

THE CONSTITUTION OF ST. LUKE UNION CHURCH
(Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and United Church of Christ)
Bloomington, Illinois
(Revised December 18, 1994)

THE PREFACE

The St. Luke Union Church, Bloomington, Illinois, is a particular congregation affiliated with both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ denominations. It was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois on September 14, 1975.

The congregations of the Union Presbyterian Church and the St. Luke United Church of Christ were united on September 14, 1975, under the provision of both denominations allowing for “union churches.” As such, the St. Luke Union Church, Bloomington, Illinois, is a successor to both former congregations.

This congregation is subject to the Constitutions of both denominations, particularly to those provisions hereinafter outlined in this Constitution, which has been approved by the Presbytery of Great Rivers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on August 18, 1975, and the Central Association of the United Church of Christ on September 11, 1975.

ARTICLE I
OUR IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

As a family of believers, united in Jesus Christ, seeking to take His command to “Love One Another” seriously:

We will maintain a place and organization through which the Gospel is proclaimed, Christian fellowship is experienced, and spiritual growth can occur.

We will endeavor to be an agent of hope in the community and the world and reach out through prayer, sharing evangelism, education, worship, fellowship, compassion, and prophetic witness;

We will provide our members with motivation, guidance, and experiences necessary to develop individual commitment, to identify personal ministry, and to achieve Christian goals.

ARTICLE II
MEMBERSHIP

1. Every member of the church has been called to ministry. Through our baptism and profession of faith we have been commissioned to become fellow workers with God. Active membership carries with it the responsibility for wholehearted service to Christ and His Kingdom throughout the world, diligent use of the means of grace including faithful participation in worship and sacraments, responsible stewardship, and a commitment to continue in the peace

and community of the people of God, all in proportion to our gifts for service and circumstances in life.

2. The active membership of this church shall be open to persons of all races and nationalities who have made a profession of faith in Christ. Upon presentation of letters of transfer from other churches, by reaffirmation of faith, or confession of faith, and who have been baptized and received into membership of the church and are active in the church's work and worship, all such persons are entitled to the right and privileges of the church, to take part in meetings of the Congregation and to vote and hold office therein.

3. The members of this church shall have a dual denominational affiliation, being considered members of both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ. The Council shall report an equal share of the total membership to each denominational judicatory of jurisdiction annually for publication in the statistical reports of those denominations.

4. All members of this church shall be under the discipline of Council according to rules agreed upon in harmony with the Constitution of each denomination where they coincide, and in harmony with the mandatory provisions of the Constitution of one denomination where the other is permissive, and at the choice of Council where they may be contradictory.

5. A member may terminate formal association with this church by requesting a letter of transfer or otherwise making known his/her wishes.

6. Council shall keep three church rolls:

a. Active Members Roll shall consist of all those who have been received into the membership of the church and who are active in the church's work and worship. One half of this roll shall be reported annually to each judicatory of jurisdiction for publication in their statistical reports. Should a member fail intentionally to participate in the work and worship of the church for a period on one year and after Council shall have made diligent effort to discover the cause of the member's non-participation and to restore the member to activity in the church's work and worship, a member may be transferred to the In-Active Member Roll, provided that written notice be sent to that member sixty (60) days in advance of such transfer.

b. Inactive Member Roll shall consist of those who have been removed from the Active Members Roll by Council because of failure to participate in the church's work and worship. Such persons shall continue to receive pastoral care. If after two years there is no justification for restoring such person to the Active Members Roll, such person shall have their names deleted from the membership rolls, provided that written notice be sent to that member sixty (60) days in advance of deletion. Members on this roll may not vote or hold office in the church.

c. Affiliate Members Roll, which shall consist of those who have been received into affiliate membership (such person continue to be active members of the church where they are members, but have an active relationship with the church in the community where they are temporarily residing - usually students in college or persons in the armed service). Affiliated membership needs to be renewed every two years. Members on this role may not vote or hold office in the church.

ARTICLE III THE PASTORATE

A. Pastor

1. The pastor, an ordained minister, is set aside within the ministry of the whole church to devote his or her time, energy and special training to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament; to

work with the elders in the exercise of pastoral care, oversight and government; and to guide the church in its whole life and program so that it will be a living and effective part of the Church of Jesus Christ.

2. It is the duty of the pastor to preach, teach and enable people to grow in their faith and knowledge; to lead in worship, administer the sacraments and conduct weddings and funerals; to pray with and for the congregation; to study to increase his or her own faith and knowledge; and to be an example of Christian faith, life and practice in the community.

3. With the elders, the pastor is to encourage the people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the Church and their mission to the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled and the dying; to participate in governing responsibilities, including the leadership of the congregation in reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole.

4. The pastor is responsible alone to God and conscience in the exercise of his and her duties, subject always to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery (as used herein means the "Great Rivers Presbytery of the Lincoln Synod of the Presbyterian Church (USA)") and the UCC Association (as used herein means the "The Eastern Association of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ"). He or she, however, should seek the counsel, advice and guidance of Council, the elders, Presbytery, UCC Association and fellow pastors. He or she has the freedom to preach the Word of God as he or she understands it and to apply it to life situations as his or her conscience and the Holy Spirit speak to him or her. He or she also has exclusive authority for determining the hymns to be sung, the passages of scripture to be read, the prayers to be offered, and the sermon subject at each service of worship.

5. The pastor shall be a member of Council with the right to vote. He or she shall also be an ex officio member of all commissions and committees within the church.

6. The pastor shall be the head of staff.

7. The pastor shall officiate at all weddings and funerals held within the church edifice unless it is unavailable. If it is desired that a second clergyperson should assist in the service, he or she will be invited to do so by the pastor. The pastor has the right to refuse to officiate at a marriage.

8. The pastor is responsible for sharing the ministry of the church in the higher judicatories of both denominations and in ecumenical relationships.

9. The pastor shall be a full and responsible member of his and her denomination and shall also have standing in the other denomination. He or she shall be subject to the discipline of both judicatories, provided that when either shall begin an action it shall invite a committee in the formulation and pressing of the charges. In the event of appeal, the case shall finally be decided by the highest court to which the appeal is taken in the Church which commenced the action, and that decision shall be equally binding on the Presbytery and the UCC Association.

10. The pastor shall participate in the denominational pension plan of one of the churches. If he or she is already participating in one plan, he or she shall remain in that plan. If not, he or she shall choose between them.

11. The call and the specific responsibilities of the pastor shall be determined by the congregation upon recommendation from the Pastor Search Nominating Committee. The pastoral contract may be terminated with sixty (60) days written notice given by either party.

12. When the church is without a pastor, Council shall call a meeting of the congregation to elect a Pastor Search Committee, which shall be representative of the whole congregation. This committee's duty shall be to nominate a minister to the congregation for election as pastor. The committee shall jointly confer with and receive the guidance of the Department of Ministerial Relations of the Presbytery and the Church and Ministry Committee of the UCC Association. The committee shall seek its nominee from the most qualified candidates available from both denominations. When the committee is ready to report, it shall notify Council, which shall call a meeting of the congregation for that purpose. The action of the congregation, if favorable, shall be presented to the Presbytery and the UCC Association for their concurrence. If they concur, a commission representing both the Presbytery and the UCC Association shall proceed to the installation of the new pastor. The same procedure shall be followed in the selection of an associate or assistant pastor.

B. Additional Staff Members

1. All additional ordained clergy in the service of this church shall be called, retained and released as herein provided for the pastor and shall function according to a job description.

2. Other staff members employed by the church upon recommendation of Council shall function according to a job description.

3. Those hired for special services must be approved by Council upon the recommendation of the pastor or an appropriate commission or committee.

**ARTICLE IV
CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

1. There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation in the church edifice on the third Sunday of January for the transacting of any business properly coming before the meeting. The hour of the meeting shall be set by Council. The date and place of the annual meeting may be temporarily changed by Council when necessary, provided the required public notice is given (see Section 3).

2. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by Council, by the Presbytery, by the UCC Association, or by Council upon written request of twenty-five (25) members on the active roll of the church. Such calls must state the purpose of such special meetings, and no other business save that specified in the call may be considered.

3. Public notice of the time, place and purpose of all meetings of the congregation shall be given from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays, or notice may be made in writing and mailed to each member of the congregation at least ten (10) days in advance.

4. The congregation, in addition to serving its ecclesiastical function, shall also function as a religious corporation in accord with the corporation laws of the State of Illinois.

5. The duties and rights of the congregation shall be as follows:

- a. To elect a Pastor Search Committee.
- b. To elect a pastor or pastors;
- c. To approve the terms of call to a pastor;
- d. To authorize certain members to sign the call and to select members to prosecute it before Presbytery and UCC Association;
- e. To review the terms of the call of the pastor annually, and to change the terms of the call of a pastor, subject to approval by Presbytery and UCC Association.

- f. To elect representatives to serve on the Nominating Committee;
- g. To elect ruling elders to serve on Council;
- h. To concur or to refuse to concur in the pastor's request to Presbytery and UCC Association for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, and to select people to convey its action to Presbytery and UCC Association;
 - i. To indicate to Presbytery and UCC Association its desire for a change in its pastor;
 - j. To petition Presbytery or UCC Association concerning any matter needing action by that body;
 - k. To approve the purchase, mortgaging or selling of real property, subject to approval by Presbytery and UCC Association.
 - l. To consider and vote upon any question which Council should properly bring before it;
 - m. To vote to merge, unite or yoke with another congregation or to dissolve the congregation (such votes requires a two-thirds majority of members present and voting) subject to the approval of Presbytery and UCC Association;
 - n. To adopt, modify or change articles of this Constitution (see Article XI).

6. A quorum shall consist of 10% of the members on the active roll of the church but not less than twenty-five eligible voters.

7. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

8. The chairperson of Council shall preside at all meetings of the congregation.

9. The clerk of Council shall also be the clerk of all meetings of the congregation, and shall also have all the powers and duties of the secretary of the corporation under the laws of the State of Illinois. In his/her absence, the assistant clerk shall perform the duties or Council may designate a clerk pro tempore for the meeting. The minutes of each meeting of the congregation shall be attested to by the chairperson and the clerk, approved by Council, entered in the minute book of the Council, and approved by the congregation at its next annual meeting.

10. The Nominating Committee consists of six (6) adult members plus one (1) youth member elected annually. Nominations for ruling elders to serve on Council shall be made by a representative Nominating Committee of active members of the church, which shall itself include both women and men, giving fair representation to persons of all age groups and of all racial ethnic members of the congregation. The members shall be divided into three (3) classes of two (2) each. The Nominating Committee will nominate members to serve a three (3) year term and be elected by the congregation. Committee membership shall consist of one (1) member from Council, and five (5) members that reflect a cross section of the congregation. The pastor shall be a member of this committee, serving ex officio and without vote.

11. Full opportunity shall always be accorded at the congregational meeting for additional nominations for ruling elders from the floor. Such nominations require prior approval from the person(s) being nominated.

12. In recognition of the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), permission is required of Presbytery to sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber any of the real property of the congregation. Permission is also required for the leasing of that part of the property used for the purpose of worship or for the leasing for more than five years of any of the other real property of the church.

ARTICLE V CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Council is responsible for the whole life of the congregation. Its authority is limited only by the rights reserved to the congregation, the pastor or pastors, and the higher judicatories of the denominations. It shall include exclusive authority over the worship of the congregation, the administration of the sacraments, and the education, nurture and pastoral oversight of all the members of the congregation. It shall have the responsibility of receiving and dismissing members. It shall be responsible for the care and use of the property. It shall promote the stewardship of the membership and lead the congregation in participation in the mission of the Church in the world. The Council may delegate its responsibilities from time to time, subject always to the authority and direction of the Council.

2. Council shall consist of ten (10) adult members and one (1) youth member plus the pastor(s). The 10 lay members shall be divided into three (3) classes of three (3), three (3), and four (4), one class to be elected each term, nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected each year by the congregation for a term of three (3) years. The youth member shall be elected annually. No member of Council shall be eligible to serve for more than one term or consecutive partial terms totaling more than three (3) years until at least one (1) year has elapsed from the expiration of his or her term.

3. The members of Council shall be ordained as ruling elders and installed as members of Council under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall be eligible to membership and office in the judicatories of both denominations.

4. A quorum shall consist of six (6) ruling elder members.

5. The Nominating Committee nominates one member to serve as chairperson, one person to serve as vice chairperson and one person to serve as clerk of Council, to be elected by the congregation at the annual congregational meeting.

The assistant clerk will be elected by Council from among Council members.

The Council chairperson shall have served at least one year of their three year term before being nominated and elected to the office or shall have previously served on the Council of St. Luke Union Church.

The Council vice chairperson shall serve as the liaison from Council to the Stewardship/Budget Committee.

6. Council shall meet regularly once a month, but additional meetings may be called by the chairperson at his or her discretion, at the request of the pastor, at the request of two (2) or more members of Council, at the request of the UCC Association, or by Presbytery. Notice of a special meeting shall be given either by announcement from the pulpit or by contacting the members by phone or mail at least two days prior to the meeting.

7. It shall be the practice of Council to open and close its meetings with prayer.

8. Council shall also serve as trustees of the corporation, holding title to the property in accord with the corporation laws of the State of Illinois. It shall have power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real property of the church when specifically authorized to do so by the congregation and with the approval of Presbytery.

9. Council shall keep accurate records of its proceedings and shall submit its records annually and whenever requested to each judicatory of jurisdiction. It shall also keep the required membership rolls, a roll of ruling elders, and a complete register of marriages, baptisms and deaths. It shall report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory of jurisdiction,

and such membership shall be reported in the statistical reports of each denomination, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union church, and with an indication of the total actual membership. A similar report of church school members, baptisms, etc., and financial expenditures shall be made by Council and noted by each denomination in its statistical report.

10. The per capita apportionment shall be paid to the Presbytery on the basis of one half the total membership with an equal amount to be contributed to the UCC Conference.

11. Council shall elect annually, from among its membership, delegates to the Presbytery, the UCC Association, and the UCC Conference and shall appoint representatives to the Presbyterian Ministry Council and the United Church of Christ Mission Council.

12. Council shall review and approve the annual budget of the church as presented by the Stewardship/Budget Committee and present it to the congregation at the annual meeting.

13. Council shall appoint and delegate responsibilities to such committees and/or commissions as it shall see fit to best administer the program of the church; committees and commissions shall always be responsible to Council and subject to its authority and direction. (See Commission and Committee Organizational Manual.)

14. While recognizing the basic right of any giver to designate the cause or causes to which his or her own gift shall go, Council shall annually divide all undesignated benevolence money 40% to each denomination and the remaining 20% at its own discretion.

15. Appeals or complaints against the actions of Council shall be made to one judicatory only (Presbytery or UCC Association) at the choice of the members and all subsequent appeals or complaints shall be in the courts of the members' original choice, and decisions so finally made shall be binding on the Council and or the member(s). Complaints may be taken under the constitutional provisions of only one denomination, according to the choice of the complainant, and once being complained to one judicatory, the other denomination shall not accept jurisdiction in the same matter.

16. Whenever the constitutions of the denominations differ, the mandatory provisions of the one shall apply in all cases where the other is permissive. Wherever there are conflicting mandatory provisions (except as provided in Article II, Section 4 above), Council shall petition the judicatories with immediate jurisdiction to overture their respective higher courts to resolve the conflict either by authoritative interpretation or by constitutional amendment.

17. A member of Council who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of Council without presenting an acceptable reason, may, after due notice, have his or her membership declared vacant by action of Council. The Nominating Committee shall immediately be notified of such action and be requested to provide a candidate for replacement.

ARTICLE VI THE LAITY

1. Council Chairperson. The chairperson shall preside at all regular and special business meetings of the church. He or she shall serve at all meetings of the congregation and of Council and present the annual report of Council to the church during the annual meeting.

2. Council Vice-Chairperson. The vice-chairperson shall assume the duties of the chairperson in the chairperson's absence and shall assist with such other duties and special assignments as requested by the chairperson or Council.

The Council vice-chairperson shall serve as the liaison from Council to the Stewardship/Budget Committee.

3. 2. Council Clerk. The clerk shall keep records of all business meetings of the church; a register of the members with the date and mode of their reception and removal; a record of the current classification of all members as active, inactive or affiliated. He or she shall issue letters of transfer; keep on file all correspondence, written and printed official reports and other valuable papers; and make an annual report to the church.

4. Assistant Clerk. The assistant clerk shall assist the clerk when necessary and assume the duties of the clerk in his or her absence or inability to act.

5. 3. Financial Secretary. The financial secretary, assisted by an assistant financial secretary, shall count and promptly deposit in the church's bank account all monies raised in the interest of the church. All monies given to the church in identified envelopes shall be counted by the financial secretary or assistant in private.

At least once a week he or she shall deposit all monies received for the account of the church at a bank or banks designated by the Commission on Business Affairs with approval of Council. He or she shall keep an accurate account of all monies received through subscriptions for current expenses, benevolence or any other purpose.

He or she shall secure, assign and place in the hands of contributors envelopes designed to be used for contributions and provide statements to contributors.

He or she shall be a member of the Commission on Business Affairs. He or she shall submit to Council a monthly statement of financial condition and submit a report to the church in the annual meeting, such report to be certified by an auditing committee.

The financial secretary shall not receive nor be held accountable for monies raised by any church sponsored organizations which administers its own funds, i.e., women's organizations, men's organizations, etc.

6. Assistant Financial Secretary. The assistant financial secretary shall assist the financial secretary when necessary and assume the duties of the financial secretary in his or her absence or inability to act.

7. 4. Treasurer. The treasurer shall receive from the bank or banks a deposit slip or other evidence of deposit of monies by the financial secretary. He or she shall keep an accurate accounting of all receipts and disbursements and shall pay the bills of the church as authorized. He or she shall be the sole custodian of all church funds and shall have custody of all papers relating to the property of the church. He or she shall be a member of the Commission on Business Affairs and an ex officio member of Council. He or she shall submit a monthly report to Council. At the annual meeting of the congregation he or she shall present financial statements of receipts and disbursements in detail for the calendar year just ending and a schedule of assets and liabilities of the church which has been certified by an auditing committee.

8. Assistant Treasurer. The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer when necessary and assume the duties of the treasurer in his or her absence or inability to act.

9. Bonding and Robbery Insurance. All officers and persons handling monies raised in the interest of the church, including all church projects, i.e., women's and men's organizations, special projects, etc., shall be bonded by the church and covered by robbery insurance. The amount of the bond and insurance coverage should be determined by the Commission on Business Affairs.

**ARTICLE VII
WORSHIP**

1. Worship shall be held on each Sunday morning of the year.
2. Special services shall be held from time to time as determined by the pastor, Council and the Commission on Worship. The character and nature of these special services shall be appropriate to the ecclesiastical season.
3. The service of Holy Communion shall be held the first Sunday of each month and at such other services as Council and Commission on Worship may designate.

**ARTICLE VIII
COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

A. Commissions.

1. Council shall authorize the following commissions to function in carrying out the program and business of the church: Business Affairs, Education, Fellowship, Mission, Outreach, Pastoral Care and Worship.

2. Each Council member will be nominated by the Nominating Committee to serve one of the seven (7) commissions of his/her choice. That person will not serve as the chairperson of the commission. The Council member will be the liaison from the commission to Council.

Each of the seven (7) commissions shall consist of 6 members, plus the Council liaison. The members shall be divided into 3 classes of 2 each. The Nominating Committee will nominate members to each commission to serve a 3 year term, and be elected by the congregation. This does not preclude someone from serving consecutive terms on different commissions. An individual shall not serve consecutive terms on the same commission or overlapping terms on multiple commissions. A minimum of one (1) year shall pass before an individual can serve a second term on the same commission.

The commission will elect its chairperson from its own membership.

Chairpersons of the commissions and standing committees shall meet at least one of the following prerequisites: 1. shall have served at least one (1) year of their 3-year term before being appointed; or, 2. shall have previously served on the Council of St. Luke Union Church; or, 3. shall have been a member of the commission at some time within the previous four (4) years.

3. Each commission shall meet monthly, if necessary, with special meetings to be called as needed. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

4. Accurate minutes shall be kept by each commission of its proceedings and be available to Council on a monthly basis.

5. Each commission shall be responsible for submitting budget recommendations as requested by the Stewardship/Budget Committee.

6. After the budget is approved, each commission shall be responsible for disbursing the funds which have been allocated to the items in the budget that relate to that commission's area of concern. If it is necessary to request more funds than have been allocated in a specific category,

this request shall be made to Council. The specific areas of concern and functions of each commission and committee are spelled out in the Commission and Committee Organizational Manual.

B. Standing Committees.

MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE consists of the pastor and four (4) members. The Commissions on Pastoral Care and Worship will elect from their membership a representative to serve on the Ministerial Relations Committee. The committee also includes two (2) members from the congregation, one (1) member elected by the congregation and one (1) member selected by the pastor.

. NOMINATING COMMITTEE consists of six (6) adult members plus one (1) youth member elected annually. Nominations for ruling elders to serve on Council shall be made by a representative Nominating Committee of active members of the church, which shall itself include both women and men, giving fair representation to persons of all age groups and of all racial ethnic members of the congregation. The members shall be divided into three (3) classes of two (2) each. The Nominating Committee will nominate members to serve a three (3) year term and be elected by the congregation. Committee membership shall consist of one (1) member from Council, and five (5) members that reflect a cross section of the congregation. The pastor shall be a member of this committee, serving ex officio and without vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE consists of six (6) members Council and the Commissions on Education, Worship and Business Affairs will elect from their membership a representative to serve on the Personnel Committee. Additional members include the chairperson of the Ministerial Relations Committee, a member of the congregation (appointed by Council) and the pastor, who is the head of the church staff and is an ex officio member of the committee.

RECYCLING COMMITTEE consists of six (6) adult members plus one (1) youth member elected annually. The members shall be divided into three (3) classes of two (2) each. The Nominating Committee will nominate members to serve a three (3) year term, and be elected by the congregation.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE. The Nominating Committee will nominate six (6) members from the congregation, to be elected by the congregation annually.

It shall be the responsibility of the Special Projects Committee to plan and carry out fund raising activities and events, such as the annual group sale and bazaar.

The committee shall perform additional functions as requested by Council.

STEWARDSHIP/BUDGET COMMITTEE consists of six (6) adult members. The members shall be divided into three (3) classes of two (2) each. The Nominating Committee will nominate members to serve a three (3) year term, and be elected by the congregation annually. The vice chairperson of Council shall serve as liaison to the Stewardship/Budget Committee.

**ARTICLE IX
ORGANIZATIONS**

Fellowship Groups

1. Fellowship groups, such as those for women, men, youth, may be created upon approval of Council to promote the interests of the church spiritually, socially and financially.

2. Membership shall be open to all people interested in the life of the church. Each organization shall elect its own officers, adopt its own plan of organization and control its own funds subject to the provisions of this constitution. They shall make annual reports to the church.

ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION

1. This church may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of two congregational meetings, held not less than one year or not more than two years apart, subject to the concurrence of the Presbytery and the UCC Association.

2. In case of dissolution, all property of the church, real and personal, shall be divided with 50% going to the Presbytery and 50% to the UCC Conference.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

The constitution may be amended at the annual meeting of the congregation or at any special meeting called for that purpose by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting, provided the proposed amendment(s) shall have been distributed in full to the members of the congregation at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. All amendments shall become effective only upon the approval of the Presbytery and the UCC Association.