

2025 Bylaws

Spring Creek United Church of Christ

**Accepted by Congregational Approval
on
March 3, 2025**

Bylaws of Spring Creek United Church of Christ

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ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Spring Creek Congregational Church (SCCC), Rockford, Illinois (United Church of Christ) doing business as Spring Creek United Church of Christ (SCUCC).

ARTICLE II – MISSION

We, the members of Spring Creek United Church of Christ, are a people of God centered in Christ. Responding actively to God's love, we strive to be inclusive, reconciling and caring in our ministry to each other and to the wider community.

ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted by the State of Illinois. While this church is under no obligation to ecclesiastical hierarchy, it accepts the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share in the denomination's common aims and work.

ARTICLE IV – BELIEFS

Spring Creek United Church of Christ recognizes the Bible as its primary guide for faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of Christian fellowship. Members shall have the undisturbed right to interpret and follow the Word of the Still Speaking God according to the dictates of their own conscience under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

We are an Open and Affirming church. All persons without regard to ability, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or national origin may be involved in the life of the church and have full access to all ministries.

A. Requirements.

1. Persons who seek membership shall attend an orientation program designed by the Pastor.
2. The person seeking membership shall participate in the "Order for Reception of Members: Affirmation of Baptism," or in case of persons who have never been active members of a church (adolescents, for example), the "Order for Confirmation: Affirmation of Baptism." Both orders, whenever possible, will be part of regular congregational worship.

B. Status.

1. Active Members. Members are considered Active Members if they attend worship services regularly and/or support the church by contributing their time, talent, or treasure. Active Members may vote and hold any elective office.
2. Committed Friends. Committed Friends are persons who attend regularly and contribute time, talent, or treasure but do not seek Active Membership. Application by the individual and Council approval of this status is required. Committed Friends may vote in all meetings and hold any office except Moderator, Vice Moderator, or Financial Secretary.
3. Inactive Members. Inactive Members are those persons who have not attended or supported the church financially for two years and have been declared inactive by the Council upon the recommendation of the Congregational Care Ministry. Inactive Members may not vote or hold elected office. A member shall not be declared inactive until thirty days after the Clerk/Secretary sends written notification of the church's plan to do so. Inactive or terminated members may be returned to active membership status by written request of the individual and with the approval of the Congregational Care Ministry.

C. Termination.

Termination of membership may be accomplished in the following ways:

1. Resignation. A member may resign by sending a letter of resignation to the church. The Clerk/Secretary is responsible for accepting and recording the resignation and shall inform the Congregational Care Ministry of the change in the member's status.
2. Letter of Transfer. A member may request a letter of transfer to another congregation. The Clerk/Secretary is responsible for issuing the letter to the Clerk/Secretary of the receiving congregation and shall inform the Congregational Care Ministry of the change in the member's status.
3. Written Notice to Terminate Membership. Membership may be terminated by a majority vote of the Council upon recommendation of the Congregational Care Ministry only if:
 - a. A member has not participated, supported, or been in communication with the church for over two years,
 - b. The Congregational Care Ministry has made at least two attempts in writing and at least one attempt by other means to communicate with the individual for a subsequent period of six months,
 - c. The Clerk/Secretary has sent additional written notification of the church's intention to terminate membership to the last known address of the member, and
 - d. Thirty (30) days have passed since the written notification with no return response, or the member agrees to a termination of membership.

ARTICLE VI – WORSHIPING AND MEETING

A. Worship and Sacraments.

1. Worship. Sunday worship shall be held at hours determined by the Council. Other worship opportunities shall be held on days and at times determined by the Council, with the advice of the Worship Ministry and the Pastor.

2. Sacraments.

a. The sacrament of Holy Communion shall be celebrated each month of the year at such times as determined by the Pastor and Worship Ministry.

b. The sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated at such times as determined by the Pastor and Worship Ministry.

B. Congregational Meeting.

1. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held on a date and at a time determined by the Council and announced at least 14 days in advance in accordance with Section C, paragraph 1 of these Bylaws, stated below. The purposes of the meeting:

a. Review the annual written reports of the Council, Pastor, other professional staff, Officers, Ministries, and any auxiliary organizations, e. g. a women's fellowship or a musical ensemble.

b. Election of Officers and Ministry Leaders to fulfill the Mission of the church. All terms will begin with the church fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

2. Special Meetings. A Special Meeting may be called by the Pastor, the Council, or by the Clerk/Secretary upon the written request signed by at least five members of the church. The nature of any business to be transacted must be stated in the call and the meeting shall be limited to such business.

C. Rules and Regulations of Congregational Meetings.

1. Notices. Notices for congregational meetings shall be announced in worship or printed in the bulletin on two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting and published to the members at least two weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting via email, postal mail, or by whatever means available. The call shall specify the time of the meeting and the action(s) to be considered.

2. Quorum. A quorum shall consist of 20% of the eligible voters of the Congregation.

3. Voting. A vote of the majority of the eligible voters present and voting shall be considered the action of the congregation, except in electing or dismissing a pastor, or in making alterations or amendments to the Bylaws, or in spending from the Reserve Fund, in which a super majority of two-thirds of the eligible voters present and voting shall be required.

4. Procedure. The standard parliamentary procedure shall be that found in the Modern Edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VII – LAY OFFICERS

A. Composition.

Five officers shall be elected from the congregation and serve as Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk/Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

Officers, together with the support provided by the Ministry Leaders, shall be charged with the administration of the church business, spiritual growth, and preservation of assets in accordance with the wishes of the congregation.

Officers shall perform the duties described in these Bylaws.

1. Qualifications. The Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Financial Secretary must be active members of the church as defined in Article V of these Bylaws for at least one year. Other officers and ministry leaders shall be either active members or committed friends. (See Article V, B, 1 and 2)

2. Nominations and Elections. Nomination of Officers may be made by any member of the congregation until such time established by the Nominating Committee that has been appointed by the Council. Written ballots shall contain the names of all nominees and be presented prior to the vote at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, in accordance with requirements of these Bylaws, Article VI, C, 1. Election shall be by ballot unless it is uncontested and there are no nominations from the floor, in which event a voice vote may be taken.

In the event a vacancy occurs in any office, the Council shall appoint a replacement for filling the vacancy in a timely manner. Notice shall be given to the members of a vacancy in the office, the beginning and end of the term shall be clearly defined, and the appointed replacement published to the members.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. The Moderator Shall:

- a. Be elected to a one-year term. There is no limit to the number of successive terms that may be served.
- b. Preside at all Congregational meetings and Council meetings and serve as official lay representative of the church where no other is designated.
- c. Execute documents authorized by a Congregational Meeting or by the Council for transaction of church business.

- d. In extended absence of the Pastor, assume the administrative duties of the Pastor, and with the advice and consent of the Council, coordinate transaction of regular church business.
- e. With input and assistance from Council, appoint delegates to represent SCUCC at association and conference functions.
- f. Serve as an advisory member to all ministries, attending meetings at her or his discretion.

2. The Vice Moderator Shall:

- a. Be elected for a one-year term. There is no limit to the number of successive terms that may be served.
- b. Carry on the duties and have the powers of the Moderator in the Moderator's absence.
- c. The Vice Moderator shall automatically complete the unexpired term of the Moderator should the office be vacated.
- d. Be a member of the Finance and Personnel Ministry and become informed of the ongoing financial and personnel matters.
- e. Serve in other assignments as requested by Council.

3. The Clerk/Secretary Shall:

- a. Be elected for a term of two years. There is no limit to the number of successive terms that may be served.
- b. Assume office upon election by the Annual Congregational Meeting, or in case of a vacancy in the office, upon appointment by the Council to fill the remaining term.
- c. Maintain records of proceedings of Congregational Meetings and of the Council and prepare correspondence and notices as directed by Council.
- d. Maintain a current register of the church membership, including dates and modes of their reception/termination, as well as a record of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, and Deaths.
- e. Send letters of clarification of membership standing, process letters of resignation and transfer, and respond to requests for information from membership records when appropriate.
- f. Preserve on file all written official reports.
- g. Assure that appropriate written notices of meetings are published to members.

h. Serve as secretary of the corporation and perform such duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of Clerk or Secretary of an assembly.

4. The Treasurer Shall:

- a. Be elected for a two-year term with no limit to the number of successive terms that may be served. The term of an outgoing Treasurer shall, in addition, overlap for a period of time to assist in the training and transition of the newly elected Treasurer.
- b. Assume office upon election by the Annual Congregational Meeting, or in the event of a vacancy in the office, upon appointment by the Council to fill the remainder of the term.
- c. Receive from the Financial Secretary monies to be deposited into a secure account.
- d. Disperse all monies required for operation and maintenance of the church, execution of the church programs, and payment of staff salaries and benefits.
- e. Disburse all monies for the wider church, including OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) and other programs of the United Church of Christ (UCC).
- f. Disburse all memorial monies toward approved memorial objects and causes.
- g. Provide a written report to the appropriate ministries of all monies received and disbursed on their behalf, as well as a complete monthly report of financial activities to the Finance and Personnel Ministry and to the Council.
- h. Provide a written year-end report to the Finance and Personnel Ministry for inclusion in the annual reports to the Congregation.
- i. Assist the Office Personnel in preparing annual reports to the wider UCC.
- j. Prepare and submit reports in a timely fashion required by federal and state agencies.
- k. Maintain accurate records of all church funds.
- l. Provide current and historical expenditure data for planning the annual budget appeal and special financial campaigns.
- m. Serve as a member of the Finance and Personnel Ministry and *ex officio* member of the Council.

5. The Financial Secretary Shall:

- a. Be elected to a two-year term, with no limit on the number of successive terms that may be served. The term of an outgoing Financial Secretary shall overlap the newly elected Financial Secretary to assist in a time of training and transition.

- b. Have been an Active Member of the church for at least one year prior to election.
- c. Assume office upon election by the Annual Congregational Meeting, or in event of a vacancy in the office, upon appointment by the Council to fill the remainder of the term.
- d. Receive and deposit into a federally insured bank all contributions and income from operating, missions, and memorial activities. Income raised by an auxiliary organization to support its own activities does not need to be received by the Financial Secretary if the organization maintains a separate account.
- e. Keep an accurate and confidential record of all funds received.
- f. Disburse all funds monthly or as frequently as required to the Treasurer and other appropriate accounts.
- g. Provide a written report to the Finance and Personnel Ministry of all monies received.
- h. Provide a written year-end report to the Finance and Personnel Ministry for the church's annual report.
- i. Assist the Office Personnel in preparing the annual report to the wider UCC.
- j. Provide calendar year-end itemized financial statements to members and non-members for whom there are records of giving. Also provide a year-to-date financial statement any time at the request of the contributor.
- k. Provide current and historical income data to the ministries and Council as requested to support planning for the annual pledge appeal and specific financial campaigns.
- l. Serve as a member of the Finance and Personnel Ministry and an *ex officio* member of the Council.

ARTICLE VIII – CLERGY OFFICERS

A. Pastor

1. Selection.

- a. The Council shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee selected from volunteers and nominees from the congregation to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.
- b. The Pastoral Search Committee shall provide a summary monthly report to the Council and shall present to the congregation the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy.
- c. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of those present at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

2. Termination.

The pastoral relationship may be terminated by either the church or the Pastor according to Call (Contract) or as mutually agreed. Termination of the relationship by the church shall result from a two-thirds vote of the eligible voters present at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

3. Duties.

- a. Shall be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with assistance of the ministries.
- b. Shall seek to enlist followers of Christ, preach the gospel, celebrate sacraments, have under her or his care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the various ministries.
- c. Shall be a non-voting, *ex officio* member of the council.
- d. Shall be an advisor member of all ministries.

4. Other Ordained Officers.

The selection, termination, and duties of other ordained officers shall follow the pattern set forth in this Article VIII, A.

ARTICLE IX – COUNCIL

A. Composition.

1. The Council shall be composed of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk/Secretary, Pastor(s) (non-voting), Treasurer (non-voting), Financial Secretary (non-voting), and Leaders of the ministries, Communication, Community Care, Congregational Care, Education, Finance and Personnel, Properties, and Worship.
2. A quorum shall be one-half of the voting members, or their designated representatives, of the filled positions of the Council.

B. Responsibilities.

1. Formulate and maintain a long-term strategic plan for the church.
2. Oversee the activities of the officers and ministries and ensure they are functioning properly.
3. Discuss, amend, and approve the annual church budget proposed by the Finance and Personnel Ministry.
4. Approve expenditures that exceed the approved budget items. Changes in recurring basic fees such as electricity, gas, water, sewage, garbage, etc., do not need Council approval.
5. Review the Bylaws every two years and recommend amendments, if needed.

6. At least annually, and at other times when needed, appoint a Committee to nominate members for current or anticipated vacancies in the lay leadership positions of the church.
7. Have full legal charge of all real and personal property, securities, and titles held under the Church Corporation. It shall not have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer the real property of the church without a majority vote of the eligible voting members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.
8. Approve hiring and termination of non-ordained staff, in consultation with the Finance and Personnel Ministry and the Pastor.
9. Have the power to appoint special committees that shall be directly responsible to Council.
10. Approve all funding and solicitation by individuals or groups on behalf of SCUCC prior to initiation of the activity.
11. Arrange for an annual (internal or external) audit of financial records of the church and receive a written report.
12. Approve all contracts and commitments not included in the annual budget.

ARTICLE X – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE MINISTRIES

A. Composition.

1. Each ministry shall consist of a Leader elected by the Congregation for a two-year term at the Annual Meeting with half of the Ministry Leaders elected each year. There is no limit to the number of successive terms the Ministry Leaders may serve.
2. Other ministry members shall serve as specified in these Bylaws or shall be appointed by the Council with the guidance of a Nominating Committee, also appointed by the Council, the Leader of each ministry, and the Pastor. No ministry will have fewer than three members at any time.
3. Ministry Leaders or members who fail to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the position may be removed from their position and replaced by the Council.

B. Responsibilities.

1. Evaluate activities and needs related to their respective ministry areas as defined in these Bylaws, initiate responses, and coordinate activities in the ministry area and with other ministries, members and friends of the congregation, lay and clergy officers, support staff, and others.
2. Create a ministry work plan for the year and present it to the Council for approval.
3. Prepare a long-term ministry plan for Council approval, update it annually, and follow it.

4. Provide an annual budget to the Finance and Personnel Ministry when requested.
5. Monitor expenses and seek Council approval for needs that may exceed the budget.
6. Submit a written report prior to the Annual Meeting for inclusion in the church's annual reports.
7. Establish a regular meeting time and notify the Moderator, Pastor, and Church Office.
8. Detailed descriptions of Ministry Areas of Responsibility for each ministry may be found on the church web page.
9. The Ministry Leader, or an appointed representative, must attend all Council meetings.

ARTICLE XI – COMMUNITY CARE MINISTRY

The Community Care Ministry is responsible for leading the church in its striving to be “caring in our ministry... to the wider community,” including our local geographical area, the wider world, the wider United Church of Christ, and the ecumenical Christian and interfaith communities to which we belong.

ARTICLE XII – CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

The Congregational Care Ministry is responsible for leading the church in its striving to be “caring in our ministry to one another,” with particular attention to our Open and Affirming goal of including all people.

ARTICLE XIII – COMMUNICATION MINISTRY

The Communication Ministry is responsible for fostering faithful and effective communication among our members; between members and staff; between this church and the wider UCC and our partners in ministry, and between the church and the wider community. These duties include, but are not limited to, supervising eNews, the electric sign, bulletin boards, announcements, and press releases.

ARTICLE XIV – EDUCATION MINISTRY

The Education Ministry is responsible for intentional programs of teaching and learning that enable people of all ages – children, youth, and adults – to gain awareness, knowledge, understanding, and skill for living a faithful and effective life of service, following the example and teaching of Jesus.

ARTICLE XV – FINANCE AND PERSONNEL MINISTRY

The Finance and Personnel Ministry has overall responsibility for the collection and disbursement of all funds required to operate the church and support the church's activities. This includes the collection and use of regular contributions, special gifts, memorial gifts, and endowments. The ministry is also responsible for facilitating faithful and effective personal and professional relationships between the paid personnel of the church and its members. In doing so, the ministry shall work closely with the Communication Ministry, with the Moderator, and with the Pastor as staff leader.

ARTICLE XVI – PROPERTIES MINISTRY

The Properties Ministry has the responsibility for guiding the use, maintenance, and repair of all the physical components of the church, including buildings, grounds, and equipment; for providing optimal property and liability insurance; and for contracts relating to the use and care of the physical components that appear in the annual budget.

ARTICLE XVII – WORSHIP MINISTRY

The Worship Ministry is responsible for working with the Pastor(s), Music Director, and other staff to provide worship experiences that strengthen our identity as "a people of God centered in Christ" and our capacity for "responding actively to God's love."

ARTICLE XVIII – AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of the eligible voters present at a Congregational Meeting provided that notice of such meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment(s) shall be given in accordance with Article VI, C, 1, Worship and Meeting.

ARTICLE XIX – ADOPTION

These Bylaws were adopted and declared in force (date of meeting) at the Congregational Meeting of Spring Creek Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (doing business as Spring Creek United Church of Christ), Rockford, Illinois, held on (date of meeting) and supersede all previous constitutions and Bylaws of this church.

— END OF BYLAWS —