

**BY-LAWS OF THE FIRST CHURCH UNITED
WEST LIBERTY, IOWA
*Original 1977, Revised 2017***

I. FIRST CHURCH UNITED

The Church shall remain affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Church Board shall serve as and fulfill all duties and requirements of the Presbyterian Session.

II. BAPTISM

Persons being baptized shall have a choice of immersion, sprinkling or pouring (including infant baptisms).

III. COMMUNION

Communion will be served the first and third Sunday of each month. Communion will be served in the Presbyterian Tradition on the First Sunday of each quarter. Communion can be served on days of special religious significance. Times and dates for communion shall be determined by the Board.

IV. SPEAKING ELDERS

Elders must be members in good standing and have the following traits – spirituality, knowledge of the Bible, common sense, moral consistency in life and conversation, and a depth of sympathy. The character of the Elder is of superlative importance for Elders set the moral and spiritual tone of the church. They shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting for a three-(3) year term.

V. COMMUNION SERVERS

Communion Servers must be members who are active and faithful in the work and worship of the church and well respected by their fellow members. Each year this group will be composed of men and women approved by the Official Board.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

Qualifications of Communicant Membership shall be by affirmation of faith, or letter of transfer (proof of baptism as herein described shall be required for membership). Any active communicant member shall be eligible to vote.

VII. MINISTERIAL RELATIONS

A. Professional Status

The Pastor shall maintain ministerial credentials and relationship with Pastor's parent denomination, but shall be recognized and accredited by the denominational partners in the union.

B. Denominational Relationships

The minister is expected to attend the various denominational meetings and conventions of each denomination, the importance of this being that the minister will then be able to identify with both the denominations and provide the type of leadership necessary.

C. Pastoral Duties

As the minister is responsible to the church board, all duties shall be determined by that Board. Minister shall have freedom in the pulpit.

VIII. ANNUAL MEETING

- A. The annual meeting of the corporation and congregation shall be held during the month of January on a date determined by the Board.
- B. A congregational meeting must be announced from the pulpit two (2) weeks in advance.
- C. Congregational meeting quorum shall be all of those active members present and voting.

IX. OFFICIAL BOARD

A. Members and Quorum

- 1. The Official Board shall be composed of 9 communicant members.
- 2. Board meeting quorum shall require a minimum of five (5) active board members.
- 3. The Board shall meet monthly. Additional meetings shall be called by the minister or the Board chairman. All Board business shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

B. Terms

- 1. Three (3) members to serve for a three (3) year term elected annually.
- 2. The term of office for these Board members shall be three (3) years with vacancies staggered so that all terms do not expire simultaneously.
- 3. Board members shall be elected at an annual meeting from the membership with a majority of those present and voting, constituting the election. Voting shall be by secret ballot if there is more than one (1) candidate per office available.
- 4. No Board member shall serve on the board for consecutive terms, either full or partial, for more than six (6) years, and shall be ineligible to be elected to a new term until one (1) full year shall have elapsed.

C. Officers

- 1. The Board shall appoint a secretary and treasurer in an ex-officio capacity (without vote).
- 2. The Official Board shall elect a chairman and a vice chairman (elected from its membership) who will serve until the next annual meeting or until their successor has been elected and qualified. The Chairman shall preside over all Board business. If the Chairman is not in attendance, the Vice Chairman shall preside over Board business. If neither the Chairman or Vice Chairman is in attendance, a temporary Board Chairman shall be chosen by the Board.

D. Duties

- 1. Representatives to the denominational meetings shall be appointed by the Board.
- 2. The Board shall prepare and present a proposed budget to the congregation at the annual meeting.
- 3. A budget shall be drawn up by the Board to cover operating expenses of the First Church United.
- 4. A missionary percentage goal shall be set by the Board and divided 50-50 for the respective denominations involved.
- 5. The per capita assessment of the Presbyterian denomination shall be derived from 50% of the total membership and paid accordingly.
- 6. The Board shall include in the budget an adequate and definite sum to be set aside for maintenance and repair of all properties.
- 7. It shall be the duty of the Board to see that a monthly financial statement is prepared for publication in the church newsletter.
- 8. The Board shall select from their membership a liaison to serve on each committee it oversees.

9. The Board shall appoint a church member to compile a list of communion servers annually. These servers shall be church members. It shall be the practice to ask current and past board members to serve.
10. The Board shall appoint additional committees or dissolve existing committees as needed on an annual basis.
11. Congregational meetings must be announced by Board representative from the pulpit two (2) weeks in advance. Congregational meeting quorum shall be all of those active members present and voting.

E. Committees

1. Nominating Committee

- a. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to compile an Official Board and Committee membership ballot listing to be voted on by the Congregation at the January annual meeting.
- b. The Nominating Committee shall consist of one Board Member appointed by the Board and 2 members at large selected at the January annual meeting. This Committee shall begin filling positions for the January voting ballot in October and finish in early December.
- c. A list of positions to be filled shall include but not necessarily be limited to open terms to the following: Official Board, Communion Speaking Elders, Trustees-property maintenance committee, Christian Education Committee, Endowment Fund Committee, Stewardship-Generosity Committee, Board of Deacons, Long Range Planning Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee, Personnel Relations Committee, Congregational Life Committee, Community Center Board, Memorial Committee and Worship Team.
- d. The Official Board shall appoint additional committees or dissolve existing committees as needed annually.

2. Memorial Committee

- a. The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of all memorial gifts.
- b. The Memorial Committee fund, separate from general funds, consists of money given in memory of a deceased person. The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for all deposits and withdrawals from this fund.
- c. The Memorial Committee shall insure money from this memorial fund is used for appropriate items of a permanent nature. The Memorial Committee shall make proposals and recommendations of items to be purchased with Memorial funds to the Board.
- d. Board approval must be secured prior to the purchase of any memorial item. To keep with the needs of the church, the Memorial Committee shall regularly solicit suggestions from the Pastor, the Board and the congregation.
- e. The Memorial Committee shall consist of three (3) members. One member shall be appointed each year so there are always two experienced members remaining on the committee.
- f. A portion of a worship service shall be used on an annual basis for a dedication service of all memorial gifts for the year.

3. Pastoral Relations Committee

- a. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of three members, all of whom shall be voting members of First Church United. Members shall be elected to a three (3) year term, elected annually to serve no more than two consecutive terms.
- b. Each year by the 15th of October the Minister shall give to the Nominating Committee a list of five (5) names. From this list, the Nominating Committee shall submit one name to the congregation to be elected at the annual meeting.
- c. In the event of a vacancy on the Committee, the Official Board shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the Congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy.
- d. The purpose of this Committee is to provide confidential communication between the Congregation and the Pastor.
- e. This Committee shall meet with the Pastor on a regular basis.
- f. The Pastors annual review shall be facilitated by the Pastoral Relations Committee through use of Congregational input.
- g. Timing of the Pastors annual review shall be scheduled by this committee and the Board chairman so the review can be completed prior to the annual budget process. The budget shall include the proposed salary decision for the Pastor.

4. Pastor Selection Committee

- a. The Pastor Selection Committee shall consist of six (6) members appointed in whatever manner of action is determined necessary by the Board. At the first meeting of the Pastor Selection Committee, the members shall choose a Chairman.
- b. Each denomination will submit an agreed upon number of candidates' names for minister or may consider candidates from other sources. The Pastor Selection Committee will recommend to the Board its choice for Pastor and the terms of Call. The candidate will be considered for their abilities to perform the needed ministry rather than by denomination.
- c. The Official Board shall consider the recommendation of the Pastor Selection Committee, and if approved, shall recommend the proposed Minister to the Congregation.
- d. A Call shall be extended to the proposed Minister on the basis of a majority vote of members present and voting in a regular or special meeting of the congregation. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- e. The term of ministry shall be as per provisions of the Call.
- f. Ministry termination shall be according to the policy of the denomination to which the Pastor belongs.

5. Endowment Committee

- a. This Committee is governed by a separate set of Bylaws and manages the investment, disbursement and control of the Endowment funds.
- b. See Attached Exhibit A. (By-Laws of the Endowment Committee)

6. Music Ministry Committee

- a. Music Ministry Committee shall consist of Music Directors, Organists and Pianists, one representative from the Worship Team and the Pastor.
- b. This Committee shall manage the disbursement of funds from the Beryl Brooke Memorial Music Ministry Fund.

- c. See Attached Exhibit B. (Statement of Administration of the Beryl Brooke Memorial Music Ministry Fund).

X. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

- A. Any and all future amendments to the By-Laws shall be by vote of the Official Board, requiring simple majority (which shall require five (5) of the nine (9) votes possible even though less than nine (9) may be in attendance.)
- B. This By-Law revision incorporates amendments adopted by the First Church United Official Board on May 14, 1998, January 14, 1999 and December 20, 2007.

XI. ADDENDUM TO THE BY-LAW REVISION

- A. Items I-VIII have been kept as originally negotiated and agreed upon by Members of both parent denominations at the time of the merger to create First Church United.
- B. Items referencing the current operation of First Church United have been updated to more carefully detail the duties and responsibilities of the respective committees.
- C. These By-Laws supersede any and all prior By-Laws of First Church United.

These By-Laws were voted and approved on _____, 2017

Chairman of the Board

Vice Chairman of the Board

Secretary to the Board

EXHIBIT A

ENDOWMENT FUND BY-LAWS

Dated May 1990, Amendments January 1998, January 2001 and March 2011

A. AMENDMENT TO CONGREGATIONAL BYLAWS – FIRST CHURCH UNITED

“An Endowment Fund, whose purpose, governance, and operational procedures shall be defined by special resolution adopted by the Congregation, shall be established.”

B. RESOLUTION TO IMPLEMENT THE ENDOWMENT FUND

WHEREAS, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind – time, talents, created world and money, including ACCUMULATED, INHERITED and APPRECIATED RESOURCES; and

WHEREAS, Christians can give to the work of the church through bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, charitable gift annuities, assignment of life insurance, and transfers of property (ash, stocks, bonds, real estate); and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Congregation of FIRST CHURCH UNITED to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion to their Lord, expressed by the grantors and in accord with the policies of this Congregation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this Congregation, at a Special Congregational Meeting held May 6, 1990, approve and establish on the records of the church a new and separate fund to be known as the Endowment Funds (hereafter called the “FUND”) of First Church United, West Liberty, Iowa. This FUND will be apart from the existing “Memorial Fund” and any future “Special Project Funds”.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the primary PURPOSE of this FUND is to enhance the mission outreach of First Church United. ALL PRINCIPAL AMOUNTS WILL BE RETAINED AND ONLY THE INCOME EXPENDED: UNLESS BY 2/3 CONGREGATIONAL APPROVAL.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following Plan of Operation set forth the administration and management of the FUND.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the bequests received by the FUND will not be held in confidence, unless otherwise stipulated by the bequestor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that hereafter the date of the adoption and signing of this resolution. Any undesignated funds from wills, bequests, or special gifts will be placed in the appropriate fund after a Board appointed committee consults with family members to determine the wishes of the testator. If no family members remain, the official Board will make the determination of the appropriate fund.

C. PLAN OF OPERATION

1. THE COMMITTEE

“The Committee shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be voting members of First Church United. Except as herein limited, the term of each member shall be three (3) years. Upon adoption of this resolution by the Congregation, it shall elect five (5) members of the COMMITTEE.

Two (2) for a term of three (3) years;
Two (2) for a term of two (2) years;
And one (1) for a term of one (1) year.

Thereafter, at each annual meeting, beginning in 1991, the Congregation shall elect the necessary number for a term of three (3) years. The senior pastor and the Chairperson of the Official Board shall be advisory members of the COMMITTEE.

The Nominating Committee of the Congregation shall nominate the candidates for the Endowment Fund Committee and report at the Annual Congregational Meeting. In the event of a vacancy of the COMMITTEE, the Official Board shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next Annual meeting of the Congregation, at which time the Congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy.

The COMMITTEE shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as required for operation of the FUND.

A quorum shall consist of three (3) members. A majority present and voting shall carry any motion or resolution.

The COMMITTEE shall elect from its membership the following:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Fund Treasurer
- c. Recording Secretary

The Chairperson, or member designated by the Chairperson, shall preside at the COMMITTEE meetings.

The Recording Secretary shall maintain completed and accurate minutes of all meetings of the COMMITTEE and supply a copy thereof to each member of the COMMITTEE. The Recording Secretary shall also supply a copy of the minutes to the Official Board and Church Office. The Recording Secretary will acknowledge all gifts, in writing, which are received and keep accurate records regarding each gift.

The Fund Treasurer shall provide the Official Board complete and accurate financial records of accounts for the FUND annually, and shall sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the FUND. The Fund Treasurer shall sign all checks that are to be invested with COMMITTEE approved institutions. Interest returned on investments will be invested in a local account by the Fund Treasurer as directed by the COMMITTEE. After specific programs recommended by the COMMITTEE and approved by the Board, the Fund Treasurer shall write checks to First Church United. The Official Board Treasurer will distribute the funds as designated by the COMMITTEE and approved by the Board. The financial records shall be AUDITED ANNUALLY by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or other appropriate person, who is NOT a member of the Committee. Cost of the audit will be at the expense of the FUND.

The COMMITTEE shall report on a quarterly basis to the Official Board. At each Annual Meeting of the Congregation, the COMMITTEE shall render a full and complete audited account of the administration of the FUND during the preceding year.

The COMMITTEE may request other members of the Congregation to serve as advisory members, and at expense of the Endowment Fund income only, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the FUND. The COMMITTEE shall determine the criteria for investment and choice of investment profile for the principal and unspent interest of the FUND. It shall be the policy of the COMMITTEE to accrued gifts in a local account until a minimum of \$5,000 is accrued, and then invested using the established criteria.

The COMMITTEE will be responsible for promoting and encouraging gifts to the FUND. Educational and informative materials and programs are to be regularly developed by the COMMITTEE to assist Congregational members in deciding to make undesignated bequests and gifts to the ENDOWMENT FUND. All gifts to the FUND in the form of stocks, bonds, collectibles, or property, other than cash, will be converted to cash as soon as the COMMITTEE can make arrangements. The cash value of the converted gift will be placed in the FUND for investment.

Members of the COMMITTEE shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the FUND except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omission, and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self-dealing or transactions with the FUND in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interest would conflict with the interest of the FUND.

ALL ASSETS ARE TO BE HELD IN THE NAME OF “THE FIRST CHURCH UNITED ENDOWMENT FUND”.

Funds will be divided in equal portions for investment with the Christian Church Foundation (Disciples of Christ) or Board of Church Extension and Presbyterian Foundation (Presbyterian Church, USA).

2. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

“The COMMITTEE shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures. Income from investments shall be retained in a local account as deemed financially beneficial to First Church United, awaiting disbursements.

INCOME from the FUND shall be distributed annually and such other times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:

Specific programs for support shall be recommended by the COMMITTEE using suggestions from Board approved committees with final APPROVAL by the Official Board for funding.

- a) One-fourth (1/4) used with the approval of the Official Board of First Church United in any manner deemed appropriate.
- b) One-fourth (1/4) for scholarships or grants to local students with preference given to members of First Church United who are in college or seminary preparing for the Ministry; Leadership training scholarships for staff and congregational members of First Church United; and to provide supplementary stipends for Seminary Interns for First Church United.
- c) One-fourth (1/4) for outreach into the community, including but not limited to, grants to social service agencies, institutions and agencies to which this Congregation relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in our parish area who are in spiritual and/or economic need.
- d) One-fourth (1/4) for wider mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Presbyterian Church (USA) at home and overseas (that is 50% to each denomination), including grants for new church development, colleges and Seminaries, educational ministries, evangelism and world mission.

- 3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Endowment Fund shall in no way affect the operation of the General Fund, Memorial Fund, or Special Project Fund, nor is it intended to discourage gifts to the General Fund, Memorial Fund or Special Project Funds.

4. AMENDING THE RESOLUTION

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any amendment to this resolution, which will change, alter, or amend the purpose for which the FUND is established shall be adopted by a TWO-THIRDS VOTE of the Members present in person at a Congregational meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this resolution. As provided by First Church United Bylaws, a two-week advance notice from the pulpit and in church bulletin must be will be given prior to the meeting”.

5. DISPOSITION OR TRANSFER OF FUND

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event First Church United ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the FUND shall be at the discretion of the

Official Board in conformity with the constitution of First Church United of West Liberty, Iowa. Consultation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Presbyterian Church (USA) may be desirable for the continuation of Endowment Fund obligations.

6. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

“This resolution, recommended by the Official Board and accepted by the Congregation at a legally called Congregational meeting, is hereby adopted.

FIRST CHURCH UNITED

By: _____
Dean Phelps, Chairperson

And _____
Marilyn Ruegsegger, Secretary

Dated this 6th day of May, 1990

**AMENDMENT TO FIRST CHURCH UNITED BY-LAWS FOR FIRST CHURCH UNITED
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Approved at Annual Congregation Meeting January 25, 1998

Under item “C” of the adopted by-laws the following changes be made to this section – The Committee shall elect from its membership the following: a) Chairperson; b) Financial Secretary; and c) Recording Secretary, to the following; a) Chairperson; b) Recording Secretary. It is recommended that a full-time Financial Secretary be an ex-officio member of the First Church United Endowment Committee. This Financial Secretary shall be responsible to the Endowment Committee to conduct all financial transactions. The Financial Secretary shall be elected by the congregation to serve on the Endowment Committee as an ex-officio member, the length of term to be at the pleasure of the Endowment Committee.

**AMENDMENT TO FIRST CHURCH UNITED BY-LAWS FOR FIRST CHURCH UNITED
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Approved at Annual Congregational Meeting January 14, 2001

The Endowment Fund treasurer shall be allowed to write checks directly from their funds rather than giving the money to the Church Board and the Board treasurer writing the check.

**AMENDMENT TO FIRST CHURCH UNITED BY-LAWS FOR FIRST CHURCH UNITED
EMDOWMENT FUND**

Approved at Annual Congregational Meeting March 23, 2011

Under Section C, add subsection:

1. Yearly withdrawal from both denominational investment funds (2.5% of principal balance) to be distributed equally to Fund B, Fund C and Fund D. This is to enhance the distribution and use of God’s Gifts as defined by these three funds. Gifts received over the years were meant to be used for worthy projects as opposed to sitting in an investment and earning a small amount of interest.
2. All transfers between Fund B, Fund C and Fund D to enhance the use and support of worthy projects. Performance and support should not be limited to fund balance. As all of these funds reside in one bank account at West Liberty State Bank and split only in the financial reports of the fund, there is no actual bank transfer.

Under Section C.2 (Distribution of Income) the following changes to be made to this section as follows:

B. Add – In addition to current use definition First Church United will create two scholarships worth \$2,000 each and will distribute yearly. First preference will be given to members of First Church United and will be based on need and involvement in church and community. If no one applies then we can consider others in the community.

D. Change – One-fourth (1/4) for wider mission of the Christian Church (disciples of Christ) and Presbyterian Church (USA) at home and oversees, including grants for new church development, colleges and seminaries, educational ministries, evangelism and world mission. This is also meant to support at-home or world-wide disaster recovery in relationship to catastrophic disasters.

As stated in the Endowment Fund under section C.4. (Amending the Resolution) any and all amendments require a two-thirds vote of the members present in person at a congregational meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this resolution. As provided by First Church United By-Laws, a two-week advance notice from the pulpit and in the church bulletin must be given prior to the meeting.

EXHIBIT B

Statement of Administration of Beryl Brooke Memorial Music Ministry Fund

A “Brooke Memorial Music Ministry Fund” shall be established and the money placed in the fund will be invested and administered by the Endowment Committee of First Church United. The Brooke Memorial Music Ministry Fund will be separate from any other funds that are administered by the Endowment Committee.

Use of the fund is intended for the music ministry of First Church United as stated in the last will and testament of Beryl Brooke. Use of this fund shall be for non-consumable item purchases or capital item purchases for the music ministry of First Church United.

After the money has been placed in the Brooke Memorial Fund, interest should be rolled over into the principal balance. Principal money can be used by the Music Ministry Committee after requesting funds through the Endowment Committee. Endowment Committee will approve/disapprove request and then forward to the Official Board for their approval. Use of money from this fund does not require approval from the congregation.