grievance process as stated in the Grievance Procedure. Team members attend Leadership Team meetings and/or make recommendations as needed. The Personnel Team often deals with confidential, sensitive, crucial issues with legal implications. Because of this nature of the work of the team and the need for continuity and institutional knowledge, members of the Personnel Team are encouraged to serve multiple terms. The team has three to five members.

#### **Article XVI. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **A. Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the membership by a two-thirds vote of the members of the church present and voting, provided that notice of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment shall be given to all members of the church at least two weeks before the meeting. All members of the church in good standing are entitled to vote.

##### **B. The Church Year**

The fiscal year of the Urbandale United Church of Christ shall commence January 1st and end December 31st of each year. A proposed budget shall be presented for approval to the membership of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one budget review shall precede the congregational budget approval meeting. Notice of the review session and congregational meeting shall be given to the membership at least two weeks prior to final approval of the budget.

### **C. Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

An annual meeting of the congregation shall be convened at the end of the church program year. The purpose of the meeting is for the congregation to hear reports from staff, officers, and Ministry Teams, to elect the members of the Leadership Team, and to conduct and transact other church business. Newly elected persons shall assume office at the annual meeting of the congregation.

### **D. Elections**

Elections shall be held by voice vote, unless any eligible voter present at an election meeting requests a vote by ballot. In the event that a winner cannot be immediately determined by voice vote, the vote shall be taken by ballot.

Unless otherwise specifically provided, a majority vote is decisive. Where there are more than two candidates for a single position and no one receives a majority, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped on each succeeding ballot until one is elected.

All members of the church in good standing are entitled to vote.

### **E. Removal**

The Leadership Team is empowered to remove any Ministry Team member for cause upon recommendation of the affected Ministry Team.