OZAUKEE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We covenant together, of our own free will, to love God and to enjoy God forever, to walk in God's ways, known and to be made known, to study the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ, to live and work together in unity and peace, and to care for those whom God has given us to love. We, the members of Ozaukee Congregational Church, hereby unite under this covenant and establish this Constitution and its Bylaws.

ARTICLE I – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is to join together in order to conduct public worship and to seek God's will as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE II – POLITY

This Church, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws, is an autonomous body having within its membership the right of control in all its affairs. Although it recognizes the mutual value of consultation and association with other churches, it is accountable only to God and Christ Our Lord and to no other ecclesiastical authority.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

A. A member of this Church is a person who has accepted the Covenant of this Church before the congregation; and one whose membership has not been terminated. The privileges of church membership include voting on church matters, and serving as church officers and board members. A friend of this Church is a person who supports this Church in fulfilling its purpose but is not a member.

B. A member of this church is one who, within a three year period, has attended worship services of this church, provided financial support to this church, and/or participated in this church's outreach ministries.

C. Reception of new members will take place at worship services.

ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION

A. Officers: Lay officers are to be elected annually by the Church.

1. The Moderator is the principle executive officer of the Church. The Moderator:

a. Has administrative responsibility for carrying out and supervising the execution of the policies adopted by the Council.

b. Presides at all meetings of the members and serves as chairperson of the Council.

c. Is a non-voting ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

d. May name a clerk pro tem during the absence or disability of the Clerk/Historian, subject to change by the Council at its next meeting.

e. May not be reelected as Moderator or Moderator-Elect for a period of one year after serving a term of one year. However, the Moderator may be eligible to serve a second consecutive one-year term by vote of the members, in the event that the Moderator-Elect is unable to serve the forthcoming term of Moderator.

f. Serves as, or names, the voting delegates who shall attend and represent the Church at meetings of any organizations with which the Church may be associated.

g. Serve as a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

2. The Moderator-Elect shall assist the Moderator in the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of that office.

a. In the absence of the Moderator, shall perform the duties of the Moderator.

b. Shall serve for one year as Moderator-Elect and then automatically succeed to the office of Moderator for the following year.

c. Shall immediately succeed the Moderator in the event of the Moderator's resignation or inability to serve, serving the remainder of term of the former Moderator and then serving the full term of Moderator the following year

d. Serves as a member of the Nominating Committee.

e. Serve as a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

3. The Clerk/Historian acts as secretary for the Church. The Clerk/Historian:

   a. Records the minutes of the Council and the Annual Meeting and any Special Meetings of the Church.

   b. Keeps the Church records and maintains a history of the Church.

   c. Is a voting member of the Council.

4. The Treasurer is responsible for custody of all Church funds and valuable papers, and for the deposit thereof as the Board of Trustees directs. The Treasurer:

   a. Must give such bond as the Board of Trustees prescribes, at Church expense.

   b. Is a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees.

   c. Is a voting member of the Council.

   d. Shall provide a report for each meeting of the Council, in writing and/or orally, summarizing the church's financial status.

5. Other officers or assistant officers, as needed, may be elected annually by the members.

B. The Council: The Council represents the membership and acts as the executive committee of the Church between Church meetings, encompassing the entire task of the Church. The Council:

1. Consists of the Moderator, the Moderator-Elect, the Clerk/Historian, the Treasurer and the Chairpersons of the Church Boards as regular voting members; and the immediate past Moderator, the Minister(s) and Ordained Associates as non-voting ex-officio members.

2. Formulates and recommends programs to the members.

3. Has primary responsibility for the integration and correlation of the work of all officers, boards and committees.

4. Advises with and has general supervision of the minister(s).

5. May retain, on behalf of the Church, the services of a Choir Director, Organist and Custodian as needed, and such other staff assistance deemed necessary by the Council.

6. Shall approve or disapprove recommendations made by the various boards with respect to hiring and discharging of employees of the Church.

7. Review this Constitution annually, and propose any recommended amendments to the congregation (comporting with the amendment procedure in Article VIII).

C. Boards: The following boards are made up of members elected by the Church for three-year terms. Members who have served one full term are ineligible for one year for reelection to the same board, unless approved by Council vote.

1. The Board of Deacons consists of a minimum of five members, plus the minister(s) as ex-officio members without vote. It is responsible for:

a. Preparation and distribution of sacramental elements for use in worship services.

b. Organizing hospitality and congregational care activities

c. The spiritual interests of the Church and its members.

d. Decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Lent.

e. Organization of the Annual Dinner/Meeting and Annual Church Picnic.

2. The Board of Trustees consists of a minimum of five trustees plus the Treasurer, and minister(s) as non-voting ex-officio member(s). The Board of Trustees:

a. Exercises all statutory powers and duties with respect to Church property and secular business matters, but shall have no power to buy, sell or mortgage real estate without specific authority by vote of the Church or of the Council.

b. Manages and safeguards the funds of the Church, designating depositories, authorizing procedures for approval and payment of bills and salaries.

c. Arranges for an annual review of the church's financial records and presents the results to the Council prior to the Annual Meeting.

d. May, with the concurrence of the Council, invest reserve funds and establish separate foundations or trusts for specific purposes and name the trustees therefore.

e. Formulate budgets and, after consultations with the Council, present budgets to the Church.

f. Stimulates the development of bequests, trust funds and memorials.

3. The Board of Christian Education consists of a minimum of five members plus the minister(s), nursery attendant(s), associate or assistant minister(s) responsible for Christian Education, and/or lay Director of Christian Education as non-voting ex-officio members. The Board Christian Education:

a. Formulates and administers education programs of the Church, such as the Sunday School, high school youth programs, fellowship organizations for children and young people and adult education.

b. Recommends to the Senior Minister the hiring and dismissing of the lay Director of Christian Education and Nursery Attendant(s).

4. The Board of Benevolences consists of a minimum of five members plus the minister(s) as a non-voting ex-officio member(s). The Board of Benevolences:

a. Investigates, coordinates and promotes benevolent projects throughout the Church fellowship and directs those of the Church itself.

b. Has sole authority for the disbursement of funds collected or allocated for benevolent purposes.

c. Seeks out and encourages means of expanding the Christian service of the Church beyond its own membership.

5. The Board of Christian Stewardship consists of a minimum of five members. The Board of Christian Stewardship:

a. Promotes among the members of the Church the systematic and proportionate giving of financial support to the church.

b. Is responsible for the raising of funds and the maintenance of progress in meeting members' pledges.

6. The Board of Facility Management consists of a minimum of five voting members. The Board of Facility Management:

   a. Will be responsible for developing ongoing short and long-term plans for the maintenance and improvement of the Church's facilities and property.

   b. Will investigate and evaluate proposed projects related to the Church's facilities and property.

7. The Board of Membership and Events consists of a minimum of five members. This Board is responsible to ensure that continuous, positive communication, fellowship and interaction occurs between Ozaukee Congregational Church, its members, friends and the community. The Board of Membership and Events:

   a. Will develop and execute the processes and programs that will positively impact membership in our church and church promotion.

   b. Will create and maintain a process for welcoming visitors, recognition and guidance for new members and integrating and involving new members and friends into the church, and establish a means for better understanding membership.

   c. Will be responsible for the creation and development of the following communication channels: press releases, welcome information and literature, advertising, public promotion and the church website.

   d. Will enlist the assistance of individual church members or friends to participate on short-term subcommittees for the purpose of developing and coordinating any program or activity as sanctioned by the Board.

8. The number of elected members of any board may be temporarily increased or decreased by the Council as needed for a period of up to one year.

D. The Nominating Committee: This Committee functions throughout the year to nominate board members and lay officers for all positions to be filled by election at any meeting of the Church or the Council.

   1. The Nominating Committee consists of five persons, four of whom are members at large elected by the Church at the Annual Meeting, and the fifth being the Moderator-Elect.

2. Members at large of the Nominating Committee are elected for a term of one year and, after serving one full term, are not eligible for reelection for one year.

E. The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC): This committee is charged with developing a three to five year Visioning plan for the church, and presenting this plan to the Church Council for the Council's action. The LRPC re-constitutes every two years beginning in 2018, and goes dormant after presenting their plan to the Council.

1. The LRPC is chaired by the immediate past Moderator of the Church Council. If the immediate past moderator of the Church Council is unwilling or unable to serve, or is no longer active within the church, then the remaining members of the LRPC (see below) shall select the chair (the current Moderator will serve as chair until a new chair is selected).

2. The LRPC consists of the following members, all of whom have full voting rights:
   a. The current Moderator of the Church Council
   b. The Moderator-Elect
   c. Any and all past Moderators of the Church Council, who are willing to serve and are active church members
   d. Any and all current Ministers on staff
   e. Two (2) additional members selected by the current Moderator of the Church Council. These 2 members each must have served previously on the Church Council.
   f. Two (2) additional members selected by the Chair of the LRPC. These 2 members each must have served previously on the Church Council.

3. The LRPC re-constitutes every two years beginning in 2018 and following the annual meeting of the Congregation.
   a. The Chair of the LRPC shall report at the first Church Council meeting immediately following the annual meeting who are the members of the newly constituted LRPC.
   b. The LRPC will meet as necessary to develop a three to five year Visioning Plan for the Church. It is up to the LRPC what is to go into this plan.
   c. The LRPC (or designated members) will present this Visioning plan to the Church Council at the Council's regularly scheduled September Meeting. The Church Council is then responsible for implementing the plan as they see fit.
   d. Unless directed by the Council otherwise, the LRPC will go dormant following the presentation of their plan to the Church Council, to be re-constituted every two years.

F. Pastoral Relations Committee: This committee functions as a conduit of communication between the ministers and the congregation. It is composed of the immediate past Moderator, current Moderator and Moderator-Elect.

G. Committees: At their discretion, the Council and the several boards may create and dissolve standing and special committees in furtherance of their respective duties.

H. Ministers

1. The Church may have one or more Ministers, Associate Ministers or Assistant Ministers as may be determined by the membership.

    a. The Council will nominate, for election by the membership, a committee to recommend a call for any vacancy.

    b. The call to a Minister(s) will be extended by the Church upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a congregational meeting called for that purpose. The Council may approve a process for absentee ballots by members, if deemed necessary.

    c. The Ministers must be graduates of an accredited seminary, ordained and must become members of the Church before being installed.

    d. The Minister(s) will be under the general supervision of the Council.

    e. The Church Council may hire, for a specified period of time, one or more interim ministers when the need arises, without a vote of the congregation. The general responsibilities for all ministers of this church, interim and otherwise, are outlined in sections 2 and 3. Any more specific duties, as well as compensation, shall be at the discretion of the Church Council.

2. The Minister(s), in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, are in charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church. The Ministers:

    a. Seek to enlist people as members of this Church.

    b. Preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

    c. Have charge of all services of worship.

    d. Provide pastoral care services.

    e. Direct the Confirmation program.

f. Provide periodic adult Christian education opportunities.

g. Provide administrative leadership.

h. Establish a vision for missions and outreach.

i. Perform baptisms, weddings and funerals.

j. Nurture and maintain a healthy spiritual life for oneself and the congregation.

k. Enjoy and protect the privilege of serving this congregation.

l. Is(are) a non-voting ex-officio member of the Council and of all boards and committees, except the Nominating Committee and any committee established to call a Minister.

m. Attend meetings of the Pastoral Relations Committee when called upon.

3. One of the Minister(s) shall be designated as the Senior Minister. The Senior Minister shall:

   a. Supervise all paid staff.

   b. Conduct performance reviews of all paid staff.

   c. Recommend compensation adjustments to the Moderator and the Board of Trustees.

   d. Recommend to the Council the hiring or termination of all paid staff.

4. The Minister(s) continues in office until his/her tenure is terminated.

   a. A Minister's tenure may be terminated upon at least sixty days' written notice to the Council by the Minister.

   b. A Minister's tenure may be terminated by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church present at a special congregational meeting called for that purpose.

      (1) The Moderator must provide a Minister at least sixty days' written notice of such termination of tenure.

(2) In the event of such a vote, the Council may suspend the Minister with full benefits pending termination of tenure.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

A. Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the Church will be held each year on the date to be determined by the Council.

1. Notice of this meeting must be published to the membership in the Church Order of Worship in each of the four weeks prior to the meeting.

2. Notice of this meeting must be announced from the pulpit for two weeks preceding the meeting date.

B. Special Meetings: Special meetings of the members may be held at any time upon call of the Council or any of the Boards, or of the Clerk/Historian upon written request of twenty-five voting members of the Church.

1. Notice of a special meeting and its purpose must be published to Church members at least two weeks prior to the meeting date and announced from the pulpit for two weeks preceding the meeting date.

2. Business transacted at a special meeting is limited to considering and acting upon subject matter specified in the notice.

C. Roberts' Rules of Order Revised governs parliamentary procedure in meetings of the Church.

D. Nominating and Election Procedures:

1. Nominations of the Nominating Committee for positions to be filled at the Annual Meeting, including membership on the Nominating Committee for the following year, must be made available to the members of the Church at least two weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting.

2. Additional nominations for any such position may be made only by petition, signed by ten voting members of the Church and filed with the Clerk/Historian at least two weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting, and such additional nominations will be published to the members of the Church at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting.

3. Nominations are to reflect the fact that members of the same immediate family may not serve as voting members on the same board or on the Nominating Committee at the same time, unless approved by Council vote.

4. Voting will be by secret ballot in the event of a contest.

5. Vacancies occurring in any Church office, or on any board or the Nominating Committee, between Annual Meetings of the Church will be filled by an interim appointment until the next Annual Meeting.

    a. The Council will make such appointments after consulting the Nominating Committee.

    b. Any unexpired term will be filled by nomination and election at the next Annual Meeting.

6. No nominations may be presented at a meeting of the Church unless the nominee has consented to serve if elected.

7. The terms of lay officers and of Council and board members commence immediately upon their election.

8. Any person who ceases to fulfill the definition of membership shall be subject to removal from office.

E. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year will be the calendar year.

ARTICLE VI – RESERVATION OF POWERS

All powers not delegated by this Constitution are reserved to the membership of the Church and may be exercised by voting members in meetings of the Church of which due notice has been given.

ARTICLE VII – BYLAWS

A. The Church may adopt Bylaws in furtherance of the provisions of this Constitution.

B. This Constitution governs if any conflict exists between the Bylaws and this Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENT

A. The proposed amendment must be published and mailed to the membership at least four weeks prior to the meeting.

B. Notice of the meeting must be included in the Church Order of Worship published during each of these four weeks.

C. The amendment adopted must be substantially the same as that mailed to the membership.

D. The amendment must be consistent with the spirit of this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX – MERGER/CONSOLIDATION

A majority of the members of the Church present at an Annual Meeting or special meeting called for the purpose of considering a merger or consolidation must approve in concept merger or consolidation before any further action may be taken. If approval is given, a study committee will be formed to research and recommend to the membership any further action. Any decision to approve merger or consolidation will require a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special meeting called for that purpose.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION

A. Any decision to dissolve this Church requires the approval of two-thirds of the active members present at a special meeting called for this purpose.

B. Upon dissolution of this Church, any assets therein will be donated, at the direction of the Council, to a Church or organization having a philosophy and purpose similar to those of this Church as expressed in Articles I and II of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XI – EXECUTORY

This Constitution becomes effective upon ratification by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose. Upon ratification all officers, Council and board members and members of the Nominating Committee currently serving terms will continue in that capacity until the expiration of their terms as described in Article IV: A, B, C and D. The first election under this Constitution will then take place at the Annual Meeting in April, 1986.

First Revision: 4/21/1997
Second Revision: 4/28/2003
Third Revision: 5/9/2006
Fourth Revision: 4/22/2008
Fifth Revision: 10/13/2013
Sixth Revision: 4/14/2015
Seventh Revision: 1/20/2017
Eight Revision: 4/18/17
Ninth Revision: 1/21/2018
Tenth Revision: 5/31/2020
Eleventh Revision: 4/24/2022
Twelfth Revision: 4/30/2023
Thirteenth Revision: 4/28/2024
Fourteenth Revision: 4/26/2026