

**The Constitution of**  
**Lake Edge United Church of Christ**  
**Madison, Wisconsin**

Adopted on February 12, 2012

**Article I – Name**

The name of our congregation is **Lake Edge United Church of Christ** located in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Article II – Statement of Mission**

The purpose of our congregation is to worship God, to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to celebrate the Sacraments. We further aspire to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this congregation, the wider community and the Church Universal while rendering loving service to all and striving for justice and peace.

**Article III – Faith and Covenant**

**Faith** – Our congregation acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and we acknowledge as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. We look to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in its creative and redemptive work in the world. Built on the foundation of the historic church and the loving service of our ancestors in faith, we affirm the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ and the practice prevailing among Christians, we recognize two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

**Covenant** – We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We aspire to walk together in the ways of Jesus, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be our mission to witness to the gospel in the world, while worshipping God and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our ancestors, we pray for and depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. In faith and hope, we seek that all creation be fully united in God's love.

**Article IV – Denominational Affiliation**

Our congregation is a part of the United Church of Christ and we will sustain our relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of its Constitution and By Laws relating to local churches adopted July 4, 1961 and amended by subsequent General Synods.

The government of our congregation is vested in our members, who exercise the right of control in all our affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted by the Statutes of the State of Wisconsin.

**Article V – Membership**

Membership in our congregation is open to any person wishing to join who has been baptized, confirmed or has made public affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ. Membership is open to all who subscribe to the Statements of Faith and Covenant in Article III.

A. Reception and Responsibility

1. At a worship service, new members will be welcomed into the congregation following Confirmation, New Members' class attendance, private consultation with a Pastor or a letter of transfer from another congregation.
2. All members will promise to worship with our congregation, to live into a Christian Life as outlined in the Statements of Faith and Covenant in Article III, to contribute to the spiritual and financial support of our congregation and its acts of kindness in the world and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of members as well as the larger community.

B. Termination of Membership

1. A member may request in writing to be released from congregational membership.
2. A member may request a letter of transfer or a statement of church membership.
3. A member who, in spite of congregational outreach, has not attended worship or supported our congregation for a minimum of two years may be removed from the membership roll.
4. Our congregation may terminate a membership by a two-thirds vote in a congregational meeting should a member persistently breach covenantal vows. A letter of termination of membership will follow.

## **Article VI: The Office of Pastor**

The pastoral office(s) of our congregation will only be conferred upon a candidate in good standing with the Southwest Wisconsin Association of the United Church of Christ, who professes and adheres to the Statements of Faith and Covenant in Article III of this Constitution. In the call extended to and accepted by them, Pastor(s) will pledge to uphold and support our covenantal standard.

### **A. Calling a Pastor**

1. The Leadership Council will appoint a Pastoral Search Committee to seek candidates for a vacancy in the office of Pastor. A majority of the Pastoral Search Committee members will not be members of the Leadership Council.
2. The Pastoral Search Committee will present the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy at a congregational meeting. A two thirds majority vote of our congregation at a congregational meeting constitutes a call.
3. Our congregation may at its discretion choose Associate or Specialized Pastor(s) following the procedure outlined above.

### **B. Removing a Pastor**

1. A Pastor will be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, two months' notice will be given by either party.
2. Discipline of a Pastor will be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
3. If a Pastor is unable or willfully neglectful in the performance of duties, he/she may be removed from office at a congregational meeting by a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote.
4. Prior to any voting action, the Leadership Council, in consultation with the Wisconsin Conference UCC, will thoroughly investigate any claim that a Pastor is unable to perform or willfully neglectful in the performance of duties. A report will be provided to our congregation on the outcome of the investigation.

## **Article VII – Congregational Meetings**

It is the right and responsibility of our congregation in a congregational meeting to decide such matters as:

Buying and selling of property  
 Call and termination of a Pastor's call  
 Changes to major ministry goals and objectives affecting our entire congregation  
 Changes in the Constitution  
 Election of Officers and members of the Leadership Council  
 Review and approval of the annual financial operating plan  
 Approval of all borrowing in excess of 5% of the total financial operating plan

- A. Annual Meeting – An annual congregational meeting will be held to elect officers and members of the Leadership Council and to approve the ministry and financial operating plans. The official year of the church begins on January 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- B. Special Meetings – Special congregational meetings may be called by a Pastor or the Leadership Council and will be called by the Secretary on written request of ten members of our congregation.
- C. Notification - Four weeks written notice will be given to the members of our congregation stating the place, date and purpose of any meeting.
- D. Rules of Order – Robert's Rules of Order are the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by the Constitution.

- E. Quorum. The quorum will be seven percent of our congregation's membership.
- F. Voting – Elections will be determined by a majority vote of those present. All members are eligible to vote. Non members who are at least 18 years of age and contribute regularly to the financial support of our congregation may vote upon all financial matters.

### **Article VIII - Leadership Council**

- A. Membership - The Leadership Council is composed of the following: Pastor(s), Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, and seven Members-at-Large. All members, with the exception of the Pastor(s), have voting privileges.
- B. Election –
  - 1. Voting members of the Leadership Council are elected at the annual congregational meeting by a simple majority vote.
  - 2. The Vice Moderator and Moderator will each serve a one-year term.
  - 3. The Secretary and Treasurer will each serve a two-year term.
  - 4. The Members-at-Large will each serve a two-year term with four elected each even calendar year and three elected each odd calendar year.
  - 5. No voting members will serve more than four consecutive years on the Leadership Council (not including a partial term served). A two-year break will then be required before a member can serve additional terms.
- C. Vacancy - In the event that a position on the Leadership Council is vacated, with the exception of the Pastor(s), the Leadership Council will appoint a person to fill that position for the remainder of the unexpired term
- D. Quorum - A quorum will consist of no less than two thirds of the total membership of the Leadership Council. Matters will be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present.
- E. Purpose
  - 1. The Leadership Council is the executive, administrative and planning body of our congregation.
  - 2. The Leadership Council has the responsibility to develop and implement policies and procedures to execute plans approved by our congregation. Written policies and procedures will be available.
  - 3. The Leadership Council has no authority beyond that conferred by the Constitution or as outlined at a congregational meeting. Responsibilities delegated to the Leadership Council by the congregation may at any time be altered or revoked at a congregational meeting.
- F. Duties and Responsibilities
  - 1. The Leadership Council will assist the Pastor(s) in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
  - 2. The Leadership Council will watch over the administration and welfare of the Pastor(s) as appropriate. The Leadership Council will supervise the Pastor(s) and ensure he/she is properly supervising the staff. Such supervision will enable the Pastor(s) and staff to develop and implement new strategies and programs to accomplish the mission as stated in Article II.
  - 3. The Leadership Council will call committees and teams to act on the goals and needs as defined by the Leadership Council and our congregation.
  - 4. The major actions and activities of all committees and teams will be communicated to and advised by the Leadership Council.
  - 5. The Leadership Council will appoint a Nominating Committee to nominate candidates for the Leadership Council's positions. The majority of the Nominating Committee's membership will not be members of the Leadership Council.
  - 6. The Leadership Council will attend to the financial wellness and stability of our church as well as respond to financial emergencies. It will ensure these actions are performed with integrity and with the knowledge of the congregation.
- G. Meetings
  - 1. The Leadership Council will meet at regular intervals at least ten times a year for transaction of business as

- well as implementation and review of agreed upon goals.
2. Additional meetings may be called by the Moderator and/or the Pastor(s).
  3. The Secretary will prepare minutes of all meetings and distribute them to the Leadership Council and make them available to our congregation.

## **Article IX – Officers**

The following are the officers of our congregation and of the Leadership Council.

- A. The Moderator will –
  1. Preside at all official meetings of our congregation and the Leadership Council.
  2. Sign legal documents on behalf of our congregation.
- B. The Vice Moderator will –
  1. Preside and act in the absence of the Moderator.
  2. Assume such other duties as the Moderator may direct.
  3. Succeed to the office of Moderator.
- C. The Secretary will –
  1. Keep and preserve accurate records of all congregational meetings.
  2. Handle such correspondence as our congregation, Leadership Council and Officers may require.
  3. Keep and make available minutes of all Leadership Council meetings.
  4. Sign legal documents on behalf of our congregation when more than one signature is required.
- D. The Treasurer will –
  1. Ensure prompt payment of all expenditures to maintain the financial integrity of our congregation as authorized by a congregational meeting, the Leadership Council or any committee called by the Leadership Council to oversee financial matters.
  2. Ensure accuracy and propriety of all financial transactions of our congregation including that all receipts and disbursements are kept and preserved accurately.
  3. In consultation with the Leadership Council and any committee they designate, annually report on the financial condition of our congregation and recommend an annual financial operating plan for approval at the annual congregational meeting.

## **Article X – Property Rights**

All property of our congregation is held in the corporate name as stated in Article I. If at any time a separation of the congregation should take place, the property of the congregation and all benefits pertaining thereto will remain with the majority of those members who will also continue to adhere to Articles III and IV of this Constitution.

## **Article XI – Amendments**

Articles I through X may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the congregation present at a congregational meeting. The proposed amendment(s) must have been presented to the congregation in writing not less than two months previously.