

CONSTITUTION-IN-PARTNERSHIP

FAIRMOUNT & PILGRIM UNITED CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Adopted September 1, 2019

Updated July 16, 2019

Article I: Names & Relationship

The **names** of the respective churches shall be Fairmount United Church of Christ (Congregational) and Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ.

They shall **organize** as separate corporations working cooperatively in this Constitution-In-Partnership to share in the oversight and administration of all matters of governance and operational management in the life of their respective congregations.

Article II: Our Shared Objective & Goals

These congregations covenant that our principal objective shall be to stand as a leading progressive theological voice within and beyond the Wichita, Kansas area, embodying the love of God in Jesus Christ as revealed through the Holy Spirit, so that all persons come to find their own reality bound up in the ongoing redemptive work of the Divine throughout the world. Through the combination of our respective energies and resources, these congregations endeavor to connect with those who have been wounded by other forms of the church, to seek out the least, the last and the lost, in order that all claim their place as beloved children of God. These congregations will, therefore, seek to grow the realm of God through occupying a visible, proactive space in the community and mission field that surrounds us.

Article III: Polity, Doctrine & Shared Beliefs

These congregations acknowledge and experience Jesus Christ as the Sole Head of the Church and find, in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Holy Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, our guidance in matters of faith and discipline.

The **governance** of these congregations is ultimately vested in our respective members, who exercise the right of control in all our affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted to each congregation by the State of Kansas.

While these congregations are amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, we accept the obligations of mutual covenant, council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of all churches in the **United Church of Christ** and the Church Universal.

These congregations recognize the Bible as the fundamental rule of faith and practice, and we hold that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the beginning of a lifetime journey of discipleship. Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, guided by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The following **statement of faith**, therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which the Church interprets the Word of God:

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

These respective congregations further covenant to share in actively living out the following values:

The congregations shall maintain an environment which values all individuals as unique and beloved children of God. These congregations shall not discriminate against anyone with regard to race, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. These congregations understand that individuals are on their own spiritual journey, and as such, everyone's religious beliefs and personal convictions should be treated with mutual respect.

We are proud to be visibly, actively Open & Affirming congregations.

No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

We, the United Church of Christ congregations of Wichita, recognize that all persons are created equal in God's image and are loved, valued, and blessed by God. We are inclusive and diverse churches; places of unconditional love that inspire all individuals in our communities, regardless of race, culture, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and socio-economic status.

We invite all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregations as we seek to grow together in faith and love.

We will demonstrate our faith by actively living out this statement as an expression of our shared mission and covenantal relationship with one another as congregations and individuals to all who encounter us:

Everyone Welcome. Seriously, Everyone.

Article IV: Worship, Discipleship, Mission & Justice

Worship services shall be held, either in joint partnership or separately, by the respective congregations at given hours each Sunday and/or other days, except when temporarily suspended by a vote of the respective congregation(s) or, in case of emergency, by the Pastor in consultation with the Board.

The sacrament of Communion shall be celebrated on a regular basis and at such other times as may be requested, and determined appropriate by the Pastor. Participation in Communion is not required, nor is membership a requirement for participation.

The Baptism of adults, children, or infants shall be offered upon request and will be administered at such time as the Pastor may appoint.

Because of the long history of making education a priority within the United Church of Christ and its predecessor bodies, the congregations shall make Christian Education a priority for all ages. The goal of Christian Education is to lead all participants into an increasing experience of the fellowship of God and in the development of a character which shall be genuinely and consistently Christian in all human relationships. During this time of education, Discipleship shall be formulated along the educational road. Discipleship develops interest in the church and the world outside the local church, including the greater United Church of Christ and its missions; and invites active participation in the life of the respective congregations.

Mission is the church's organized and active participation in spreading the Word of God, doing justice work, and providing ministry to the needs of people not only within these congregations, but in the surrounding community and throughout the world. We live missionally in the following ways:

- As a gathered body of believers actively following Jesus
- Exploring and identifying the myriad ways Jesus is incarnate in our world
- Being disciples to all ages of our time
- Seeking to eliminate injustice
- Standing with those in need

We do all of this compelled by Christ to “declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.” (1 Chron. 16:24).

We recognize, in the cross of Christ, the invitation of the Divine to participate actively in the reshaping of the landscape of our world. This moves beyond service in mission through the local church into the realm of actively pursuing Justice in the world. We understand this pursuit of justice to be made known to us through the cross of Christ, through which God revealed the falsehood of human-designed systems of religion and social control by those in power over others. We see these human systems continually at play in the world that surrounds us and recognize the imperative signaled in the resurrection that a beloved community centered in the invitation to new, just, equitable life on an individual and corporate level must, in preaching, teaching and practice, work toward the establishment of the realm of God through both vocal opposition to unjust systems and the physical embodiment of an alternative path which is built upon the faith revealed to us in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Article V: Amendments

This Constitution-In-Partnership may be altered or amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of those present and eligible to vote at any called and duly publicized meeting of each respective congregation, provided that the substance of the proposed amendments shall have been laid before the congregations in writing not less than two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting. Copies shall either have been made available beforehand in printed format and/or published and distributed via electronic media.

Article VI: Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Fairmount or Pilgrim United Church of Christ ownership of all that congregation's respective funds and/or property shall be transferred to the other congregation. In the event of the dissolution of both congregations, all respective funds and/or property shall be transferred to the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successors.

Pilgrim & Fairmount United Churches of Christ

BYLAWS

Adopted September 1, 2019

Updated July 16, 2019

Article I: Membership

The members of these Churches shall be persons who have expressed a desire for membership and publicly accept its covenants by baptism (if not previously baptized) and affirmation of faith or reaffirmation of faith, along with acknowledgment and acceptance of the congregations' shared behavioral covenant. Persons desiring membership in one of the congregations shall be received at a regularly scheduled worship service of that congregation by public assent to the covenant of membership vows prescribed by the United Church of Christ. Any unable to attend in public may be received by the Pastor and representatives of the Board on behalf of the respective congregation.

These congregations, and our respective members at their reception and beyond, agree to abide by the following Behavioral Covenant:

As followers of Jesus Christ, we promise to respect each other at all times in the following ways:

We will approach all things in prayer. We will speak from personal experience, from "I," not "We," or "They." We accept disagreement as normal and natural to community processes.

We will speak face-to-face, honestly and without rancor, avoiding triangulation and hearsay.

We will listen with an open and non-judgmental mind, and try as hard to understand as to be understood.

We are committed to being inconvenienced for the Gospel. If we are unable to effectively communicate with each other, we will ask a third-party to be present to assist us. We will support the final outcome of the decision-making process. As forgiven people, we will choose to forgive one another.

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the covenants established by the United Church of Christ, as well as the following: Regular worship attendance within the past one (1) year and/or continued financial contribution within the past one (1) year, and agreement to abide by the congregations' Behavioral Covenant in all word and deed within and beyond the walls of the local church.

Members whose addresses are unknown or who for a period of one (1) year have not attended worship with the respective congregation or contributed to its support, may, as recommended by the Board at the Annual Meeting, be removed from the membership roll.

Any member in good standing who requests a letter of dismissal or transfer of membership to another church shall receive it. The right to full membership shall terminate upon notice or upon removal from the rolls of the respective congregation.

Article II: Church Board

The Board shall act on behalf of the congregations regarding routine church business, as established by these Bylaws. The Board shall also implement action initiated by the congregations and regarding matters of such importance that congregational approval is deemed necessary, the Board shall initiate such consideration by the congregations.

The Board shall consist of the Pastor and eight (8) elected members. One (1) member must be new to congregational membership and shall be the only member eligible to serve a second successive term on

the Board. At the time of the adoption of these Bylaws, the initial Board shall be elected to include four (4) members of Pilgrim Congregational UCC and four (4) members of Fairmount UCC. All successive Boards will be determined by the same joint election process of the congregations.

Board meetings shall be held on a monthly basis to manage the business of both congregations. A quorum shall consist of five (5) members. Board meetings shall be open to all church members except during discussion of personnel matters.

The Board shall be responsible for the following: Enact, review, and revise policies for the effective use of Church resources. Provide for an audit of financial records as necessary. Have the authority to contract for whatever may be reasonably required in the operation of the Church outside the operating budgets per their discretion. In the case of emergency, any single expense in excess of \$20,000 shall require approval from a majority of the votes of members at a Special Congregational Meeting.

The Board may appoint a historian to act as custodian over Church historical materials.

The Board will communicate and coordinate with the Pastoral Relations Team as necessary.

The Board shall have the authority to execute leases, improvements, and other necessary work on all Church facilities without congregational approval EXCEPT in the event of the sale of Church land or buildings. In the event of the sale of Church land or buildings, the congregation must approve such action by a majority vote through a Special Congregational Meeting, at which time the Board shall execute said approval and all appropriate work on behalf of the congregation.

The Board shall receive from the Pastor and Church Administrator updates on education and other administrative Church activities conducted through those offices. The Board shall act as an advisor to the Pastor and Church Administrator with regard to any and all daily administrative functions of their offices.

The Board shall convene annually to chart the course for the congregations in a visioning retreat. The focus of the retreat will be to identify and articulate goals for the year in each area of worship, discipleship, mission, and justice in order to facilitate the life of the congregations and track progress throughout the year. Results of that year's goals will be published in the annual report.

Article III: Officers

After an election, **Officers** shall be selected from within the Board by private election at the time of their initial gathering. All Officers shall be voting members of the Board.

The Officers of the Church shall be as follows:

The **Moderator** shall be the principal lay officer of the Church, the presiding officer of all congregational meetings, and the chairperson of the Board. The Moderator shall, in coordination and cooperation with the Pastor, oversee church programs and ministry priorities as determined by the Board and congregations.

The **Clerk** shall serve as secretary of the congregations and the Board. The Clerk shall: Maintain a faithful record of the proceedings of congregational meetings and of the Board. Distribute records to the Church Administrator in a timely manner for electronic publication on the church website. Coordinate with the Church Administrator to maintain new member reception, attendance, birth, baptism, marriage, anniversary, death, and other necessary membership records utilizing computer software purchased by

the Church for that purpose. Issue letters of transfer of church membership when requested. Preserve through church electronic media all written communications and official reports. Give legal notice of all meetings when such notices are necessary.

In the absence of the Moderator, the Clerk shall preside over called meetings, appointing a substitute from among the Board members to assume the recording duties at said meeting.

The **Treasurer** shall be the principal financial officer of the Church. The Treasurer shall: Assist Church Administrator in maintaining updated paperwork relating to all Church property. Sign all checks to make payment on Church obligations. Oversee record-keeping, receipts, and necessary documentation utilizing provided financial management software. Be bonded as necessary. Contract with approved financial institutions to invest endowments, legacies, trust funds, and securities and record and credit the appropriate account with income received from all sources utilizing provided financial management software. Prepare and submit to the Board a monthly statement of all accounts. Assist the Church Administrator with preparation and submittal to the appropriate authority (federal, state, local) corporate tax information and returns with tax payments as required. Present to an auditor the financial accounting records for audit as required by the Board.

The **Financial Secretary** shall: Receive and record all non-interest/dividend Church income. Count the Offering (along with a second member of the Board) on Sunday mornings. Maintain records of pledges and individual contributions utilizing provided financial management software. Deposit all receipts in the proper bank account(s) each week and return deposit slips to Church Administrator for filing. Be bonded as necessary. Prepare and submit monthly income reports to the Board. Produce and transmit semi-annual giving statements of all pledges and identified individual contributions.

Article IV: Ministry Teams

As the need arises, the Board may appoint specialized **Ministry Teams** to achieve specific tasks in a designated timeframe as determined by the Board. Such Ministry Teams shall report progress to and fall under the authority of the Board.

No other groups shall be recognized as official entities or have access to church resources within the respective congregations outside of these terms.

Article V: Pastoral Relations Team

A Pastoral Relations Team (PRT) shall be comprised of four (4) total members, with two (2) representatives elected from each of the congregations. The PRT shall elect its own Chair from within the elected members at its first meeting. The PRT shall meet three times during each 12-month term, unless otherwise requested. All meetings shall be kept confidential. The purpose of the PRT shall be to help enforce the Behavioral Covenant with respect to any issues dealing with the pastor and the congregations.

Article VI: Church Personnel

The **Pastor** shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the congregations. Pastoral duties shall include but not be limited to: Engaging the congregations in coaching and vision-casting for evangelism, church growth, and operational unity. Preaching the Gospel. Administering the Sacraments. Having charge of all public worship. Administering the various activities of the Church in coordination with the Board.

The Pastor shall be a voting member of the Board and shall consult three (3) times annually with the Pastoral Relations Team. The Pastor shall not be a member of any Pastoral Search Team subsequently established.

The Pastor shall have direct oversight of all administrative church functions performed by other church personnel, including hiring and termination prerogative of all other church personnel in consultation with the Moderator and, when necessary, the full Board.

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the church members from both congregations who are present at each congregation's respective meeting duly convened for that purpose.

The Church may at any time by a majority vote from both congregations at respective meetings called for only that purpose, request a resignation effective within ninety (90) days from the date of the request. Should the Pastor wish to resign, a notice of ninety (90) days shall be expected. In the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, relations shall immediately cease.

When a new pastor is to be called, a search team made up equally of four (4) representatives from each congregation shall be convened to define the goals and call documents for the pastoral search in consultation with the Conference Minister. These representatives shall not include any members of the current Board and shall include one (1) person new to the congregations. The congregations shall utilize the search and call processes of the United Church of Christ. The congregations shall call a minister with credentials in good standing with the Conference and the United Church of Christ.

A **Church Administrator** may be employed to assist the Pastor with administrative, secretarial and other duties as assigned. The Church Administrator shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor. The duties of the Church Administrator shall be determined by the Pastor and Church Administrator together, then enumerated in a written job description kept in the Church Administrator's personnel file. The Church Administrator must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

A **Music Director** may be employed to administer the Church music program, work together with the Pastor in crafting appropriate worship experiences through musical expertise, and shall act as the musical worship leader during all worship experiences. The Music Director shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. The Music Director must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

Childcare Staff may be employed for the care of children during worship and other events as requested. These persons will be responsible for oversight of the Nursery and Children's Church experiences, the implementation of a curriculum selected by the Board in consultation with the Pastor and Childcare Staff, the safety and security of children-in-care in accordance with safe church policies, and other duties as assigned. Childcare Staff shall be under the supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. All paid and volunteer Childcare Staff must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

A **Custodian** may be employed to care for all church facilities, ensure safety and proper cleanliness of the church property, and shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor and Church Administrator. The Custodian must pass a background check to be paid for by the Church.

In the event of disagreement between personnel, such disputes shall be mediated by the Board with the aim of reconciliation vis-a-vis Matthew 18:15-16. The Pastor shall have final decision-making authority with regard to the continuation or termination of employment for all other personnel in consultation with the Moderator.

Article VII: Congregational Meetings

One Annual Meeting shall be scheduled by the Board. The agenda shall include a review of the Annual Report with the presentation of ministry plans for the upcoming year, the election of representatives to the Board, and voting on any outstanding issues which have been appropriately added to the agenda according to the rules and regulations established in these Bylaws.

One Budget Meeting shall be held in January of each year to review and adopt a budget for the upcoming ministry year. The specific date of this meeting shall be set by the Board according to the rules and regulations established in these Bylaws.

Any special business may be called to a Special Congregational Meeting when deemed necessary by the Board. If at least one-fifth (20%) of the active, voting-eligible members of that congregation request in writing to the Board that a special meeting is called to consider specifically itemized business, the Board shall honor that request. The nature of the business to be transacted must be clearly articulated within the request. This may be conducted during or immediately after a regular worship service.

Notice for all congregational meetings shall be given by the Board at least two (2) weeks in advance by an announcement in Sunday worship service and through electronic publication in the church newsletter.

No Quorum is required so long as proper notification is made.

The number of church members who are present at the meeting shall be recorded.

Elections shall be hand-count or written ballot as requested and decided by the Moderator. A majority vote is decisive and unless restricted by law all active church members are eligible to vote.

The Terms of Office for leadership elected at the adoption of these Bylaws shall be 15 months, beginning on the 1st of the month following the election of the Board, allowing for a three-month period of training and transition. All subsequently elected Board members shall serve a period of 15 months, beginning on the 1st of the month following their election, allowing for a continual training process for new leadership. During the overlapping 3-month period, the size of the voting Board shall increase to include all newly elected and presently serving members, with presently serving officers retaining leadership roles until their terms have ended.

The Pastoral Relations Team (PRT) members shall be elected for a 12-month term at each Annual Meeting of the congregation.

During the Annual Meeting, Delegates shall be elected by each congregation to represent the congregations at the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference annual meeting and any other events requiring representation. The delegates shall serve a one (1) year term and shall report to the congregations on all pertinent items of business. The number of delegates shall be determined in accordance with the bylaws of the Conference or other organization inviting our representation. In the event that delegates cannot attend an event on behalf of the congregations, the Board shall appoint substitute representatives.

Article VIII: Safe Church Policy

These congregations are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which children and youth can learn about and experience God's love. In order to promote this goal, the following requirements are in place for all persons serving in positions of children and youth ministry:

- All volunteers will have been members of one of the congregations for a period of no less than one year
- All volunteers will be interviewed by the Board on an annual basis
- All volunteers will submit to a background check, to be paid for by the Church, prior to service
- There will be no fewer than two adult volunteers present with children and youth at any time

Article IX: Amendments

These bylaws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of those present and eligible to vote at any called and duly publicized meetings of both respective congregations, provided that the substance of the proposed amendments shall have been laid before the congregations in writing not less than four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting. Copies shall either have been made available beforehand in printed format and/or published and distributed via electronic media.

Article X: Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Fairmount or Pilgrim United Church of Christ ownership of all that congregation's respective funds and/or property shall be transferred to the other congregation. In the event of the dissolution of both congregations, all respective funds and/or property shall be transferred to the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ or its successors.