

THE BY-LAWS OF
THE PLAINFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

as adopted January 31, 2016 at the Officially Called January Congregational Meeting
in Plainfield, Illinois.

ARTICLE 1
PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

- Section 1. Purpose
The purpose of these By-Laws is to structure and communicate how the business and practices of Plainfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (PCCUCC) are to be conducted.
- Section 2. Declaration of Principles
- A. These By-Laws are subject to the Constitution of Plainfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, and do not supersede them in any way.
 - B. Official Year - The official year of Plainfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

ARTICLE 2
MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. **ONLY** the Church Council has the authority to add or remove names from the Church Roster. Names of those who are recommended for membership or termination are presented to the Church Council, who will investigate the circumstances and make the final determination.
- Section 2. Membership at PCCUCC has two distinct relationships:
- A. An active member is considered one who:
 - 1. attends worship regularly,
 - 2. attends church programs regularly,
 - 3. contributes to the financial or spiritual welfare of the church, **and**
 - 4. volunteers their time and talent as appropriate and available.
 - 5. Active members have full rights to the membership. They have voice and vote at all Congregational Meetings and have the right to hold elected offices within the church.
 - B. Associate Member is considered one who:
 - 1. attends worship regularly, **or**
 - 2. attends church programs regularly, **or**
 - 3. contributes to the financial or spiritual welfare of the church, **or**
 - 4. volunteers their time and talent as appropriate and available, **or**
 - 5. self-designates as an Associate Member.
 - 6. Associate Members have limited rights to membership. They are granted full voice at Congregational Meetings. However, they cannot vote or hold elected offices within the church.
- Section 3. Reception of New Members

Those individuals interested in joining PCCUCC will participate in New Members' Classes, led by the pastor and/or members of the Spiritual Life Ministry. Once the individual(s) becomes acquainted with the mission and covenants of PCCUCC and declares a desire to join with the church, they will be received into membership by either:

1. a reaffirmation of faith, or
2. a confession of faith and baptism, or
3. a transfer of membership

New members are received in regular Sunday worship.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Individual(s) may be terminated from membership at PCCUCC by:

- A. their joining/transferring to another congregation;
- B. they make a formal request for termination;
- C. their addresses and/or circumstances become unknown to PCCUCC, and all efforts to contact them have failed;
- D. an individual who does not fulfill the membership criteria for a period of one (1) year will be moved to the inactive roll. After all efforts to reestablish contact has failed, and the individual has been on the inactive role for one (1) year, their membership will be brought to the Church Council for consideration of termination.
- E. The Spiritual Life Ministry may establish procedures for encouraging membership to remain active (or return to active status)

Section 5. Restoration of Membership

Any person whose membership has been terminated or who has been placed on the inactive list may be restored by action of the Church Council.

ARTICLE 3
BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. Authority

- A. The whole congregation has the final authority regarding our life together. Key decisions regarding the congregation must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those active church members present at an official congregational meeting. Key decisions include decisions regarding purchase, sale, mortgage or transfer of real property, hiring/terminating of Pastoral staff, affiliation with the United Church of Christ, Mission Statement, Core Values, annual budget and Operating Guidelines.

Section 2. Congregational Meetings

- A. Frequency
There shall be three (3) Congregational Meetings called each calendar year. They shall be held on the fourth Sunday of January, May, and October. The May meeting will be held on the third Sunday in the case of the fourth Sunday being Memorial Day.
- B. Notification
The congregation shall receive published notification two weeks prior to any Congregational Meeting. The notification shall include the date, time, place, and reason for the meeting.

C. Agendas

1. **January meeting** shall include Ministry reports from all ministries, election of new officers, approval of the Operating Budget for the new year, and other business as needed.
2. **May meeting** shall include Ministry reports from all ministries, a review of current year stewardship, and other business as needed.
3. **October meeting** shall include Ministry reports from all ministries, and other business as needed.

D. Ministry Reports

All staff, officers, ministries, and committees of Plainfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ will prepare a Ministry Report of their activities and decisions. Every effort should be made to have these reports available for the congregation two weeks prior to the Congregational Meetings.

E. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of thirty percent (30%) of active members.

F. Voting.

Voting shall be, in most cases, by voice vote. A hand count or paper ballot will be used

1. when such a ballot is requested by a voting member;
2. when the voice vote fails to result in a clear election;
3. when there is more than one candidate for any office or vacancy.

G. Meeting Procedures and Conduct

All business meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order (revised) and all present will adhere to the Communication Covenant of Plainfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (see Article 6-Section 3).

H. Special Congregational Meetings

1. Special Congregational Meetings can only have one agenda item.
2. Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the Church Council or by the written request of five (5) active members of the church.
3. The reason for calling the meeting shall be communicated in the notice calling for the meeting, with said notice being given at least two weeks prior to the meeting's date.

ARTICLE 4

CHURCH GOVERNMENT, OFFICERS, AND MINISTRIES

Section 1. Government

The government of this church is vested in its voting members. The whole congregation has final authority regarding its life together. Key decisions regarding the congregation must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those church members present at an official congregational meeting. Key decisions include, but are not limited to, decisions regarding purchase, sale, mortgage or transfer of real property, hiring/terminating of Pastoral staff, affiliation with the United Church of Christ, Mission Statement, Core Values, annual budget and

Operating By-Laws, and all monetary exchanges in excess of \$ 1,000, which are not included in the approved budget.

The congregation shall approve By-Laws, which govern and structure how the church will operate and function in the ordinary conduct of business and practice. These By-Laws can only be amended, revised, or canceled (in total or in part) by a two-thirds majority at an officially called Congregational Meeting.

Section 2. Church Council

A. Make-Up

The Church Officers shall consist of a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Recording Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer. These officers, with the exception the Chief Financial Officer, shall be elected for two years. The Recording Secretary is elected to a two-year term. The Recording Secretary can be reelected to a second term, but can only serve a maximum of two terms before needed to take a year off. The Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be elected thusly; the first year of the term they shall be elected as Vice-Moderator, they shall then serve as Moderator in the second year of their term. As such, the Moderator and Vice-Moderator should be elected in staggering years. The Moderator/Vice-Moderator can serve two cycles before being required to take a year off. The Chief Financial Officer is elected for one year and may run for re-election without limit.

In addition to these officers there shall be one elected Chair for each Ministry Team; elected to serve on Church Council in addition to Chairing a Ministry Team. They are each elected for a three (3) year term. The Ministry Chairs are to be elected in staggering years so no more than one-third of the Chairs are being replaced at each election. After serving a three-year term, a member must take one year off before standing for re-election to the Church Council.

In addition, the Church Council shall have one Youth Member who is also a participating member of the congregation. The term for the youth member shall be one year. The youth member may be re-elected for three consecutive terms. The Youth member will have full voice and voting privileges and responsibilities. [*For the purpose of this position "youth" is defined as someone who has been confirmed in this congregation, or who has been confirmed in another congregation and transferred his/her membership to our congregation, and is in high school or college.*]

Members of the Church Council shall not hold any other elected position within the Church Organization.

B. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of Council members. Voting on any issue shall require a two-thirds majority of those present to pass.

In order to expedite urgent matters, voting by email or paper document shall be acceptable. Votes taken via e-mail or paper document shall be affirmed at the next scheduled Church Council meeting so that they appear in the permanent record of the Governing Board actions.

C. Meetings

The Church Council shall meet monthly, at a date and time mutually agreed upon by its members.

D. Duties

Church Council

1. Set the vision and direction for the congregation.
2. Define policies, including financial policies.
3. Make decisions regarding expenditures of capital, entering into contracts, and other financial and policies relationships – unless otherwise defined as the responsibility of the congregation.
4. Review and enforce policies.
5. Review written reports from Ministry Teams to ensure that ministries fall within our core values, policies and mission/vision statement. (See Appendix 9: PCCUCC Core Values)
6. Fill vacancies of any elected positions as recommended by the Nomination Team.
7. Make recommendation to the congregation for revisions and amendments to By-Laws or other operating policies.

Moderator

1. Preside over the Church Council business meetings.
2. Preside over the Regular Congregational meetings and any Special Congregational Meetings.
3. Preside over any Conduct Review Committee, in the event of a violation of the Safe Church Policy.
4. Set an agenda, in consultation with the Pastor, for all Council and Congregational meetings.

Vice-Moderator

1. Preside over the Church Council business meetings in the absence of the Church Moderator.
2. Preside over the Regular Congregational meetings and any Special Congregational Meetings in the absence of the Church Moderator.
3. Chair the Nominations Committee
 - a. This ministry is responsible for vetting, securing candidates for all elected offices within the church, such as Officers, Council Members, and Ministry Teams. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:
 - i. Securing candidates for elected positions.
 - ii. Preparing a ballot for all elections.
 - iii. Provide names of people to fill vacancies, as they arise, and communicating such to the Church Council.

Recording Secretary

1. Keep an accurate record of all proceedings of the Church Council.
2. Keep an accurate record of all Official Congregational Meetings
3. Shall be responsible for the appropriate distribution of all minutes within 20 days of their recording, for the purpose of their approval.
4. Shall be responsible for seeing that all minutes are appropriately published for review by the congregation.
5. Preserve a file of all official communications and written reports/minutes.

6. Shall be responsible that all required notices for meetings are sent out as necessary and required by the Constitution, By-Laws, and practices of the church.
7. Shall be responsible for all Official Correspondence for the PCCUCC, unless otherwise provided for.
8. Perform such other duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertained to the office of clerk or secretary of an assembly.

Chief Financial Officer

1. Serve as liaison between the Church Council and the Finance Ministry Team.
2. Is responsible for preparing a Church Budget and making Financial Reports as requested. And balancing all accounts monthly.
3. Is responsible for handling all monies for the church; paying bills and receiving gifts (monies, stocks, and non-cash donations)
4. Overseeing the work of the Finance Ministry Team

Ministry Team Chairs

1. Set agenda and lead meetings of their Ministry Team.
2. Provide a coordinating link between their Ministry Teams and the other Ministry Teams, as appropriate.
3. Provide monthly reports to the Church Council as to the work of their Ministry Team.
4. Provide a communication link between the Ministry Teams and the Church Council.
5. Provide Team reports for Congregational meetings.

Section 3. Ministry Teams

A. Make-up

Each Ministry Team is open to all members (both active and associate) in good standing and all friends of PCCUCC, unless otherwise specifically limited within these By-Laws. While there is no real limit to the numbers of people who can serve on a Team, they shall not consist of less than three (3) people; except for the Apple Tree Preschool Team which shall consist of 6 (six) people. These people shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee, in consultation with the Council, Pastor, sitting Ministry Teams.

B. Meetings

The Ministry Teams shall meet monthly on the third Sunday of each month, beginning approximately one half hour after worship. The meetings will begin with lunch, at which the whole group will discuss issues for the whole of the church. They will then break into Teams and conduct the work which is specifically within their unique scope as a team.

C. Objectives & Purposes of Ministry Teams

1. Coordinate all the activities/concerns/calendar for their specific ministry area.
2. Identify opportunities for new missions/ministries for the people of PCCUCC.
3. Resolve issues/conflicts/problems that arise in their ministry area.

4. Recruit people to work on the Teams, and to provide names to the Moderator of people to be appointed at election time.

D. Spiritual Life Team

This ministry is responsible for the worship and spiritual formation ministries within PCCUCC. Their duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting the Pastor in the design and execution of the worship
 - a. Developing an Order of Worship format
 - b. Maintaining a schedule of Liturgists
 - c. Maintaining a schedule of Communion preparers and servers
 - d. Decorating/Creating/Maintaining the worshipful environment of the sanctuary, or appointing and supporting an individual in this task
 - e. Lenten Programs/Worship
 - f. Blue Christmas Program
2. New Members' Classes
3. Assisting the Pastor in the design and execution of the Confirmation Program
4. Overseeing and supporting the Stephen's Ministers Program and the Sunshine Spirit Team

E. Christian Education Team

This ministry is responsible for the Christian Education Program at PCCUCC. Their duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Sunday Morning Sunday School
2. Sunday Morning Nursery
3. Week day Youth Program
4. Adult Education Opportunities
5. Annual Vacation Bible School
6. Overseeing and supporting a Youth Intern (if one has been hired)
7. Recruiting teachers
8. Recruiting Youth Advisors

F. Congregational Life Team

This ministry is responsible for providing ministry which provides deepening fellowship and friendship within PCCUCC. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:

1. Maintain and develop a schedule of Greeters for Sunday morning.
2. All-Church dinners.
3. All-Church Picnic
4. Church celebrations and special occasions; including but not limited to Easter Breakfast, Celebration of Women Dinner, Men's Celebration Banquet, funeral receptions, and College Student Support Team
5. Christmas Caroling Event
6. Prayer Chain ministry
7. Coffee Fellowship Hour Team

G. Community Connections Team

This ministry is responsible for providing ministry which provides opportunity for mission, social justice, evangelism, and outreach. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:

1. Support and maintenance of on-going relationships with mission programs (which may include the Food Resource Bank, Morning Star Mission, Feed My Starving Children, Food Pantry, Arctic Adventure, Prayer Shawl Ministry, etc.)
2. Provide continual opportunity for members of PCCUCC to be involved in mission projects.
3. Oversee and support the evangelism work of PCCUCC, seeking avenues to tell the Church's story to the community.
4. Communicate the importance of and seek support for O.C.W.M.
5. Maintain the collection of the "Blessing Bucket" during Sunday worship and determine the monthly schedule of its recipients.
6. To oversee and strengthen the Visitor Welcome program at PCCUCC.

H. Operations Team

This ministry is responsible for the maintenance and care of all PCCUCC property, the building, the grounds, and all equipment and technology. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:

1. Establish and oversee the Facilities Vision Team, which will be responsible for creating and maintaining a schedule of work needed at the church, lists of volunteers and their skills, and make recommendations for Church upkeep and upgrade.
2. Clean-up days (at least two a year)
3. Oversee the work done at the church, whether by members or other contractors.

I. Finance Team

This ministry is responsible for assisting the Chief Financial Officer, who serves as Chair, in managing the all church funds in accordance with PCCUCC core values, policies, and mission statement. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:

1. Serving as counters for the Sunday Morning Offering
2. Assisting in data entry and record keeping
3. Assisting with Accounts Payable
4. Assist in the creation of the Church Budget

J. Apple Tree Preschool Team

This ministry is responsible for maintaining and developing the relationship between the Apple Tree Preschool, the Church Council, and PCCUCC. The Apple Tree Preschool Team is the only Ministry Team which requires 6 (six) members. Their duties involve, but are not limited to:

1. Serving as members of the Preschool Board
2. Assisting in the development and maintenance of the Apple Tree Program.
3. Serving as a communication link between the Preschool and the Church.

K. Memorial Team

This ministry is responsible for maintaining, managing, and distributing the Memorial Funds of PCCUCC. The members of the Memorial Team are appointed for one year, with the exclusion of the Chair who is elected for three years. The one-year term is renewable, however no one should serve longer than four years without taking at least one year off.

Their duties involve, but are not limited to, that which is described in Appendix 7.

L. Nominating Team

The Church Council may appoint a Nominating Team of no less than three members and no more than five members. The duties of this Team is to create and maintain a list/database of potential candidates and volunteers within PCCUCC. The from this list/database make recommendations to the Church Council for individuals to serve in elected offices, as well as make recommendations for members of non-elected positions within the church life. The Vice-Moderator serves as Chair of the Nominating Team.

ARTICLE 5

STAFF

Section 1. Minister

A. Calling

The Minister shall have official standing in the United Church of Christ.

Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Minister shall be chosen and called by a two-thirds vote of the active members present at a Special Congregational Meeting called for this purpose. The Minister shall hold office without limitation of time. The relationship may be terminated by a majority vote of the active members following three months notice by either the Minister or the Church Council.

B. Duties

1. The Minister shall have responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the elected officers and Ministry Teams.
2. The Minister shall preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have responsibility for all public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with elected officers and Ministry teams. No other person shall conduct any service in this church without the consent of the Minister and Spiritual Life Team. (Other detailed descriptions of the Minister's duties can be found in the Job Description of Minister – Appendix 1)
3. The Minister shall be made an ex-officio and advisory member of the Church Council and all Ministry Teams.
4. The Minister shall be Head of Staff, and oversees the day-to-day work of other Church Staff, and is responsible for conducting the Performance Reviews of Church Staff.
5. The Minister shall become a member of this church, unless there is some compelling reason which prevents such membership.

Section 2. Associate Ministers or Staff Interns

A. Calling an Associate Minister

The members may at their discretion call an Associate Minister by two-thirds vote of the active members present at a Special Congregational Meeting called for this purpose. An Associate Minister shall hold office without limitation of time, except that the relationship may be terminated by a majority vote of the members following three months notice by either party.

An ordained Associate Minister shall have official standing in the United Church of Christ.

B. Hiring a Staff Intern

The Congregation shall empower the Church Council, in consultation and cooperation with the Pastor, to hire Intern(s) for specific ministries within PCCUCC. The Intern position should be for a specific term, not to be less than one year or to exceed three years. The contract is renewable.

C. Duties.

1. Associate Minister

- a. The Associate Minister shall have responsibility for a specified area of ministry within the church, with the assistance of the elected officers and the specific Ministry Team associated with that area. (See Appendix 2 – Job Description of Associate Minister)
- b. Further, the Associate Minister shall perform pastoral duties as assigned by the Pastor and within the limits of the their employment status (full or part time).

2. Staff Intern

- a. The Staff Intern shall have responsibility for a specified area of ministry within the church, with the assistance of the elected officers and the specific Ministry Team associated with that area. (See Appendix 3 – Job Description of Staff Intern)
- b. Further, the Staff Intern shall perform pastoral duties as assigned by the Pastor, within the limits of the their employment status (full or part time).

Section 3. Director of Music

- A. The church may hire a Director of Music, who will oversee the music ministry of the PCCUCC. The duties and responsibilities of the Director of Music are detailed in the Job Description of the Director of Music – Appendix 4.
- B. The Director of Music shall be supervised by the minister, and be further accountable to the Church Council.
- C. When a Director of Music is first hired it will be understood, and communicated, that there is a 90-day probationary period, in which the contract may be terminated at any time. Following the 90-day probation any termination must include cause and all parties be given two weeks notice.

Section 4. Office Manager

- A. The church may hire an Office Manager, who will oversee the day to day business of the PCCUCC. The duties and responsibilities of the Office Manager are detailed in the Job Description of the Office Manager – Appendix 5.
- B. The Office Manager shall be supervised by the minister, and be further accountable to the Church Council.
- C. When an Office Manger is first hired it will be understood, and communicated, that there is a 90-day probationary period, in which the contract may be terminated at any time. Following the 90-day probation any termination must include cause and all parties be given two weeks notice.

Section 5. Director of Apple Tree Preschool

- A. The church may hire a Director of the Apple Tree Preschool, who will oversee the day to day business of the Preschool. The duties and responsibilities of the Director of the Preschool are detailed in the Job Description of the Preschool Director – Appendix 6.
The Director of the Apple Tree Preschool is hired by the Church Council, in cooperation with the Apple Tree Preschool Team.
- B. The Director of the Preschool is responsible for hiring, firing, and overseeing the teachers for the Preschool.
- C. The Director of the Preschool shall be supervised by the minister and the Apple Tree Preschool Team and be further accountable to the Church Council.
- D. When a Director of the Apple Tree Preschool is first hired it will be understood, and communicated, that there is a 90-day probationary period, in which the contract may be terminated at any time. Following the 90-day probation any termination must include cause and all parties be given two weeks notice.

ARTICLE 6

OPERATIONS, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES

Section 1. Receiving and Expending Monies

- A. All monies are to be received by the Chief Financial Officer and reported to the Church Council. The CFO will ensure that monies are applied to the appropriate account. No monies or property should be accepted by any other person on behalf of the church.
- B. All monies and properties donated to the church shall be free of liens or obligations, and once received by the church can be used in whatever way is best for the church’s ministry; with the following exceptions:
 - a. Memorials made for a specific purpose. PCCUCC will do everything in its power to use Memorial Funds as directed. If this is not possible or a greater need arises the church will communicate that to the original giver, or their family, and secure their blessing to use said funds for a different purpose. If

permission is NOT given those funds must be used for the directed purpose or returned to the donor.

Memorial monies are subject to the oversight and rules of the Memorial Board (See Appendix 7)

- b. Donations for Specific Fund Raiser. Funds collected under the auspices of a specific fund or project MUST be spent on that fund or project; unless written permission is received from the giver or their family, if possible. If permission is NOT given those funds must be used for the directed purpose or returned to the donor.
- C. Monies received are to be handled dependent on how they are received:
 - a. **Regular Offerings/Tithes** will be deposited into the appropriate accounts as cash deposits.
 - b. **Gifts of Stocks, Annuities, etc.** will be held no longer than 30 days. Once they are sold the value will be deposited into the appropriate account(s).
- D. Donations of Real Property. Donations of Real Property shall be accepted without condition or restrictions. The Congregation shall be free to use, sell, transfer, or dispose of any real property as they see fit.
- E. Each Ministry Team can make expenditures up to the amount approved by the budget. All other expenditures, beyond the budget, must be approved by the Church Council or a vote of the Congregation.

Section 2. Decision-Making Structure

- A. It is understood that individual members of PCCUCC do not have decision-making authority in the life of the church, but the decisions of the church are made by the body or its authorized agents, as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws.
- B. The Authority Structure is understood as:
 - a. Final authority rests within the congregation, as voted at an official Congregational Meeting.
 - b. Day to Day authority rests within the Church Council, as the elected agent of the congregation.
 - c. Minimal authority rests within the members of Ministry Teams, ONLY within the scope and purview of their said ministry.
 - d. The minister shall have sole authority over matters of preaching and sacrament. Otherwise, the minister only has decision-making authority within the confines of his/her participation with the Council and Ministries.

Section 3. Communication

- A. Seeking to model effective and Christian Communication, PCCUCC establishes a “Communication Covenant” (see Appendix 8).
- B. The church will create, maintain, and employ multiple layers of communication; verbal, written, electronic, etc. Every effort will be made to ensure that all communication is up-to-date, correct, and faithful.

Section 4. Rights of Church Membership

Every active member of PCCUCC shall enjoy certain unencumbered rights and privileges, which include:

- A. The right to be heard. Every member has the right to express their thoughts and opinions and have them heard respectfully and responded to in a timely and faithful manner.
- B. The right to vote. Every member has the right to cast a vote, without prejudice or restriction whenever the congregation meets for such a purpose. Also, there shall never be allowed a secret vote within the life of PCCUCC.
- C. The right to equal access to all the resources of the church.
- D. The right, as well as obligation, to serve the ministry of PCCUCC, whether on the Church Council, a Ministry Team, or volunteer.
- E. The right to privacy.
- F. The right faithful and loving treatment.

Every Associate Member of PCCUCC shall enjoy those same rights, with the exception of Items B. and D. (the right to vote and the right to serve elected offices.)

ARTICLE 7

AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular or special Congregational meeting, provided that a notice specifying the time and purpose of the meeting is sent to all resident members of the church at least two weeks before the said meeting. The substance of the proposed amendments and alterations shall have been given from the pulpit or printed in the bulletin on the two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting, and copies of the same made available to the members.

ARTICLE 8

EFFECTIVE DATE

This constitution shall become effective on February 1, 2016, and, shall thereupon supersede and repeal any and all prior constitutions