

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the church shall be **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, OF OCALA, FLORIDA**, located at 6140 Southwest 78th Avenue Road, Ocala, Florida 34474.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The avowed purpose of this church shall be:
To develop passionate followers of Jesus Christ through
The Celebration of Worship;
The Excitement of God's Word;
The Rewards of Service; and
The Joy of Fellowship
Where all are welcome at His Table.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

Section A. ***Relationship with the Church Universal***

This church is a member of Christ's Church Universal: the Body of Christ.

Section B. ***Relationship with Other Communities of Faith***

This church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of other communities of faith, working in concert toward religious freedom, care for earth and its environment, cultural diversity, interfaith and ecumenical cooperation, nonviolence, and economic and social justice.

Section C. ***Covenant with The United Church of Christ***

This church shall be part of the United Church of Christ, and it shall sustain its covenant with the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ, adopted July 4, 1961, relating to local churches.

This church will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission in consultation and collaboration with the Florida Conference and General Synod of the United Church of Christ. This church listens to and hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In covenant, this church joins the various expressions of the United Church of Christ to seek to walk together in all God's ways.

This church has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the United Church of Christ, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches.

Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from the Florida Conference and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be held in the highest regard by this church.

Section D. ***Autonomy***

The First Congregational United Church of Christ, of Ocala, Florida, affirms the principle of local autonomy as set forth in its Charter and By-Laws. However, the church recognizes its responsibility to the larger fellowship of which it is a member: the United Church of Christ. It acknowledges the obligations of mutual counsel, comity, and cooperation resting upon churches in which freedom in fellowship is cherished and in this spirit pledges itself to share in their common life and purpose.

Section E. ***Government***

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject to the Laws of the State of Florida relating to not-for-profit corporations. A vote by a majority of members present at a meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum for any congregational business meeting, regular or special, shall consist of twenty-five percent (25%) of the church membership.

ARTICLE IV. DOCTRINE

Section A. ***Faith as Christian Love***

1. Christian Love of God Includes:

- a. Walking fully in the Path of Jesus without denying the legitimacy of other paths that God may provide for humanity.
- b. Listening for God's Word, which comes through daily prayer and meditation, studying testimonies to God's presence and will through testaments that we call "Scriptures," through documents expressing the collective wisdom through the ages, and attending to God's present activity in the world.
- c. Celebrating God, whose Spirit pervades and whose glory is reflected in all Creation, including the earth and its ecosystems, the sacred and secular, the Christian and non-Christian, the human and non-human.
- d. Expressing our love in worship that is as sincere, vibrant, and artful as it is scriptural.

2. Christian Love of Neighbor Includes:

- a. Engaging people authentically, as Jesus did, treating all as creations made in God's image regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, nationality, or economic class.
- b. Standing, as Jesus does, with the outcast and oppressed, the denigrated and afflicted, seeking peace and justice with or without the support of others.
- c. Preserving religious freedom and the church's ability to speak prophetically to government by resisting the commingling of church and state.
- d. Walking humbly with God, acknowledging our own shortcomings while honestly seeking to understand and call forth the best in others, including those who consider us their enemies.

3. Christian Love of Self Includes:

- a. Basing our lives on faith/trust that in Christ all things are made new and that we, and all people, are loved beyond our wildest imaginations-for eternity.
- b. Claiming the sacredness of both our minds and our hearts, and recognizing that faith and science, doubt and belief serve the pursuit of truth.
- c. Caring for our bodies and insisting on taking time to enjoy the benefits of prayer, reflection, worship, and recreation in addition to work.
- d. Acting on faith that we are born with a meaning and a purpose, a vocation and ministry that serve to strengthen and extend God's realm of love.

Section B. Sacraments

1. We acknowledge two sacraments:
 - a. **Baptism** is the sacrament within which our church, on behalf of Christ's Church Universal, welcomes people to become Christians. Baptism is the church's way of celebrating and naming the grace of God living in all of God's people-men, women, and children. It initiates and marks the entry point into the life-time pilgrimage of following in the Way of Jesus Christ.

- b. **Eucharist** (also known as “Communion”) is the sacrament within which Christians as a faith community periodically reaffirm their baptism. Because Eucharist is (1)a common meal of liberation (2) because it is an egalitarian meal, (3)because it is a meal through which we celebrate community both as Christians and as members of the world around us, (4)because it is both the experience and foretaste of God’s love for all creation, and (5) because it is a sign that people can transform themselves and each other to engage the world on behalf of love, justice, compassion, regard for the integrity of all people, and the sacredness of creation.

Section C. Covenant

We covenant with Jesus Christ and one with another and bind ourselves to walk together with God as revealed through the scriptures and other non-canonical sources of religious wisdoms and experience, our traditions, our experience, and our reason.

Section D. Affirmation of Diversity

We seek to be an inclusive church for all people, open to God’s gifts of diversity by affirming those gifts, learning from them, and being transformed by them through worship, fellowship, striving for peace and justice, the sacraments, and care for our world.

Section E. Statement of Faith

Because our church is a member of, and in covenant with, The United Church of Christ, we affirm two “Statements of Faith” - one authored by Robert V. Moss and the other in the form of a Doxology as adapted by June 2017 Synod of The United Church of Christ. These Statements of Faith are neither legally required tests of faith nor are intended theologically, metaphorically, or symbolically to limit other statements of faith. These Statements of Faith are intended to both convey and foster our church’s and our members’ interpreting God’s presence through Christ and through both our church and Christ’s Church Universal.

Section F. Peace and Justice Church

The church is a “Peace and Justice Church,” striving for peace with justice.

Section G. Human Rights Church

This church shares a universal commitment to the inherent worth of every human being and affirms that it is essential to our identity as a member of the Body of Christ to work together cooperatively toward this end. This church is

united against any expression or action of violence, war, intimidation, prejudice, and/or discrimination that attempts to injure individuals, families, or groups of people.

Section H. Open and Affirming Church

We declare that we are an “Open and Affirming Church,” welcoming into our life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, rites, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings, people of all races, genders, ages, marital standings, family structures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, socio-economic statuses, professions, faith backgrounds, nationalities, and mental and physical challenges.

Section I. Mission Statement

We are an active, inclusive and caring church that witnesses to God’s love within the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our *Extravagant Welcome* as an *Open and Affirming Church* where “God is still speaking...”leads us to invite all people to participate fully in our community and worship life as loved and accepted people of God.

We ground our worship, learning, reflection, and action in Holy Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience that inspire and challenge us to discover God’s unfolding visions and grace, more in faithful searching than in certainty. We seek creative worship and education that engage varieties of experiences to awaken, inspire, and challenge our spirit and senses through traditional and emerging theologies, music, art, the spoken word and contemplation. As a community of faith we provide a context through worship, covenantal relationship and education that enables ongoing development in faith.

Convinced that God’s plan is “That they may all be one ” we respect the faithfulness of those whose approach differs from ours. We accept our part in God’s work to mend the world, and we partner with other communities of faith and civic organizations in promoting learning, understanding, and bridging differences in achieving fullness of life for all.

We believe that God calls us to strive for peace and justice, to protect and restore God’s creation, to bring hope to others, and to live our lives with compassion and holy courage.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section A: **Types of Membership Regular:**

Regular membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has been (1) Confirmed or (2) has made public confession or reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ or (3) who has presented to the church or its Senior Pastor, letters of transfer from another church. A class of instruction shall be offered under the direction of the Senior Pastor and applicable committee chairpersons acting on behalf of the church.

2. *Associate:* *Associate* membership shall be open to those people desiring to retain membership in out-of-town churches and wish to share in the responsibilities and privileges of this church. An associate Member shall have the same rights of church membership as other members.

3. *Membership* shall become effective with the approval of the Board of Church Growth. A Certificate of Membership signed by the Senior Pastor will be issued to new members.

Section B: **Reception**

The Reception of New Members shall ordinarily be at a regular service of worship where the Right Hand of Fellowship shall be extended. In cases of disability, a new member may accept the covenant of this church at a convenient location in the presence of the Senior Pastor and one church member, acting on behalf of the church.

Section C. **Commitment Responsibilities**

Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of Communion, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and participate in the work, ministry, and meetings of the church, to contribute to its financial support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community. A church member is obligated to keep the church informed of any changes in address or status and to keep in touch with the church when absent from the congregation for an extended period of time.

Section D. **Transfer of Membership**

Any member may make a request for a letter of transfer. When a church member requests, in writing, to be relieved of membership obligations

because of change of faith or for other reasons that do not involve un-Christian conduct, the church shall make every effort to continue the membership. Failing in that, the Board of Church Growth shall grant the request and ask the Church Clerk to issue the appropriate letter of transfer.

Section F. Termination of Membership

1.. Any member, at his/her request may be granted a letter of transfer to another church. If a member desires to unite with another church that does not accept a letter of Transfer, his/her name will be removed from the membership roll.

2. A member who has had an unknown address for one year, or who has
a) not attended church worship services; b) has not shared in the Lord's Supper; and c) has not contributed to the support of this church for one year may be removed from the Membership roll and placed on an inactive list, but only after the Board of Church Growth and the Board of Deacons has earnestly sought to secure all relevant information. If after the expiration of another year the relationship to this church remains unchanged, the member may be removed from the inactive list upon recommendation of the Church Council/Trustees.

Section G. Restoration of membership

Any person whose membership has been terminated may have membership restored by a vote of the Church Council/Trustees.

ARTICLE VI. SERVICES

Section A. Worship

1. Sunday worship services shall be held in the church at hours specified by the Worship and Arts Team and the Senior Pastor and approved by the Church Council/Trustees. Other services of worship, prayer, and study shall be held as determined by the Worship and Arts Team in cooperation with the Senior Pastor.

2. Worship shall embrace liturgical practices of our faith and denomination in a spirit of ecumenism and deep respect for the Church's Apostolic traditions.

Section B. Sacraments

1. Eucharist (a.k.a. Holy Communion) shall be celebrated at such regular dates as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Worship and Arts Team.

Because Jesus Christ, our Sovereign, invited all men, women, and children into his love and blessing and to feast at his table, we welcome everyone to partake in the Eucharist (Holy Communion).

2. The Sacrament of Baptism will be conducted in a public order of worship:
 - a. For individuals personally making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
 - b. For individuals whose parents/sponsors:
 - (1). Are active members of a local church;
 - (2). Have responsibility for the individual's religious upbringing; and
 - (3). Agree to nurture the individual toward personally confirming the covenant of baptism.
 - c. A non-sacramental "Ritual of Blessing" (a.k.a. "Christening") may be conducted for any individual in either a private ceremony or a public order of worship.
 - d. In cases of dire pastoral emergency, the Pastor(s) has the responsibility to baptize individuals with exception to items "a" and "b" above.

Section C. Religious Education

1. One central task of our Church is "Christian Formation," which must be developed within the broader context of "Religious Formation". Given that all of us have been socialized into a culture different from the times of Jesus and the times of the early formation of the church, "Christian Formation" must assume the discipline of "reformation" and "resocialization" Accordingly, religious Education will include but is not limited to addressing; Religious beliefs, doctrines, customs, rites, practices, language, and traditions and their influence on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;

The Interconnected dialogue and congruent influence among moral, ethical, theological, cultural, philosophical, societal, and political practices, issues, and trends;

The world's religions and how they are internally diverse, and how they evolve and change as living traditions that impact, and are impacted by, the cultural, historical, and political contexts of adherents, including, but not limited to, interpretation through themes such as gender and sexuality, the arts, violence and peace, science, and power and authority.

2. Religious Education will be provided for adults, youth, and children.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

Section A. Church Year (also “Fiscal Year”)

The Church Year (also “Fiscal Year”) shall be from January 1 to December 31.

Section B. Annual Meeting

1. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held no later than the last Sunday in February after the morning worship service. The Moderator or Vice Moderator shall preside. The printed Annual report containing reports of officers, boards, committees, and organizations shall be presented at the meeting. Projected plans and goals for the coming year, the budget, and the proposed Amendments to the By-Laws shall be presented for adoption.

It is the prerogative of the congregation, assembled in duly called meetings to decide on such matters as: the annual budget; the buying and selling of property, the launch of building projects and capital campaigns, the call and dismissal of a pastor, changes in the Constitution and the By-Laws and the election of church leadership. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the church is invested in the Church Council/Trustees, elected and composed as provided for in these By-Laws.

2. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate on which one person’s name is listed for each position to be filled. Nominations from the floor will be accepted if that person being nominated has consented to run for said office.

3. Officers (Moderator, Vice Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Collections Clerk, and Director of Publicity) and members of the following boards shall be elected: Deacons, Church Growth, Religious Education, Church Life, Community Outreach, Worship and Arts Team, and three members -at large to the Church Council/Trustees, and three members shall serve as Directors of Ocala Tree of Life Sanctuary. Members of other boards and committees shall be elected or appointed according to the By-Laws.

4. A Parliamentarian, when needed, shall be appointed by the Moderator with the approval of the Church Council/Trustees.

5. The Annual Report to the congregation and any proposed amendments to the By-Laws must be available to the membership three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. A printed copy of the Annual Report will be mailed to members who are unable to receive a copy of the Annual Report at a Sunday Service.

6. Officers, boards, committees, and organizations must submit their yearly reports to the church office no later than December 31st. The Board of Church Growth shall report membership data available through December 1st.

Section C. Special Congregational Meetings

Other Congregational Meetings may be called as needed by the Moderator or the Senior Pastor. The Church Clerk shall call a meeting within three weeks of receiving a written petition signed by at least twenty-five (25) members of the church. In case of emergency (e.g. storm damage), the church officers and/or the pastor shall act on behalf of the church pending further action as required by the Church Council/Trustees.

Section D. Notice of Meetings

The call to meetings shall briefly describe the principle business to be considered and other appropriate matters germane to the meeting. The time and place of the meeting, and nature of the business to be transacted shall be announced at a regular Sunday service at least twenty-one days prior to the date of the meeting, and also timely notification in *News and Views*, e-mail notification by the administrative assistant, and a physical mailing to members unable to receive the material during a Sunday morning service at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section E. Rules and Regulation

- 1.Voting Rights: Each qualified member is entitled to one vote without proxy.
- 2.Quorum: A quorum for any business meeting, regular, or special, shall consist of twenty-five percent (25%) of the church membership.
- 3.Voting Rules: a majority vote is decisive except as otherwise required by these By-Laws. All qualified members of the church, who are present, are entitled to one vote, without proxy. Written ballots shall be available.
- 4.Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of this church shall be January 1 through the last day of December.

Section F. Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, shall govern the conducting of business meetings in all cases to which they apply. When there is a conflict, these By-Laws shall have precedence over the above described *Rules of Order*. The Moderator may appoint a qualified Parliamentarian at each business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. ORDAINED STAFF, CLERGY

Section A. Senior Pastor

1.The Call: The Call to the Senior Pastor goes into effect when two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the membership, present and voting by ballot at a congregational meeting called for this purpose, vote in the affirmative.

2.Duties and Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor:

a.The Senior Pastor shall be responsible to the Church Council/Trustees, the Worship and Arts Team, and the Board of Deacons for the guidance and direction of the spiritual welfare of the church.

b.The Senior Pastor shall seek to enlist followers of Christ, provide adequate opportunity for confirmation, support a program of Religious education, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, visit church members, minister to the sick and shut-ins, lead services of public worship, and perform allotted functions in cooperation with the Church Council/Trustees, boards, and committees.

c.The Senior pastor shall advise boards and committees in an ex-officio status. It is not, however, necessary that the Senior Pastor attend all meetings.

d.The Senior Pastor shall implement the day-to-day policies as established by the Church Council/Trustees.

e.All members of the church staff are under the supervision of the Senior Pastor.

f.The Senior Pastor shall establish regular hours in the office.

g.Division of pastoral responsibilities shall be addressed and determined through periodic reviews with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee when requested by the Church Council/Trustees and/or the Senior Pastor.

h. The Senior Pastor shall submit to the church office a written annual report for the Annual Meeting no later than thirty days before the Annual Meeting.

i.. The Senior Pastor shall be bonded, with the church bearing the cost.

3. Compensation and Benefits:

This church shall take into account the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ Guidelines in all such matters. There shall be a detailed, written agreement between a new pastor and the congregation, to be reviewed annually by the Church Council/Trustees

4. Termination of Senior Pastor's Position:

a. The Senior Pastor's resignation shall be in a letter to the Church Moderator and the chair of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. The terms of separation must include advance notice as outlined in the pastor's original call. The Church Moderator shall inform the congregation at the Church's next Sunday worship service.

b. Separation or Dismissal of the Senior Pastor:

1. In the event that twenty-five percent (25%) of the membership feel that the Senior pastor is not fulfilling the terms of his/her contract, has lost ministerial standing, or is accused of an illegal, immoral, or improper action, they may present said complaints to the chairperson of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee in writing, signed by the petitioners.

2. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee, in consultation with the Florida Conference of the UCC Committee on Ministry, will conduct an investigation into the charges. The Senior Pastor shall have the opportunity to present his/her case. The Pastor Parish Committee shall present its findings to the Church Council/Trustees.

3. The Church Council/Trustees shall decide whether the evidence presented warrants: (1) dismissal of the charges, (2) review with the Senior Pastor, or (3) dismissal of the Senior Pastor. If, in the judgement of the Church Council/Trustees, the dismissal of the Senior Pastor is indicated as best for the welfare of the church, the Moderator may request the assistance and advice from the Conference Minister before action is taken. (4) After deliberation, if the Church Council/Trustees decides that the Senior Pastor should resign, the Church Council/Trustees shall work to bring about a voluntary resignation. (5) If the Senior Pastor refuses to resign as requested, the Moderator with the approval of the church Council/Trustees, shall call a meeting of the church membership to act and vote on the question of dismissal. Notice of this meeting shall be announced from the pulpit and printed in the Order of Worship on two successive Sundays. It may also be announced in the monthly publication. A quorum shall consist of twenty-five (25%) of the membership. Dismissal shall be immediate upon a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote of church members present and voting by written ballot.

Section B. Interim Pastor

1. When a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs, the Pastor Parish Relations Committee shall follow the procedures as outlined in article XIII, Section A (Search Committee). The Interim Pastor need not necessarily be a member of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ, but it is suggested that the executives of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ be consulted.

2. An Interim Pastor shall receive compensation and benefits according to a "Contract of Employment" drawn up by the Church Council/Trustees and signed by the Moderator and the Interim Pastor.

3. The Interim Pastor shall serve until such time as a Senior Pastor is called.

4. The Interim Pastor may not be considered as a candidate for the position of Senior Pastor.

Section C. Ancillary Ordained or Not-Ordained Staff

1. Additional ordained or not-ordained staff might include the following: Associate or Assistant Pastor, Minister of Visitation, Minister of Religious Education, Minister of Music, etc.

2. The need for such staff shall be determined by the Church Council/Trustees with recommendations from appropriate boards, committees or the Senior Pastor.

3. The Search Committee, following the Search and Call Procedures of the United Church of Christ, shall present a candidate for the position to the Church Council/Trustees. On approval of the Church Council/Trustees, the proposed pastor shall be called by a two thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote of the membership present and voting at a congregational meeting for that purpose.

4. All Ordained or Not-ordained Staff shall be under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Section A. Determination of Need

1. The need for church employees shall be determined by the Church Council/Trustees with recommendations from the appropriate boards, committees, or Senior Pastor.

2. An "employee" includes anyone paid for his/her services such as: certified associates in Religious education, music director(s), organists, soloists, administrative assistants, administrators, clerical personnel, custodians, and other employees of the church.

Section B. Selection

1. Each staff person, full or part-time, shall have a written contract drawn up by the Church Council/Trustees.

2. Candidates for a position shall be interviewed by the Senior pastor, the Moderator, and the appropriate boards or committees.

Section C. Duties and Responsibilities

1. All employees are under the day-to-day supervision and guidance of the Senior Pastor in performing their duties as specified in their job descriptions. Certain

personnel, however, may also report to other ordained staff, a board or committee, as outlined in the job description.

2. Specific duties and responsibilities shall be outlined in the job descriptions. Arrangements shall be made on an individual basis for special assignments requiring extra hours.

Section D. Compensation and Benefits

Each employee, full or part time, shall have a contract that clearly states the allowed sick leave and vacation time, with or without pay.

2. A "full-time employee" is defined as an employee who works more than thirty regular hours a week.

3a. Full-time employees may be given the privilege of joining the Retirement Fund for Lay Workers of the United Church of Christ or some comparable retirement fund.

3b. Full Time employees shall be covered by Social Security.

4. Church employees shall be evaluated annually on their performance by their supervisors. Recommendations for changes in compensation, based on this evaluation shall be made to the Church Council/Trustees

ARTICLE X. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Section A. Leadership

The Leadership of this church shall be vested in the officers, boards, and the Church Council/Trustees. Those elected at the Annual Meeting shall assume office at the beginning of the new church year.

Section B. Duties, Responsibilities, and Elections

1. All officers and board members shall be church members in good standing.

2. Each board and committee, unless otherwise designated, shall elect its own chairperson, vice chairperson or co-chairperson, and secretary.

3. In the absence of a chairperson of a board, a vice-chairperson or a board-appointed designee shall represent the board on the Church Council/Trustees with the power to vote.

4. A person named to a board or committee as an ex-officio member has voice but no vote.

5. When a vacancy occurs on a board, the board shall seek the help of the Nominating Committee and the approval of the Church Council/Trustees to serve the unexpired term.

6. Each board shall meet regularly at times of its own choosing or at the call of the chairperson. All boards shall meet at least eight (8) times a year. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members. A special board meeting may be held at the

request of one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) or more of its voting members. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and all board members shall be notified.

10. The chairperson of boards shall submit a proposed annual budget to the Church Council/Trustees by August 1.

11. The chairperson of boards shall submit a written Annual Report to the church office. The report shall include activities of subordinate committees three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting

12. A summary of actions taken by the Church Council/Trustees shall be available to church members.

13. Church officers (see Article XII) and the Senior Pastor shall act on behalf of the Church Council/Trustees in case of an emergency.

Section C. Pastor- Parish Relations Committee

1. Purpose

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is a standing committee that supports open and healthy relationships between the pastor and members of the congregation, and among the members of the congregation. This committee is the congregation's fundamental support for the pastor. The Committee serves in the following ways:

a. As an advisory group to the pastor and support for the pastor's leadership, sharing of ideas, dreams, hopes, expectations, and concerns of the Congregation.

b. As an advisory group to the congregation, interpreting the office of the pastor as it pertains to (1) the First Congregational United Church of Christ, of Ocala, Florida (2) the United Church of Christ and (3) the Church Universal;

c. As a forum whereby the congregation and pastor, the pastoral staff, and/or church members can speak concerning matters that cannot be addressed through other structures or committees of the church, or addressed otherwise, due to confidentiality.

d. As a means to promote professional growth, the well-being of the pastor, and mutual ministries among the pastor and the congregation.

e. As a forum for helpful and honest exchange in times of conflict or discord from which new and creative understandings may arise and new commitments to ministry may be forged. It is important to emphasize that the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee serves not only as a forum between the pastor and the members of the congregation, but also when necessary between/among members of the congregation.

f. As a forum to promote constructive and caring communication in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust

g. As a model for effective, healthy, and productive relationships among the pastor and the congregation.

2. Membership

a. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall consist of the following members; the Senior Pastor, three appointees of the pastor, and a list of possible candidates supplied by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. From this list, one to three members shall be appointed by the Church Council/Trustees and the pastor for a total of five to seven members.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

a. The committee shall:

1. Select its own chairperson at its first meeting;

2. Interpret to the Congregation the nature and function of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the work of the Senior Pastor and staff:

3. Counsel the pastor concerning his/her ministry by sharing ideas about

a. work expectations and priorities;

b. Professional growth and nurture;

c. Personal needs of the pastor and his/her family.

4. Conduct a pastoral evaluation at the request of the Church Council/Trustees. Input for the evaluation shall be gathered from the committee, the Church Council/Trustees, church members, and the pastor;

5. Evaluate the professional abilities of the pastor with particular attention given to

a. pastoral roles (pastoral care, parish care, counseling, stewardship etc.)

b. ecclesiastic roles (preaching, sacraments, funerals, weddings etc)

c. teaching roles (instruction concerning matters of faith and the purpose of the church in society).

d. prophetic roles (church's role in matters of peace, justice, human relations, local, state, national and international concerns)

e. administrative roles (staff relations and advocacy, inter-staff management)

6. Assist and maintain written contracts and job descriptions for all church employees and volunteers who work directly with church members and/or financial resources such as the senior pastor, the administrative assistant, treasurer, assistant treasurer, collector, director of music and music leaders, and nursery/childcare and classroom teachers. Personnel records will include an application, personal and professional references and a background check.

a. Maintain insurance records which specify coverage for the church facilities and furnishings owned by the church, as well as policy coverage for the employees of the church.

b. Support staff training in state policy training with regard to current issues such as workplace discrimination or sexual harassment and medical training such as AED and CPR.

c. Support a financial audit as deemed necessary by the Church Council/trustees within each five year time period.

7. Confer and consult with the Pastor and Church Council/Trustees when staff changes are made.

8. Handle emergencies regarding the pastor and staff and the professional leadership of the church.

9. Provide for pastoral leadership in case of the pastor's personal emergency, illness, death, jury duty, vacation, etc.

10. Serve as the reconciling agent between the Pastor and the congregation, or between/among members of the congregation should conflict arise.

11. Foster and support the covenants agreed upon at the hiring of the pastor which mutually benefit the pastor, the congregation, and the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ.

12a. Support and communicate with the Pastor Search Committee as they lead the search for a new pastor and interim pastor.

b. Protocols:

(1) The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is a vital means by which Christian principles of love, compassion, justice, and mutual respect enhance the fabric of the First Congregational United Church of Christ of Ocala, Florida. It is recognized that the presence and the activities of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee do not absolve the pastor or the members of the First Congregational United Church of Christ of Ocala, Florida of the responsibilities to address issues and concerns openly, honestly, personally, and directly. Therefore, before appealing to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, individuals shall have addressed issues or concerns in a spirit reflecting the highest principles of our faith and life together and with an open mind and heart toward mutual resolution, respect, and understanding.

(2) Because the pastor holds membership in the United Church of Christ and because the office of the pastor represents the connection among the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ocala, Florida and the Church Universal, the Pastor and/or the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee may call on ecclesial representatives of the Florida Conference of The United Church of Christ to assist in any of its considerations or decisions.

(3) Members of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee will agree to absolute confidentiality regarding committee considerations and actions before becoming a

member of the committee. All notes taken at committee meetings will be held by the chairperson of the committee and shall be the sole possession of the chairperson. Only one copy of the notes will be held by the chairperson of the committee, except in response to a subpoena in accord with civil and criminal statutes, either state or federal, in which case the committee reserved the right of legal counsel before releasing said notes. Notes from six years prior to the current year shall be destroyed.

(4) If a member of the committee commits a gross breach of morals, ethics, and/or confidentiality, said member shall be censured and removed from the committee. A simple majority vote of the committee constitutes such action.

c. Meetings:

1. The committee shall hold its first meeting within one month following each Annual Meeting. If the outgoing chairperson is no longer a member of the committee, the outgoing chairperson shall meet without a vote at the first meeting.

2. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee meets quarterly or as needed by request of the pastor, the chairperson, and/or any three members of the committee. The Pastor (or his/her designee) and the chairperson (or his/her designee) must attend all meetings of the committee.

ARTICLE XI. CHURCH COUNCIL/TRUSTEES

The Church Council/Trustees shall serve as the administrative agency of the church and shall have concern for and custody of all tangible assets of the church.

Section A. Officers and Members

1. The Church Council/Trustees shall consist of twenty one (21) members: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Collections Clerk, Director of Publicity, and the Chairperson of the following: Deacons, Stewardship, Religious Education, Community Outreach, Church Life, Church Growth, Worship and Arts team, Pastor-Parish Relations, three members serving as Directors of Ocala Tree of Life Sanctuary, and Historian, and nominating committee and three members at large elected at the annual meeting.

2. The Moderator, Vice Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Collections Clerk, and Director of Public Relations shall be officers of the church and the Church Council/Trustees.

3. Quorum: A quorum for a Church Council/Trustees meeting regular or special, shall consist of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the Church Council/Trustees' membership.

Section B. Duties, Responsibilities and Elections

1. The Church Council/Trustees shall conduct a continuing evaluation of the church's ministry and mission. The Church Council/Trustees shall initiate suitable action when needed to expedite the program.
2. The Church Council/Trustees shall act on official matters between meetings of the congregation.
3. When an issue of vital interest to the members of the congregation comes before the Church Council/Trustees, the Church Council/Trustees shall formulate a recommendation to be put before the membership for a final vote at a special meeting called for that purpose.
4. The Church Council/Trustees shall receive monthly reports from the Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer including a summary of income, disbursements, and cash on hand. The Church Council/Trustees shall receive the reports and recommendations of church officers, boards, committees, church-related organizations, and the Senior Pastor. The Church Council/Trustees shall act as the final authority on all matters of policy and differences that may arise among officers, boards, and committees.
5. The Church Council/Trustees shall ensure that membership on all boards are complete. The Nominating Committee shall submit recommendations for vacancies to the Church Council/Trustees for confirmation. The Vice-Moderator shall fill a vacancy in the office of the Moderator. The Church Council/Trustees shall appoint a person to fill a vacancy in the offices of Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and the Collections Clerk.
6. The Church Council/Trustees shall have the authority to end the term of any elected or appointed officer of a board or committee member for just cause.
7. The final Annual Budget, as submitted in consultation with the Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer, must be approved by the Church Council/Trustees prior to its presentation to the church membership at the Annual Meeting.
8. The final draft of the By-Laws and/or amendments, as submitted by the By-Laws Committee, must be approved by the Church Council/Trustees before presentation to the congregation.
9. The Church Council/Trustees shall approve and have jurisdiction over all church sponsored and/or affiliated organizations.
10. The Church Council/Trustees may appoint other committees as needed.
11. The Church Council/Trustees shall:

- a. have power to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer real property only with authorization given by the congregation.
- b. have responsibility for leasing/lending policies.
- c. have the power to borrow necessary emergency funds for operating expenses;
- d. prepare the Annual Budget. The Annual Budget shall-
 - (1) Include all expenses, fixed charges, and debt reduction. The church Council/Trustees shall take into account the per capita contributions of the church to the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ, monies for payroll including pastors' annuities, assessment from the Ocala Tree of Life Board of Directors, and recommendations from boards and committees;
- e. Be advised of all major fundraising in consultation with the Church Council/Trustees;
- f. The Church Council/Trustees shall protect the church against the failure of church officers, including the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Collections Clerk to faithfully perform their duties through appropriate insurance and/or bonding. Also, the Church Council/Trustees shall protect, indemnify and defend through appropriate insurance or otherwise, church ministers, leadership and support staff, volunteers, and members of the Church Council/Trustees and church boards and committee from any claims of any kind brought against any such individuals related to their church-related activities performed in good faith and within the scope of their employment or Church Council/Trustees, Board or Committee responsibilities, as applicable
- g. execute any necessary contracts with salaried, hourly, and contractual personnel;
- h. address matters pertaining to legal and insurance issues. The Church Council/Trustees shall consult with insurance agencies and companies to compare insurance rates and shall have the authority to make changes to insurance policies according to sound fiscal policies and existing insurance needs.
- i. annually authorize each of the following to sign checks, make withdrawals from savings accounts or redeem Certificates of Deposit: the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Endowment Advisory Committee;
- j. have approval of conditional devices, legacies, or gifts to the church;
- k. have approval to cause securities, other than Endowment Fund property, to be registered (1) in the name of the church or (2) in the name of the Church Council/Trustees of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, of Ocala, Florida or (3) in the name of a nominee;
- l. employ a bank or trust company as agent to have custody of securities that are under its control and discretion;

m. when necessary, sell any or all such securities and use the proceeds of sale for reinvestment.

n. use proceeds of sales for other purposes, provided that the proceeds of any security constituting a part of a conditional devise, legacy, or gift shall be applied in a manner consistent with the attached conditions; and

o. insure annual review of church financial records.

Section C. **Church Historian**

The Church Council/Trustees shall appoint a Church Historian for a period of one year. The Church historian may serve consecutive years.

Duties: The Church Historian shall keep a record of important events in the life of the church such as photographs taken at ordinations, installations, anniversary celebrations, new member inductions, and any occasion that depicts the life and activities of the church. The Church Historian shall keep a written account of the ongoing history and events of the church and shall maintain a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and a file of photographs digitally and/or in a physical scrapbook.

ARTICLE XII.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL/TRUSTEES

Section A. **Moderator**

1.Election and Tenure: The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected for two additional consecutive years.

2.The Moderator shall be chairperson of the Church Council/Trustees shall chair all official meetings of the congregation, and shall set the agenda for all Church Council/Trustees meetings and the Annual Meeting.

3.The Moderator, as chief lay officer of the church, shall sign all legal documents and shall represent the church at all ceremonial and formal occasions.

4.The Moderator shall act for the Senior Pastor in the secular areas of church administration when so requested by the Senior Pastor and/or the Church Council/Trustees.

5.The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees, except the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

Section B. **Vice Moderator**

1.Election and Tenure: The Vice-Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected.

2.The Vice-Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in the event the Moderator is absent or unable to perform the duties of the office.

3.The Vice-Moderator shall be Vice-Chairperson of the Church Council/Trustees.

Section C. Church Clerk

1.Election and Tenure: The Church Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected. An Assistant Clerk may be appointed by the Church Clerk to a term of one year and assumed assigned duties.

2.The Church Clerk shall be the secretary of the Church Council/Trustees and the meetings of the congregation. The Church Clerk shall keep a record of the proceedings of all such meetings. A copy of the minutes shall be on file in the church office within two weeks after the meeting.

3. The Church Clerk shall be responsible for seeing that the calls for business meetings are properly worded and announced.

Section D. Treasurer

1.Election and Tenure: The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected.

2.The Treasurer shall be a voting member of the Church Council/Trustees.

3.Duties: The Treasurer shall-

a. determine the nomenclature of accounts acceptable to the Church Council/Trustees;

b. receive from the Board of Stewardship a summary of money receipts and record by account numbers;

c. have access to all legal documents relating to the church property;

d. be responsible for seeing that checks are written for the payroll and all bills of the church;

e. keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements;

f. be bonded;

g. be empowered to place money in properly insured banking institutions approved by the Church Council/Trustees;

h. handle gifts of securities and debentures, other than those designated for the Endowment Fund. The Moderator shall be notified promptly and give the Treasurer an appraisal of the value to be used for the donor's giving record;

i. prepare the monthly statement for the Church Council/Trustees;

j. know church-management software and other computer software as necessary;

k.. train the Assistant Treasurer to assume the duties of the Treasurer when the Treasurer is absent for any reason;

l.know the computer software and financial operations of the church.

Section E. Assistant Treasurer

1. Election and Tenure: The assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a period of one year and may be reelected.
2. Duties: The assistant Treasurer shall assume all duties of the Treasurer when the Treasurer is absent for any reason.

Section F. Collections Clerk

1. Election and Tenure: The Collections Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected.
2. Duties: the Collections Clerk shall:
 - a. be a voting member of the Church Council/Trustees and an ex-officio member of the Board of Stewardship;
 - b. be responsible for recording, accounting for, and depositing receipts in bank accounts at the beginning of each business week. A record of all receipts shall be given to the Treasurer;
 - c. keep a record of monies and contributions secured, pledged or paid, crediting each subscriber when payments are made;
 - d. generate statements to donors at anytime, by request only
 - e. inform the Church Council/Trustees as to the progress of pledge payments to the church;
 - f. know the computer church-management software and the financial operations of the church;
 - g. be bonded
 - h. train one member of the church to assume the duties of the Collections Clerk when he/she is absent for any reason. He/she shall know the computer software, financial operations of the church, and will have been advised, strongly, regarding strictest confidentiality of the position.

Section G. Director of Public Relations

1. Membership: The Director of Public Relations shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and may be reelected.
2. Duties: The Director of Public Relations shall-
 - a. be responsible for all advertising of church worship services, as well as all other church-sponsored, church related, and church ministry events;
 - b. place all the advertising with the media. However, the copy, layout, and design must be approved by the Senior Pastor before it is released;

- c. release publicity to any appropriate media, including newspapers and other publications (magazines, newsletters, etc) radio and television, posters, club agendas, etc;
- d. submit annually a budget for advertising to the Church Council/Trustees;
- e. submit all invoices for publicity to the Treasurer staying within the advertising budget;
- f. appoint a person/people to aid with church public relations.

ARTICLE XIII. STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL/TRUSTEES

Section A. Nominating Committee

- 1.Membership: The committee shall consist of at least five members who shall be elected annually. Members may serve consecutive terms.
2. Duties; The Nominating Committee may receive suggestions from boards, committees, and members of the church for nominees to any office. All nominees must consent to serve before being nominated. This committee shall prepare a slate of candidates to be presented for election three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. It shall nominate one person for each position. At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, nominations from the floor will be accepted if the person being nominated has consented to run for said office. This committee shall assist the Church Council/Trustees and boards in filling vacancies that occur.

Section B. Search Committee

- 1.Task: When a vacancy occurs in the position of the Senior Pastor or other ordained staff, the Church Council/Trustees shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee. The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) to nine (9) members with two alternates representing the diverse makeup of the congregation. The list of members for the Pastoral Search Committee will be presented to the congregation for approval. The chairperson of the Pastoral Search Committee shall be elected by consensus of the committee. The regional minister of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ may be an ex-officio member of the Search Committee.
2. Duties: The primary duty of this committee is to select the best qualified candidate for the position of Senior Pastor (or other pastor) and present the candidate to the congregation.
 - a. The Search Committee shall develop a "Church Profile" from the *United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership*.

- b. The “Personal Profiles,” from the *United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership* of pastors seeking the new positions shall be received and reviewed.
- c. The church and all candidates shall agree to protocols regarding pastoral searches as defined by the United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership.
- d. The profiles of candidates should be thorough and should include information on education, work experience (pastoral and other), a faith statement, references, and any regular practices (including a criminal background check) as deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Search Committee may request the Conference Minister to secure relevant information about any candidate whom it wishes to consider.
- e. Limitation: no Interim Pastor serving this church may be considered as a candidate.
- f. Delegates from the Search Committee shall screen, audit, and hear as many qualified candidates as they deem necessary.
- g. The final candidates selected may be asked to preach in a “neutral pulpit” with the Search Committee present.
- h. When the Search Committee has selected the finalist, it shall draft, in consultation with the Church Council/Trustees, a proposed agreement with the terms of the call including: duties and responsibilities, compensation, benefits, and termination as outlined in the Article VIII, Section A. pages 12 and 13.
- i. The candidate shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Church Council/Trustees and the Worship and Arts Team.
- j. The Call in final form shall be given to the Church Council/Trustees for approval. The Senior Pastor, the Church Clerk, and the Florida Conference Executive shall each receive a copy of the Call.
- k. The Church Clerk shall prepare the Call to meeting, which will be announced from the pulpit on two successive Sundays. The Call shall be printed in a church publication at least ten days, but not more than twenty days, before the meeting date.
- l. The selected candidate shall deliver a sermon before the congregation on a Sunday morning. The Search Committee shall nominate the candidate to the congregation in order to approve the Senior Pastor’s candidacy. The Senior Pastor shall be called by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority vote of the church members present and voting.

Section C. By-Laws Committee

- 1. Membership: The By-Laws Committee shall consist of six (6) members appointed by the Church Council/Trustees.

2. Duties and Procedures

a. Minor changes (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.) will be provided to the Moderator, who will inform the Church Clerk, who will maintain the By-Laws document. Minor changes will be appended to the By-Laws on separate sheets of paper and will be available to church members.

b. Major changes will be brought to the attention of the Moderator, who will decide whether the committee should convene to review the changes/revision, and then make submission to the Church Council/Trustees, the changes/revisions will be brought to the congregation for approval. Major changes that are approved and appended to the By-Laws document will be designated with the following annotation: "approved by vote of the congregation on (date)." If the committee doesn't need to review the changes/revisions, the Moderator will provide the Church Clerk with the changes to keep the document current and appended as indicated in "b" above.

c. The Church Clerk will keep a record of all changes submitted and made.

3. Other

a. The By-laws Committee shall meet every five years, beginning in 2009. At that time, the Moderator will determine the membership of the committee. The committee will be responsible to review the entire document along with any changes that were amended over the past five years. The By-Laws Committee will make all necessary revisions and submit the revised By-Laws document for vote of the congregation prior to the next Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE XIV Boards

Section A. The Board of Deacons shall consist of up to twelve (12) members, who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. The Board of Deacons shall:

a. Assist the Senior Pastor in the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, including home communion offered monthly to the sick, the bereaved and shut-ins. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for the Baptismal font, linens, antependia, accouterments, the Communion table, and the Communion elements.

b. appoint a head usher

c. schedule and supply acolytes, ushers, welcomers, communion servers and attendance books for each service and submit a monthly chart to the church office the week prior to the new month so that names can be inserted in the weekly bulletin.

d. cooperate with any church board or committee whose responsibilities may overlap with specific duties;

e. See Article VI Section B regarding serving communion.

f. The chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall serve as a member of the Church Council/Trustees.

g. keep account of members who are regularly absent from church services and follow-up with those members to inquire as to any illnesses or events that prevent those individuals from attending worship services.

h. send cards for such occasions as birthdays, illness, and death on behalf of the church.

2. **The Worship and Arts Team** shall consist of at least four to six members who shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and approved at the Annual Meeting.

The Worship and Arts Team shall-

a. assist the Senior Pastor in planning Sunday Worship and other worship services throughout the year by planning music and programs of enrichment and the message of Christ to the life of the congregation.

b. cooperate with any church board or committee whose responsibilities may overlap with specific duties.

c. work with the Senior Pastor in planning music for worship in order to provide a well-balanced worship service.

d..work with the Senior Pastor, the music director and other music/arts personnel in developing and fostering:

(1) Music and liturgical ministries;

(2) arts ministries, including drama, two and three dimensional art, literature, poetry, dance etc.

e (1) work with the Senior Pastor in searching for, hiring, and coordinating with music personnel and (2) make its recommendations to the Church Council/Trustees for approval.

f. work with the Church Council/Trustees in developing contracts for all music/arts personnel.

g. be responsible for the care and maintenance of all church musical instruments, choir robes, and the music library.

h. with the Director of Music, prepare an annual budget to be presented to the Church Council/Trustees. The Worship Arts Team and Music Director shall work within the bounds of this budget. An exception to this would be special fundraising projects with profits earmarked for the music program, with approval of the Church Council/Trustees; and

i. with the Senior Pastor and the Church Council/Trustees and on approval from the Church Council/Trustees, select/hire the Director of Music.

j. The Music Director is an ex-officio member of the Church Council/Trustees. The Chairperson of the Worship and Arts Team is a voting member of the Church Council/Trustees.

Section B. Board of Church Growth

The Board of Church Growth shall maintain worship attendance records, help receive new members, and in league with the Boards of Deacons and Church Life and with the Director of Public Relations, publicize the various ministries of the church and welcome new members into the church's fellowship.

1. Membership; The Board of Church Growth shall consist of six members each serving a three to five year term with an option to renew their term if necessary and will be elected at the Annual Meeting.

2. Duties: The Board of Church Growth shall:

a. with the assistance of the Senior Pastor, and the Administrative Assistant, will maintain the membership records of the church including:

(1) names and contact information;

(2) dates and modes of reception/removal;

(3) baptisms, marriages, confirmations, and deaths;

(4) records of letters of transfer; termination of membership, etc.

b. assist the Senior Pastor in calling on and receiving new members;

c. Contact new members to secure pledges and gifts;

d. with the Senior Pastor, develop a plan to foster member participation to enable church growth, and outreach. This shall include proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to church members, to our community, and to the world;

e. confer with the Senior Pastor when there is a question concerning the termination of a membership (See Article V, Section E);

f. provide worship attendance pads and other means of collecting information;

g. assist the Senior Pastor in conducting membership classes for new members;

h. assist the Senior Pastor in receiving new people into membership of the church.

i. conduct a "Time and Talent Survey" to gather information regarding members' interests and skills;

3. The Board of Church Growth provides week-to-week support to the Board of Deacons, the Pastor(s), and the Administrative Assistant.

Section C. Board of Religious Education

The Board of Religious education shall supervise and direct all religious education of the church.

1.Membership; The Board of Religious Education shall consist of at least six members elected at the Annual Meeting.

2.Duties:The Board of Religious Education shall-

- a. cooperate with other committees to provide lectures, retreats, and seminars;
- b. provide literature consistent with, and supportive of, the Covenant of our Church;
- c. prepare an annual budget to be presented to the Church Council/Trustees.
- d. oversee the administration of programs for children/youth including;
 - (1)organizing and maintaining a Sunday School for children and a nursery;
 - (2)when needed, organize and maintain a Vacation Bible School;
 - (3)organize and maintain a Youth Group;
 - (4)under the leadership of the Senior Pastor, provide for confirmation classes as needed.
- e. oversee the administration of programs for adults including:
 - (1)organize regularly scheduled religious education study group(s)
 - (2)organize special religious education events to address particular, current issues pertaining to the church's ministry and engagement with culture and society;

Section D. Board of Community Outreach

1.Membership:The Board of Community Outreach shall consist of up to 12 members from the First Congregational Church and Temple Beth Shalom. All members will have voting privileges and be appointed at the Annual Meeting.

2.Duties: The Board of Community Outreach shall-

- a. inform church members of the work and needs of benevolent agencies and publicize the use of funds given for such purposes;
- b. inform church members about social issues and formulate and promote programs of action and concern;
- c. consider monetary and service requests from the United Church of Christ, other denominational agencies, and other service agencies.
- d. prepare an annual budget of all potential expenses to be presented to the Church Council/Trustees. All remaining funds donated to The Board of Community Outreach shall be held for use in the next fiscal year.
- e. donate quarterly to the Interfaith Emergency Services and deliver one meal monthly.

Section E. Board of Church Life

1. Membership: The Board of Church Life shall consist of up to twelve (12) members each serving for a three to five year renewable term if necessary. One member from the Board of Church Life shall be elected at the first meeting to serve as the

Chairperson of the Board of Church Life and shall be a member of the Church Council/Trustees.

2. Duties: The Board of Church Life is responsible for enhancing church fellowship including:

- a. organizing church meals, periodic fund-raisers, outings, excursions, and other events that enhance the communal life and fellowship of the Church;
- b. cooperating with other boards in preparing organized social occasions as deemed necessary to enhance the ministries of those boards;
- c. maintaining and making recommendations for improvements to the kitchen;
- d. maintaining responsibility for an inventory of kitchen items;
- e. reporting net income from fellowship events to the Church Treasurer;
- f. working with the Board of Church Growth, Director of Public Relations, and the Board of Deacons to publicize the various ministries of the church and to welcome new members into the church fellowship;
- g. maintaining a budget, prepared and submitted by the chairperson each year to be presented to Church Council/Trustees for approval.

Section F **Board of Stewardship** shall have responsibility for enhancing and enabling Christian Stewardship and financial support.

1. Membership

The Board of Stewardship shall consist of up to eight (8) members elected at the Annual Meeting. The Collections Clerk shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Stewardship.

2. Duties: The Board of Stewardship shall:

- a. emphasize the larger dimensions of stewardship as (1) God's blessing and privilege to participate in God's work through the Church and (2) an integral dimension of every member's Christian discipleship and faith journey, which shall include pledging, worship, tithing, and participating in and contributing to church ministries, programs, and committees;
- b. secure pledges as the foundation for the operating budget of the church. Organize and lead the church-wide campaign and have charge of other fund raising projects assigned by the Church Council/Trustees.
- c. follow these general accounting procedures:
 - (1) count and record in a timely manner all pledges when received;
 - (2) keep a full and correct account between the church and each person;
 - (3) receive all pledges to the church.;
 - (4) record the pledges into the church's database promptly;

(5)notify the Treasurer and Council of the pledge numbers and amounts at the next meeting of the Church Council/Trustees

(6)provide statements at any time, upon request only, to all people who have pledged and/or provided identifiable gifts to the support of the church.

d. create and maintain a year-round program of stewardship education, keeping the members of the church informed of the financial needs of all aspects of the Church's work and of progress toward meeting financial and human resource needs and goals;

e. make available information provided by United Church of Christ conference and denominational resources on the ethics of Christian Stewardship in order to inform and encourage church members and friends to contribute through proportional giving, and tithing.

ARTICLE XV. AUXILIARY COMMITTEE(S)

Section A. Auxiliary Committees may be created as follows:

1. Temporary Committees (a.k.a. Pro-tem or pro-tempore Committees) for specific, time-limited tasks as may be created by the Church, the Church Council/Trustees, a Church Board, the Senior Pastor, the Director of Music, or an officer. Representatives of Temporary Committees will have no vote in the Church, the Church Council/Trustees, or Church Boards.

2. Permanent Committees may be constituted by action of the Church at an Annual or called meeting.

ARTICLE XVI. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section A. **Formation, Approval, and Jurisdiction**

The Church Council/Trustees must approve the formation of all church-related or church-sponsored organizations. All organizations connected with the church are regarded as integral parts of the church and under jurisdiction of the Church Council/Trustees.

Section B. **Government**

These organizations shall elect their officers and set their own policies.

Section C. **Reports and Audits**

Each organization shall give a written report on the year's activities and financial condition to the Church Office one month prior to the Annual Meeting to be included in the Annual Report. Accounts of these organizations may be audited if necessary.

Section D. **The Women's Fellowship** is recognized as an Auxiliary Organization. Its President (or one of its members elected by the Women's Fellowship) is a member of the Church Council/Trustees.

ARTICLE XVII. DELEGATES

Section A. Election

Delegates and Alternates to the Florida Conference Annual Meeting shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

Section B. Term

Delegates may serve multiple terms if elected.

Section C. Reports

A written report shall be submitted to the congregation to be printed in the monthly publication of the church. One delegate shall also make an oral report to the congregation within one month following the conference.

ARTICLE XVIII. FINANCE: PROTOCOLS

Section A. Pledges

Year round stewardship shall include an annual financial stewardship campaign to receive pledges. A proposed budget, including a year-to-date financial statement, shall be provided.

Section B. Endowment Funds

Endowment Fund Contributions will be managed by the Endowment Committee. A financial report will be provided to the Church Council/Trustees annually.

Section C. Scholarships

Longtime, active church members or individuals who have been members of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ocala, Florida may apply for scholarships if funds are available.

Section D. End of Year Balances

At the end of each "Fiscal Year" the balance of all Board and Committee accounts will be set at zero dollars (\$0.00), and the use of the balance of any remaining monies becomes the purview of the Church Council/Trustees. For particular cause, a Board or Committee may request of the Church Council/Trustees that a portion or all of its previous year's balance carry over into the new fiscal year. The Church Council/Trustee's decision on the request is final.

Section E. Fiduciary Accounts

The Church will have one (1) set of fiduciary accounts (e.g. checking, savings, investment accounts, credit cards, etc.) that are overseen by the Treasurer and the Church Council/Trustees. No Board, committee, or individual (s) may privately or without oversight hold any sort of fiduciary account on behalf of the Church.

Section F. Document Retention Policy

The purpose of the Document Retention Policy is for the Church to promote proper Treatment of its corporate records.

1. General Guidelines.

Records should not be kept if they are no longer needed for the operation of the church or required by law. Unnecessary records should be eliminated from the files. Too many records also make it more difficult to find pertinent records.

2. Exception for Litigation Relevant Documents. The organization expects all officers, directors and employees to comply fully with any records retention schedules, provided that all officers, directors, and employees should note the following general exception to any destruction schedule: If you believe or the Organization informs you, that Organization records are relevant to litigation or potential litigation, then you must preserve those records until it is determined that the records are no longer needed.

3. Minimum Retention Periods for Specific Categories

a. Organizational documents include the Organizations articles of incorporation, by-laws, and IRS Form 1023, Application for Exemption. Organizational records should be retained permanently.

b. Tax records include, but may not be limited to, documents concerning payroll, expenses, proof of contributions made by donors, accounting procedures, and other documents concerning the Organization's revenues. Tax records should be retained for seven years.

c. Employment Records/Personnel Records. State and federal statutes require the Organization to keep certain recruitment, employment and personnel information. The Organization should keep in the employee's personnel files all final memoranda and correspondence reflecting reviews and action taken by or against personnel. Employment applications should be retained for three years, if not hired. Employment applications for employees should be kept for six years after termination date. Retirement and pension records should be kept permanently. Other employment and personnel records such as W-2's should be retained for seven years.

d. Board and Committee Materials: Meeting minutes should be retained permanently in scanned electronic form (e.g. PDF files, etc.) A clean copy of all other Board and Committee materials should be kept for no less than three years.

e. Photo albums, newspaper articles kept in scrapbooks, church directories etc. should be kept permanently in scanned electronic form. (sic.)

f. Contracts.

Sale invoices, contracts, leases, licenses, and other legal documentation should be kept for three years beyond the life of the agreement.

g. Correspondence.

Unless correspondence falls under another category listed elsewhere in this policy, correspondence should generally be retained for two years.

h. Banking and Accounting

Accounts payable ledgers (Quickbooks) and schedules should be kept for seven years. Bank reconciliation, bank statements, deposit slips, and checks should be kept for three years.

i. Insurance

Expired insurance policies, insurance records, accident reports, claims, etc. should be kept permanently.

j. Audit reports

External audit reports should be kept permanently. Internal audit reports should be kept for three years.

4. Electronic Mail

E-Mail that needs to be saved should be either:

a. Printed in hard copy and kept in the appropriate file or

b. Downloaded to a computer file and kept electronically, or on a disk as a separate file.

The retention period depends on the subject matter of the email as covered elsewhere in this policy.

ARTICLE XIX. BY-LAWS ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section A. Current Revisions

These By-laws replace the By-Laws of the First Congregational United Church of Christ By-Laws adopted on February 9, 2022. They shall become effective immediately when approved by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting. The meeting shall be called for that purpose by written notification and announced from the pulpit two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Section B. Current Terms of Office

Those people elected under the previous By-Laws shall complete the terms to which they were elected.

Section C. Future Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting (1) at any Annual Meeting of the church or (2) at a special meeting. Members shall be notified in writing, not less than three weeks before the time proposed for action.

ARTICLE XX. DISSOLUTION

No officer, member, or employee of this church shall receive pecuniary profit from the church except reasonable compensation for services in affecting one or more of its purposes. In the event of the dissolution of the church, its property and assets shall become vested and administered by the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successor, or other organization organized and operated exclusively for religious and church purposes. Such decision shall be made by church members at a meeting called for this purpose. If such decision is impossible, final determination shall be made by the Superior Court of Marion County, Florida.

ARTICLE XXI. THANKS

Section A. Names

The names of members of the By-Laws Committee shall be included in the format below. Section D. and greater of this article shall include the dates and names of future By-Laws Committee that perform major edits to the By-Laws.

Section B. Thanks

The First Congregational United Church of Christ, of Ocala, Florida offers its thanks to the members of the 2025 By-Laws Committee for their time and dedication.

Section C. 2008-2009 By-Laws Committee

Mary Ann Werst (scribe), Larry Kratz (chair), Patricia Keith (vice-chair), Carol Thompson, Lesley Casey, John Metzger, John Fernandez, Don Dannecker, Nancy Schneider, Valerie Raisch, Elaine Staley, Hal McSwain (Pastor)

Section D. 2018-2019 By-Laws Committee

Dana Knapp (moderator), Diane Donohue (scribe) Hal McSwain (Pastor)

Section E.. 2025 By-Laws Committee

Dana Knapp (Chair), Ken Hull (Transitional Pastor)
Patricia Keith (Editor), Joanne Houston(scribe), Linda Lohr (Collector),
Paula Hayward, Carron Janssen.