

The First Congregational
United Church of Christ of Sarasota, Inc.

1031 South Euclid Avenue
Sarasota, Florida 34237

2016⁸ BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME

The Name of the church shall be: The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Sarasota, Inc.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, to realize the Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal, to render loving service toward all persons, and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

ARTICLE III - POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and places its temporal affairs in the hands of its members as they shall act under His guidance.

The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. The final authority in all matters shall rest in the membership. It shall be a part of the United Church of Christ cooperating through the Florida Conference.

ARTICLE IV - THEOLOGY

The Statement of Faith or the UCC Statement of Faith in the form of a Doxology of the United Church of Christ is the basic summary of the theology to which members subscribe. It is a testimony, not a test of faith. Each member shall have the right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

A. This church is an Open and Affirming Church and membership in the church is open to any person upon Confession of Faith and Baptism or the acceptance of the principles of this church as set forth in Articles II, III and IV of these Bylaws or by Confirmation, or upon Reaffirmation of Faith by those who have been members of some other church but are without credentials, or by presenting a Letter of Transfer from another church.

B. Any member must accept the principles of this church as set forth in Article II, III and IV of these Bylaws.

- C. A person who wishes to participate in the life of this church while maintaining membership in another church may be received as an Associate Member by the same process as regular active members are received. Associate Members shall have all the rights and duties of regular active members.
- D. Members shall pledge to attend regular worship services, contribute financially to the support of the church and its benevolences, participate in its life and work, and adhere to the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.
- E. Members whose addresses have become unknown, or who, in spite of friendly approaches, have not communicated with the church nor contributed to its support, may, by vote of the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team after consultation with the Caring for the Congregation Team, be transferred to the inactive Membership file. Any member so transferred may request restoration to Active Membership status and be so granted, subject to approval vote by the two teams listed above or the Church Council. When a member has been listed as inactive, such membership may be terminated at any time upon recommendation of the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team & Caring for the Congregation Team and a vote of the Church Council. The Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team and the Caring for the Congregation Team shall review annually the list of inactive members for appropriate action.
- F. Any member whose behavior becomes a severe hindrance to the life and mission of the church may be dismissed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those attending a specially and properly called congregational meeting after patient and loving efforts by the Caring for the Congregation Team and the Pastor to counsel with the member.

ARTICLE VI - SERVICES AND MEETINGS

- A. WORSHIP -Regular Sunday and special services of worship shall be held at such times as the Pastor(s) and the Celebrating Worship Team determine.
- B. BUSINESS MEETINGS
1. ANNUAL MEETING. The Annual Meeting shall be held (as provided in the Articles of Incorporation of the Church) in January, on a date to be set by the Church Council at its December meeting, with notice to all members two (2) weeks in advance, and announced to the congregation on the two (2) Sundays preceding the meeting. The calling of such meeting shall be done via the Mid-Week Message, church bulletin and/or Church Newsletter. At this meeting, annual reports of officers, leadership teams, committees, organizations, and ministry teams shall be received, officers and required team members will be elected, the annual budget shall be adopted, and other business shall be transacted. All officers and team members elected at the Annual Meeting shall be installed and take office the Sunday following election, and shall continue in office, unless removed or resignation takes effect, until their successors are elected and installed.
 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS. Other business meetings of the church may be called as needed, but the business to be presented for action must be announced on two (2) preceding Sundays, with notice to all members two (2) weeks in advance. The calling of such meetings shall be done via the Mid-Week Message, church bulletin and/or Church Newsletter. Such meetings shall be called by the Council Secretary at the request of the Pastor, the Moderator, the Church Council, or upon receipt of a written request signed by not fewer than the number of members required for a quorum for a legal meeting.
 3. BUDGET MEETING. A meeting of the church membership for the consideration of a tentative budget prepared by the Finance, Funding and Stewardship Team and approved by the Church Council shall be held prior to the Stewardship Drive.
 4. RULES AND REGULATIONS. The right to vote is limited to church members. A quorum for any congregational business meeting shall consist of thirty-five (35) members. A majority vote is decisive except as otherwise required.

ARTICLE VII - THE PASTOR AND OTHER MINISTERS

A. THE PASTOR

1. The Pastor shall be an ordained minister with full and regular ministerial standing in the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Pastor shall perform the duties as set forth in the Call which shall include a job description. The Pastor shall supervise all paid staff persons unless such supervision is otherwise specifically stated in the Call or in these Bylaws. As ordained leader of the congregation, the Pastor shall be a member ex officio of all Leadership Teams and Committees and be entitled to be present at any meeting of any church sanctioned group except officially called meetings when the Pastor's tenure, salary or behavior is under discussion. The Pastor shall provide overall direction as leader of the Church, in its total ministry; care of the Congregation; as well as the administration, condition, and security of the Church and its grounds/buildings/equipment.
2. When a vacancy in the office of Pastor occurs, the Church Council shall elect a Pastoral Search Committee of no less than nine nor more than twelve members, who, after seeking the advice of the appropriate Conference Minister of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ, shall nominate a successor at a meeting of the church duly called for the purpose of acting on such nomination. Election as Pastor must be by at least a two-thirds vote by ballot of those members of the church present and voting, and the term of office shall be of indefinite duration. Termination may be by the church at a duly called by church meeting or by the Pastor with sixty days' notice. If the church and the Pastor agree, the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be invited to meet as a Council to install the Pastor.

B. OTHER MINISTERS

The church may from time to time call other ministers to serve with the Pastor as colleagues. The same policies for calling such ministers shall pertain as are described for the Pastor with the following exception:

1. Special relationships may be established between Assistant or Associate Pastors and Leadership Teams or Committees with which they are expected to work in specialized ways such as Spiritual Education & Growth or Music and Fine Arts:
2. The colleague relationship between such minister or ministers and the Pastor may be described in job descriptions approved by the Pastor and the Congregation at the time of the Call; and
3. When more than one minister serves the church, it is understood that any member of the church may call upon any minister of the church for pastoral services such as counsel, marriages or funerals.

ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS

- A. Officers shall be elected for a one-year term. The Treasurer and ~~Council Secretary~~ **Recording Secretary** of the Church may be reelected up to a nine-year term upon recommendation of the Church Council.
- B. The Moderator who shall be the principal officer of the church and the President of the Corporation shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and of the membership. The Moderator may nominate the following committees or persons for election by the Church Council: Bylaws, Pastoral Relations, Publicity, Long-Range Planning, and others as needed, as well as the quota of delegates to The Florida Conference and other associations of which the church is a member. The Moderators in conjunction with the Pastor shall be responsible for the Family Emergency Fund which is used to confidentially assist members, friends of the church and their families in need, as occasion arises. There shall be a written report monthly to the Church Council, prepared by the Treasurer of receipts, expenditures, and balance of all funds within the Family Emergency Fund. There shall also be an annual report of total contributions, total expenditures and year-end fund balance available to the Congregation.
- C. The Vice Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in the Moderator's absence, shall be Vice President of the Corporation and **Corporate Secretary**, and shall perform such other assignments as the Moderator or the Church Council may request.
- D. The Immediate Past Moderator serves as senior advisor to the Moderator and Church Council for the year following their term as Moderator.
- E. ~~The Council Secretary~~ **The Recording Secretary** shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church and the Church Council, shall preserve a file of all communications and written official reports, shall give legal notice of all meetings when such notices are necessary, ~~shall be Secretary of the Corporation~~, and shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by law or usually pertain to the office of Recording Secretary.
- F. The Administrative Staff of the Church shall keep a register of names and addresses of the members of the church with dates and mode of their reception and removal, and a record of baptisms, marriages, and deaths of members. The Administrative Staff shall issue letters of transfer voted by the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team, notifying the churches to which they are addressed, and shall preserve a file of such communications and official records.
- G. The Treasurer shall be the Treasurer of the corporation and shall have charge of all funds of the church, except the Endowment Fund, receiving all offerings, as submitted by the Collector, paying all bills, and keeping open and true accounts of all the fiscal transactions of the church under policies set by the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team with the approval of the Church Council. The Treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team. The Treasurer shall issue monthly reports as well as an Annual Report to the Church Council and shall be part of the Budget meeting.

ARTICLE IX - THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES

A. The Church Council, as delegated by the membership, is the final administrative and policy authority of the church, having supervision over all its affairs.

B. The Church Council shall consist of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, the Immediate Past Moderator, the Treasurer, the Council Secretary, the Chair or designate of each of the Leadership Teams of the Church and the President or other designated representatives of other organizations as invited by the Church Council. The Pastor and any other minister(s) shall be ex officio members.

C. The Church Council shall meet generally on a monthly basis at least nine times a year as directed by the Moderator. Special meetings may be called by the Council Secretary at the request of the Moderator, or any two members of the Council. A quorum consists of seven members.

D. The Church Council shall approve any recommended increase in the size of a Leadership Team or Committee beyond the required minimum number of members specified in these Bylaws.

All leadership teams and committees shall report to the Church Council before taking any matter to the membership in regular or special meetings. The Church Council shall grant a hearing to any church member(s) or groups of members requesting, in writing, time for consideration of complaints, suggestions or questions unresolved by appropriate teams or committees.

E. Upon nomination by the Moderator after consultation with the Staffing Team, the Church Council may elect the following committees, each of which shall consist of at least three (3) members and shall elect its own chair:

1. The Bylaws Committee may, from time to time, propose revisions of the Bylaws and, with the approval of the Church Council, shall present such revisions to the membership for action at a duly called special meeting or at the Annual Meeting.

2. The Long Range Planning Committee shall review the structure, function, and mission of the church. This Committee shall collect the necessary data as a basis for its recommendations, which are presented to the Church Council and, if approved, to the membership for adoption.

3. The Pastoral Relations Committee is responsible for the relationship between the congregation and the Pastor or other minister and the Pastor or other minister with it, on any problem arising in the Pastor's or other minister's relationship with members of the church, the church as a whole, or the larger community. This committee shall seek to be helpful in defining and correlating duties of the Pastor or other minister(s) and shall also seek ways in which the ministry of the church may be enhanced.

F. The Auditor or Auditors shall be appointed by the Church Council, to examine the records of the Treasurer and any other funds requiring audit, and shall report at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE X - LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

A. LEADERSHIP TEAMS

1. The ten Leadership Teams of the church are: ~~1) Caring for the Congregation, 2-1) Celebrating~~ Worship, ~~3-2) Facilities and Grounds, 4-3) Fellowship and Special Events, 5-4) Finance, Funding and Stewardship, 6-5) Growing and Inviting~~ **Caring**, ~~7-6) Mission, 8-7) Music and Fine Arts, 9-8) Peace and Justice~~ **9)**. Spiritual Education & Growth and 10) Staffing.

The team functions are derived from and aligned with the Church Vision and Mission Statements.

2. Each Leadership Team shall have at least six members. At least one-third of the members of each Leadership Team shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall hold office for a term of not more than three years. After serving one full term, members are ineligible for reelection to the same Leadership Team until at least one full year has elapsed.

3. Each Leadership Team, as soon as practicable following the Annual Meeting, shall meet and elect its chair and such other officers as are required. The retiring chair of each Leadership Team shall call the new Leadership Team together for the purpose of electing new officers. Each Leadership Team shall be responsible for filling vacancies in consultation with the Moderators and the Pastor.

4. In case a vacancy occurs in any Leadership Team the Moderators should be consulted for a replacement. Leadership Team member replacements serve only until the succeeding Annual Meeting of the church.

5. Each Leadership Team shall prepare an annual itemized budget of the funds necessary from the general funds of the church for its work and activities, and submit bills to the Treasurer for payment from its budgeted funds.

6. A majority of members of a Leadership Team shall constitute a quorum.

7. Leadership Teams shall meet generally on a monthly basis at least nine times a year and at other times as required.

B. CARING FOR THE CONGREGATION

~~1. Purpose: Develop policies and implement programs providing for the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical needs within our congregation.—~~

~~2. Responsibilities: Maintains liaison with the Staff Ministers and the Parish Nurse for health focused activities to include the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of congregants at our church.—~~

~~C.~~ **B** CELEBRATING WORSHIP

1. Purpose: in collaboration with clergy, develop procedures and policies and provide oversight of church worship programs and services

2. Responsibilities: Maintains liaison with clergy in providing lay support for worship services to include Sunday services and special services. Assumes responsibility for service functions such as ushers, communion, flowers, altar cloths, bibles, candles, liturgists and greeters. Assumes responsibility for the guest book and visitor packets.

~~D.~~ **C. FACILITIES AND GROUNDS**

1. Purpose: Plans and supports maintenance of buildings and grounds, equipment needs, and coordinating long-range site needs and improvements.
2. Responsibilities: It shall be responsible, in partnership with Campus Manager, for the care of the property of the church.

~~E.~~ **D. FELLOWSHIP & SPECIAL EVENTS**

1. Purpose: Plans and supports church-wide special events and annual events that create opportunities for fellowship, enjoyment and social interaction within the congregation and that create opportunities to welcome and embrace a diversity of visitors and newcomers.
2. Responsibilities: Plans, manages and recruits volunteers for church-wide fellowship events. Plans, manages, and recruits volunteers for special events that include other local congregations. Creates communications to publicize events, recruit volunteers, and thank contributors and volunteers. Provides budget input for Fellowship and Special Events.

~~F.~~ **E. FINANCE, FUNDING & STEWARDSHIP**

1. Purpose: The Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team will provide oversight for those financial matters of the church under the Team's purview and coordinate the development of the annual budget each year. The Finance, Funding and Stewardship Team will also provide oversight of budget execution in conjunction with the other teams on Church Council responsible for individual portions of the budget.
2. Financial Responsibilities: The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the team. The Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team shall be responsible for the collection, disbursement, financial reporting, budgeting, financial audits and investment of church monies, including memorial gifts and other special funds, except for those funds that fall under the purview of the Endowment Committee (see section XI) or such other funds as the Church council may exclude. The Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team will also supervise, in conjunction with the ministerial staff, those members of the church staff charged with collecting, accounting for, reporting and disbursing church funds, including the Treasurer and Collector.
3. Stewardship Responsibilities: Conduct the Stewardship Campaign in the period directed by the Church Council. Conducts programs to emphasize the giving of members' time, talents and treasure. In close liaison with the Clergy and Administrative Assistant will be responsible for reporting changes in membership data as determined by the stewardship campaign including transfers and release of membership.

~~G.~~ **F. GROWING AND INVITING CARING**

1. Purpose: General oversight and guidance aimed at helping our church members to grow in faith, invite others in our community to share in growth, **and share Christian love within the church.**
2. Responsibilities: ~~Provides appropriate materials in the narthex and Syster Hall, for prospective and new members, and for the church membership as a whole. Works with the Ministers in conducting new member seminars and for the shepherding of new members. Growing and Inviting may also involve marketing, communications, public relations. Team will work with the minister to coordinate efforts to grow the congregation.~~ **Faithfully engage our guests and members in growing as disciples and tending our connections as a Christian Community. Works with the Ministers in following up with guests; organizing new member classes and new member reunions; reviews attendance; reviews membership rolls and seeks to create a safe space of warm welcome for all at our church.**

H. G MISSION

1. Purpose: Specific oversight and coordination of activities which express the gospel message of justice, reconciliation, peace, and giving to others. Activities may include coordination/oversight of such activities as Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), Love Offerings, special offerings, world day of prayer, mission trips, volunteer opportunities and recognition, evangelism, and the peace and justice committee.
2. Responsibilities: Responsible for the relationship of the church to the community and the larger world. The team shall promote, coordinate and program all special offerings, benevolences and missionary education throughout the church. It annually sets a goal for Christmas and Easter offerings in coordination with the Church Council, and informs the membership of its plans for distribution of the funds received. It cooperates with the United Church of Christ and related non-profit organizations in the area, involved with interpreting social problems, and working toward their solution; and when feasible, may contribute to their support, with the approval of the Church Council.

H. H MUSIC AND FINE ARTS

1. Purpose: Plans and supports all aspects of the church's music program, as well as a variety of other fine arts activities (choirs, concerts, special music, visual arts, performing arts, drama).
2. Responsibilities: The responsibility of the entire musical and artistic program of the Church. Such responsibility shall include recommendation to the Minister, Staffing Team and Church Council about the employment and evaluation of the Minister of Music and shall confer directly with the Minister of Music and the Pastor on all musical subjects and questions. It shall also confer with, and work in close cooperation with the Spiritual Education & Growth Team and the Celebrating Worship Team for necessary coordination of musical activities.

H. I. PEACE & JUSTICE

1. Purpose: Brings awareness to and supports the public witness of FCUCC to issues of injustice and inequality, specifically developing our church's historic commitment to such issues as racial diversity, poverty, the environment, and the LGBTQ community.
2. Responsibilities: Oversees and receives updates on social issues that are important to the church; coordinates special events that deepen understanding of peace and justice issues; makes recommendations to the Moderator team and church Council for communication and advancement of these issues throughout the church

J. SPIRITUAL EDUCATION & GROWTH

1. Purpose: Plans and supports all aspects of the spiritual development and faith formation initiatives for all ages in the church.
2. Responsibilities: The team shall establish, support, implement and oversee the spiritual development and faith formation ministries of the church in cooperation with the pastors and other appropriate professional staff. These initiatives take place throughout the life and settings of the church both formally and informally. Generates and supports activities to accomplish the various spiritual development and faith formation initiatives including Sunday school, Thursday Knights and Wings, Youth Events and Adult Education programs.

K. STAFFING

1. Purpose: Plans and supports the employment of all paid staff.
2. Responsibilities: The Staffing Team in conjunction with the Minister and with the input and assistance of other appropriate persons and/or church teams shall maintain the Employment Policy Handbook, make sure that each employee has a copy of the handbook and review the handbook annually

for appropriate changes. Shall develop and maintain the job descriptions for all staff positions including the Senior Minister and the criteria for evaluating their performance. Shall keep abreast of changes in job descriptions and communicate with staff as they evolve. Shall recommend, to the Church Council for approval, after consultation with the appropriate persons and/or church leadership teams, the hiring and dismissing of all members of the church staff with the exception of the Senior Minister, Minister of Music and/or any other Minister who are hired and dismissed according to Article VII. Shall be responsible for insuring that annual objectives are established for each staff position.

Shall insure that annual evaluation interviews, with the appropriate persons and/or church teams are held with each staff person as a means of determining whether or not the established objectives are being met and the staff person is experiencing growth in their particular position and career. Less formal reviews may be held, as needed, throughout the year. Shall insure that annual compensation reviews, with the appropriate persons and/or church teams, are held with each staff person and that compensation recommendations for all employees of the church are submitted to the Finance, Funding & Stewardship Team.

ARTICLE XI - ENDOWMENT FUND

- A. The Church Council, through the Endowment Committee, shall seek and administer in the CONGREGATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND such funds as are given by legacy, devise, bequest or beneficiary designation from an estate, trust, life insurance company, retirement account, or similar source unless those funds are specifically designated or allocated by the donor for some other purpose or recipient. In addition, the Church Council may transfer any other funds to the Congregational Endowment Fund.
- B. The Congregational Endowment Fund Committee shall consist of five (5) members of the church, named by the Church Council and elected by the membership of the church at an Annual Meeting. Members of the committee serve for an indefinite period. In case of vacancy by death, resignation or removal for cause by the Church Council, the Church Council shall appoint any eligible church member to fill such vacancy until the next Annual Meeting.
- C. The committee shall be the custodian of all funds in the Congregational Endowment Fund and shall direct the investment and expenditure of such funds, subject to the restrictions placed thereon by the donors or testators or the Church Council in placing funds therein not specifically given, devised or bequeathed to said fund.
- D. The Chair of the Congregational Endowment Fund Committee shall present in the Annual Reports of the church a statement of activity in the Congregational Endowment Fund.
- E. The Committee shall elect such officers and shall hire such agents and execute such agreements and contracts by appropriate resolutions as may be necessary for the transaction of its business.

Disposition of Bequests Policy

This policy statement governs the disposition of bequests which, for the purposes of this statement, will mean any type of gift in which the assets are transferred upon the death of the donor. The assets may be in any form, such as cash, securities, personal property, real property, etc. Bequests with First Congregational United Church of Christ a beneficiary can be of three general types:

- A. **Designated:** The donor has identified a specific purpose(s) to which the funds should be directed or has specifically designated the Endowment Fund as beneficiary. These funds will go into the "Designated" Endowment Fund such as Buildings and Grounds Endowment, Music Endowment or Scholarship Endowment.
- B. **Undesignated:** The donor has **not** designated a specific purpose for the funds therefore the assets

will be directed to that portion of the corpus of the Endowment Fund where earnings are unrestricted.

C. **Memorial Funds:** Bequests given to the church, in lieu of flowers or as a memorial gift in honor of a family member will be transferred to the Church Memorial Fund. The Church Council shall determine if any of these funds will be transferred to the Endowment Fund.

ARTICLE XII – FIRST UCC WOMEN

Membership shall be open to all women of the church. It shall elect its own officers, perform its functions and support church activities through standing and special committees as set forth in its own Bylaws.

ARTICLE XIII – RESIGNATIONS

A person resigning from any Leadership Team or Committee shall file a resignation in writing with the Chair of such Leadership Team or Committee who thereafter shall file the resignation with the secretary of said Leadership Team or Committee and notify the Moderators and Pastor of the resulting vacancy.

ARTICLE XIV – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

All business meetings of the church and its teams and committees shall be conducted pursuant to these Bylaws and in conformity with Roberts Rules of Order; and a parliamentarian shall be appointed for each congregational meeting.

ARTICLE XV – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on the first day of January.

ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS

A. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of at least thirty-five (35) members present and voting at any Annual Meeting or at a special meeting properly called for the purpose. The calling of such meeting shall be done via the Mid-Week Message, church bulletin and/or Church Newsletter two (2) weeks in advance, and shall be announced to the Congregation on the two (2) Sundays preceding the meeting.

B. The Bylaws of the First Congregational Church of Sarasota, Inc. were first adopted at the Annual Meeting, February 2, 1955. They have been revised and amended February 1, 1956; February 5, 1958; March 21, 1963; December 9, 1963; January 10, 1965; May 16, 1965; December 11, 1966; February 7, 1968; February 5, 1969; February 22, 1970; February 3, 1971; September 12, 1971; and were thoroughly revised and rewritten for the Congregational Meeting, January 16, 1972. They were revised and rewritten again and adopted at a congregational meeting on February 6, 1977, January 13, 1980 and January 15, 1984. Revised and adopted at a congregational meeting, January 27, 2007. Revised and adopted at a congregational meeting, January 17, 2010. Revised and adopted at a congregational meeting, January 12, 2014. Revised and adopted at a congregational meeting March 20, 2016. **Revised and adopted at a congregational meeting January 27, 2019**