

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
of  
Hart, Michigan  
An Incorporated, Non-Profit, Ecclesiastical Corporation

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CONSTITUTION

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ARTICLE I (Polity)

The Government of this Church is vested in its Membership and duly elected officials, as an autonomous body. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical organization. It recognizes an obligation to counsel and cooperate with the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, in accord with its Constitution and By-Laws adopted July 4, 1961, with the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ, and with other Churches and Councils of Churches with whom it may cooperate from time to time.

ARTICLE II (Membership)

Section A. Granting of Membership

1. Membership in this Church shall consist of any person who has been baptized and, has either been confirmed or made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It shall also include those persons who have presented a satisfactory transfer of membership from another church or who have made a reaffirmation of a previous confession of Faith.
2. Applicants for membership shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the Church and the Lord's Supper, as regularly as possible; to strive to live the Christian Life; to contribute to the support of the Church and its benevolences; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the Membership and the community. Applicants shall have the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Diaconate.
3. Such applications, when so approved, shall be voted upon by the Church membership at any regular Church service, or at any other meeting that may be designated by the Board of Diaconate or the Executive Council. Upon approval and acceptance by the Church, the newly-made member shall give public assent to the Covenants of the Church and thereupon be publicly welcomed into its fellowship as Active Members of the Church.

Section B. Termination – Membership in Church may be terminated by:

1. (Letter) Letters of dismissal and recommendation shall be granted only by recommendation of the Board of Diaconate and the approval of the Executive Council. If, because of change of faith or for any other reasons not involving conduct contrary to the faith and practice of this Church, a member requests in writing to be released from his membership obligations, the Church may grant and terminate his membership according to the above procedure.

2. (Transfer) Any member may by his or her own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this Church, the person may be dismissed with a Certificate of Church Membership.

3. (Retirement or Inactivity) Any member who has for one year been inactive in the faith and practice of this Church, has failed or neglected to contribute to the support of this Church, and/or whose address this Church is unable to ascertain, MAY be placed upon a retired or inactive list on motion of the Board of Diaconate and approval thereof by the Executive Council. Members placed upon the retired or inactive list shall forfeit their right to vote at Church meetings on any matters affecting the Church as a corporate body, internal administration of Church affairs, elections, or pastoral tenure. After one more year, the conditions remaining unchanged, the member's name MAY be dropped from the Roll only upon vote of the Board of Diaconate and the approval of the Executive Council. Here let it be known that there have and will always be unique circumstances concerning many inactive and retired members. Thus the Diaconate and Executive Council are expected to thoughtfully review each situation before recommending and approving the dropping of such a member from this Church's membership.

Inactivity for two years does not mean automatic dismissal. As general policy, an inactive member who makes a contribution to the Church, but who attends only occasionally, or who indicates to the Board of Diaconate a desire to remain in inactive or retired status, or who only takes part in one of the organizations of the Church, shall not be automatically removed from the inactive lists; however, every effort shall be made to encourage those on the inactive or retired lists to become active and participating members.

4. (Exclusion) If a member who persistently breaches his or her membership vows after due notice has been given the member by the Board of Diaconate, and a hearing before the Executive Council has been offered such member, and faithful efforts have been made to bring the member into conformity, in accordance with the spirit of Christ, the Church May censure such member, or May suspend or terminate the person's membership, upon recommendation by the Board of Diaconate and the approval of the Executive Council.

#### Section C. Right of Review Hearing

Any person who shall be aggrieved by the failure to approve an application for membership, or by the censure, suspension or termination of membership, shall have the right to a hearing before the Executive Council upon written petition; and such Executive Council shall have the power, after conducting such hearing at its earliest convenience, to reverse, amend or affirm the previous action taken.

### ARTICLE III (Faith and Order)

This Church accepts the Scriptures as its authority in matters of Faith and practice. Its understanding of the truth contained therein is essentially in accord with the Statement of Faith approved by the United Church of Christ in July of the year 1959, and with the suggested paragraph on Faith, copies of which are reproduced and set forth in the Appendix hereto. This Church affirms these to be statements of what is commonly held as faith and

order in the United Church of Christ; nothing in them shall be construed to be a binding agreement for membership, but only as a consensus of opinion and a basis for our common Faith.

#### ARTICLE IV (Covenant)

The Covenant by which this Church exists and to which members are asked to give consent, providing that there are no expressed reservations, is as follows:

*We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the Will of God. We propose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to and increasingly become the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our fathers, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal Life.*

#### ARTICLE V (Dissolution)

Should there be a dissolution, at any time, of the Ecclesiastical body heretofore formed on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1957, by the merger of and Union of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches with the Congregational Christian Churches in the United States, under the name of the United Church of Christ, such dissolution shall not ipso facto, terminate the corporate existence or effect a dissolution of the local Congregational United Church of Christ of Hart, Michigan.

In the event the local Congregational United Church of Christ should be dissolved, discontinued, or cease to function, title to all of the property and possessions of the Church shall thereupon be held in trust by the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successors, if either are then existent, or such other trustee or trustees as may be appointed by a Court or Competent Jurisdiction, for the use and benefit of the membership and/or its regularly elected incumbent trustees at the time of its dissolution or discontinuance, and for such further use and disposition as may be ordered by such Court or authorized by law.

Submitted as Amended Constitution 1981