

# **CONSTITUTION FOR ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MADRID, IOWA**

## **PREAMBLE**

This church is a community of people called by God to nurture each other, serve those in need, and transform our lives by listening attentively to God who is still speaking. In faith, this church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all.

People gather together as a congregation in this church to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the sacraments, to realize Christian fellowship and unity within the church and the church universal, to render loving service toward all and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace. The members of this church are bound together by a common faith and by a continuing covenant among the members and friends.

### **Article I: Name**

The local name of this church is St. Paul's United Church of Christ. It is located at: 115 South Cedar Street, Madrid, Iowa.

### **Article II: Purpose and Mission**

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome at St. Paul's United Church of Christ. We provide opportunities for members and friends alike to engage in worship and celebration. We provide a nurturing environment through fellowship, education, faith exploration, and growth in our journey. We encourage the stewardship of our time, talents, financial resources, and the environment. We pursue social justice and action, continuing to reach out beyond ourselves.

### **Article III: Covenant of Faith**

The members of this faith community covenant with God and one another to walk together in the way of Christian faith. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in Holy Scriptures. We affirm the tenets of the Christian faith, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ by embodying God's love and justice in all that we do. Within this unity, however, each member shall have the undisturbed right to listen for God's voice according to the dictates of his or her conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

### **Article IV: Polity**

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 it by the Secretary of State of Iowa. Members seek the guidance and inspiration of Jesus Christ in matters of faith and discipline through the Holy Scriptures using reason, faith, and conscience. Without forfeiting any of the responsibility or control vested in its members, this church is a member of the Central Association of the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ. Suggestions and actions of the Iowa Conference and the

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General Synod of the United Church of Christ are respected and taken into consideration.

### **Article V: Governing Body**

The governing body of this church will be the members assembled at the Annual Congregational Meeting and at any specially called Congregational Meeting. A quorum is twenty percent (20%) of the church members. A quorum of the Official Board is 60% of its members. A simple majority vote is the rule except where otherwise specified. At the annual meeting the congregation receives reports from all boards, committees, commissions, task forces and recognized church activity groups, and from the pastor. These reports summarize the activities of these groups during the current year and are to be part of the permanent record of St. Paul's.

The Executive Board is elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The Official Board is selected from the elected committee members at the Annual Meeting. A chairperson is chosen to represent their committee on the Official Board. They act as the governing body between Congregational Meetings.

The congregation, through the church by-laws, establishes the lengths of the terms of office of the members of the Board. They also, through the by-laws, specify the tenures of members of the Board in their offices, including the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve in any one office.

### **Article VI: Meetings**

Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Moderator/Director or in response to a request made by an Officer of the Church, a committee or board, or a quorum (20%) of the membership of the church.

The annual meeting is held in October to address the affairs of the church.

A meeting to call or dismiss a Pastor requires a 20% quorum of the church membership. When calling a Pastor a favorable 67% vote of confidence is needed by the membership attending the special called congregational meeting. When non-approval/dismissal of a Pastor is deemed necessary at least a 67% vote of the membership attending the special called congregational meeting is required.

### **Article VII: Limitation Of Debt**

No officer, committee or board of the church will incur any indebtedness of the church beyond the approved annual budget without the congregational membership vote of approval. Approval of the Congregation/Membership for incurring debt will direct the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Moderator/Director of the church to be signatory of the loan incurring the debt.

### **Article VIII: Committees, Boards and Special Appointments**

The Executive Board of this church is the Pastor, Director/Moderator, Vice Moderator, Board Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. This Board will respond to immediate concerns and issues that arise between the regular meetings of the Official Board and Congregation.

Prospective members of the following committees and delegates are submitted by the  
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Nominating Committee and elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Nominations are accepted from the floor.

Christian Education & Youth	Pastor/Parish Relations
Diaconate	Trustees
Finance/Mission	Worship
Lay Life and Work	Association/Conference Delegate
Membership/Church Growth	Historian
Nominating	Madrid Home Communities Delegates

1. Christian Education and Youth facilitates religious education for the church, including all Youth activities.

2. Diaconate assists the Pastor in preparing and administering the Lords Supper, caring for the sick, the sorrowing, the stranger, and in ministering to the spiritual welfare of the church. In the absence of the Pastor or a stated supply, they will conduct the worship services of the church.

3. Finance and Mission oversees the financial stewardship and missions of the church.

4. Lay Life and Work is responsible for the maintenance of the kitchen and facilitates its use.

5. Membership and Church Growth assists the Pastor in planning programs to welcome newcomers and invite them into our church family.

6. The Nominating Committee provides a list of nominees for church offices and committees.

7. Pastor/Parish Relations supports the Pastor and monitors and strengthens the relationship between the Pastor and the Congregation for effective ministry by both; organizes annual review of the church ministries.

8. Trustees hold in trust all properties of the church and see that the same is properly cared for.

9. Worship assists the Pastor in preparing the sanctuary for worship events whether routine or special.

10. The Association/Conference Delegate represents St. Paul's at Central Association and conference meetings.

11. The Historian is responsible for recording church and church family life

12. Madrid Home Communities Representatives represent St. Paul's at MHC annual meeting

### **Article IX: Responsibilities of the Officers of the Church**

1. The Director/Moderator coordinates the activities performed by the Board and committees.

2. The Vice Moderator acts as the Moderator in his/her absence.

3. The Board Secretary keeps an accurate record of the Executive and Official Board

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proceedings.

4. The Financial Secretary receives records and deposits all offerings.

5. The Treasurer is responsible for paying all bills and maintaining records of distribution.

6. The Recording Secretary maintains accurate records dealing with the membership roster.

He/she serves on the Membership and Church Growth Committee.

### **Article X: The Ministry**

The Pastor is called to Tell The Story. He/she is responsible for the stated services of worship, administering the sacraments and giving general direction to the gatherings of the church. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. Policies and procedures for engaging the services of a pastor are set out in the by-laws of St. Paul's Church and are consistent with the policies and procedures of the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### **Article XI: Amending the Constitution**

This Constitution may be amended by the membership of St. Paul's at a regular or specially called Congregational Meeting. All amendments will be published and presented to the congregation at a regular or specially called Congregational Meeting and voted upon at the next regular or specially called Congregational Meeting as long as two (2) months have expired between presentation of the amendment and the vote securing its passage. A two-thirds (67%) vote of a quorum present, is needed in favor of the amendment to secure its passage.

### **Article XII: Adoption**

The provisions of this constitution become effective when accepted and adopted by the membership and will supersede any and all constitution, articles, rules, or amendments previously adopted by this church.

**BY-LAWS OF  
ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,  
MADRID, IOWA**

**ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

1. Becoming a Member:

- A. Membership in this church is open to anyone who has been baptized, made confession of faith in Jesus Christ or has been confirmed. Our membership is open to all persons who accept the obligation of membership in the church of Jesus Christ.
- B. Confirmation classes are offered to Junior-Senior High youth of the parish and community. Curriculum is approved by the Christian Education Committee.
- C. Orientation content is at the discretion of the Pastor and/or members of the Diaconate. All persons will attend an orientation who are:
  - considering membership
  - wishing to renew their vows or reaffirm their faith
  - wishing to transfer their membership into the local church from a different denomination or faith claim

2. Members, affiliate members, and friends of this church are persons who embrace its Purpose and Mission and accept its Covenant of Faith. We strive to do the will of God by:

- A. Attending worship faithfully and partaking in Communion
- B. Participating in the life and fellowship of the church
- C. Supporting the work and outreach of the church through the contribution of time, talents, financial resources, and prayers
- D. Inviting neighbors, family, and friends to join with us in fellowship
- E. Having membership in St. Paul's United Church of Christ is available to all who have expressed that desire. Affiliate members are persons whose UCC membership remains elsewhere while they reside in the Madrid area. Friends are those who strive toward the goals stated above.

3. Voting Privileges, as well as the ability to serve as an officer on any board or committee, are reserved for full and affiliate members. Full membership may be attained through attendance at a membership orientation class and by one or more of the following means:

- A. Letter of Transfer from another church

- B. Reaffirmation of Faith
- C. Confession of Faith and Baptism
- D. Confirmation of Christian Faith

4. Full and affiliate members make a commitment to the church through the Reception of New Members Liturgy.

5. Transfers:

- A. Any member, upon written request to the Pastor or Church Membership and Growth Committee, may be granted a letter of transfer, or may be released from membership.
- B. The Recording Secretary issues the appropriate letter of release.

6. Inactive and non-resident members:

- A. Members who have permanently changed their residence to distant communities are urged by the Official Board to obtain letters of transfer to the church of their choice or become affiliate members.
- B. During the first quarter of each year, the Membership and Church Growth Committee and the Financial Secretary review the membership rolls of the church and bring appropriate recommendations to the Board at its April Meeting. Review of the membership roll reflects consideration of the membership requirements as stated above in 2, A - E.  
A member, who after a period of two years has not observed the intent of those, requirements, may, at the recommendation of the Membership and Church Growth Committee and by a vote of the Official Board, be placed on the inactive list.
- C. Pastor, Board Members, Committee Members, and Church Members are encouraged to visit with inactive members.
- D. Absent members desiring to maintain their membership in this church are expected to contribute annually to its support.
- E. Special consideration is given to individual circumstances.

## **ARTICLE II: GOVERNING BODY**

The Executive Officers and committee chairpersons or their designee attend all official board meetings. For St. Paul's Church program to be meaningful and successful, it is necessary that every committee be represented at each meeting.

1. DIRECTOR/MODERATOR coordinates the activities of the Board and committees and serves a maximum two-year term.

- A. Presides at the official meetings of the church.
- B. Serves as chairperson of the Official Board
- C. Is signatory along with the chairperson of the Trustees when acquiring a loan for the repair, maintenance, or capital improvement of the church property.

2. VICE MODERATOR serves a maximum two-year term.

- A. Acts as director/moderator in the absence of the moderator.
- B. Ensures all standing committees are meeting and functioning as described herein
- C. Has the power to call a meeting of any and all standing committees and boards when deemed necessary

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- D. Serves on the Annual Membership Review Committee.
  - E. Is encouraged to succeed moderator
3. BOARD SECRETARY serves a two-year term
- A. Maintains the comprehensive record of church activities
  - B. Copies and collates all submitted reports for the Annual Meeting
  - C. Posts the minutes in the Narthex upon approval of the Board
4. FINANCIAL SECRETARY serves a two-year term
- A. Receives, records, and deposits all monies (fees, offerings, donations, etc.)
  - B. Keeps accurate record of pledge accounts and distributes quarterly statements
  - C. Serves on the annual Membership Review Committee and is an ex-officio member of Finance and Mission
  - D. Sends a written thank you or acknowledgement on behalf of the congregation
5. TREASURER serves a two-year term
- A. Pays all bills in a timely manner
  - B. Submits monthly reports to the Official Board
  - C. Maintains General and Designated Accounts
  - D. Pays Special Assessments upon the direction of the Board
  - E. Maintains an accurate record of accounts and records disbursements
  - F. Reconciles records monthly
6. RECORDING SECRETARY serves a two-year term
- A. Maintains accurate records to include name and dates of membership, baptism, marriages, child dedications, confirmations, membership transfers/removals
  - B. Serves on the Membership and Review Committee

### **ARTICLE III: PASTOR**

The Pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ is the spiritual leader of the congregation. The Pastor is called by the church members whenever a vacancy occurs, holds office without limitation of time, and may be installed or recognized by the Governing Body when Pastor and church so desire.

The Pastor of St. Paul's is the officiant at all special services. The Pastor may issue an invitation to a guest pastor to participate in the worship service.

The general duties of the Pastor include the following:

- Preaches the Word and administers the rites and sacraments of the church
- Oversees the Christian education of the parish
- Responds to the pastoral care needs of the congregation
- Administers the activities of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees, and serves as Pastor to the people of this parish
- Is ex-officio advisor to all the committees and shall have the privilege of attending all committee meetings
- Is responsible, in conjunction with the Governing Body, for the oversight of the fiscal health of the church
- Represents the congregation in denominational, ecumenical and community settings
- Gives a report of the years' work at the Annual Meeting of the church

## **ARTICLE IV CALLING OR DISMISSAL OF A PASTOR**

Duties and Responsibilities for calling and dismissal of a pastor

### A. Official Board (using Conference guidelines)

1. Accepts a pastors resignation
2. Forms the Search Committee

### B. Search Committee

Upon notice of the resignation of the Pastor, the Official Board will appoint a Search Committee to work with the Iowa Conference staff in hiring another Pastor. The appointed committee shall have at least one member from: Finance and Mission, Diaconate, Pastor-Parish Relations and five members at large. Special consideration is given the elderly and the youth of the church in selecting these members. Pulpit supply during the search for a new Pastor is the responsibility of the Diaconate.

### C. Whenever St. Paul's plans to share with another congregation in the employment of a Pastor, it is the privilege and responsibility of the Governing bodies of the churches involved to establish a membership ratio of representation in the:

1. Process of calling a pastor
2. Maintenance of the parsonage or rental allowance
3. The Board appoints members of its body to sit on a Church Relations Committee. This committee yearly evaluates the relationship and makes appropriate recommendations to the respective church governing bodies concerning financial and program obligations.

## **ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES AND SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS**

All committees, elected or appointed, standing or temporary, are under the authority of the Official Board and ultimately the Congregation. No committee action which is contrary in letter or in spirit to the constitution of St. Paul's United Church of Christ will be recognized. Each committee elects a chairperson, co-chair, or designee to represent that committee at board meetings to keep the board informed of the activities of that committee and assists the committee in submitting any requests for board action. Committees are to maintain a comprehensive manual of their responsibilities and methodology including dated minutes of committee meetings.

### 1. Christian Education and Youth serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of three to five (3-5) members
- B. Promotes and facilitates religious education opportunities, i.e. Church school, confirmation classes, Vacation Bible School, UCC camps
- C. Plans, selects and implements curriculum with pastoral consultation
- D. Plans and guides all church related youth activities (Jr. - Sr. High)

### 2. Diaconate serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of six to eight (6-8) members preferably equal distribution of men and women (but not required)
- B. Assists the Pastor in preparing and administering communion, baptism and caring for those in need
- C. Assists in ministering to the spiritual welfare of the church
- D. Makes arrangements for pulpit supply, or conducts the services of the church in the absence of the Pastor
- E. Selects and recommends an Interim Pastor upon the completion of Pastors services
- F. Is involved in member orientation (See Article I -1B and C)



- G. Works closely with Worship Committee on related responsibilities
- H Interviews confirmands following class completion

3. Finance and Mission serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of four to six (4-6) members with Financial Secretary and Treasurer as ex-officio members
- B. Studies publications from Conference and educates the membership regarding missions
- C. Informs the congregation about the financial matters of the church
- D. Prepares proposed Annual Budget to be presented at the October Annual Meeting to include Pastors financial support
- E. Obtains people to conduct annual audit of the financial records
- F. Coordinates a pledge campaign when appropriate
- G. Maintains records with respect to the Memorial requests (Use of any monies not used for requested memorials will be determined by the Official Board)

4. Lay Life and Work serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of at least six (6) members
- B. Plans for activities using the Kitchen/Fellowship area
- C. Works with church members/friends to prepare and fulfill plans
- D. Maintains kitchen and keeps it supplied for church related activities

5. Membership and Church Growth serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of four (4) members, two of which are Vice Moderator and Recording Secretary
- B. Assists the Pastor in planning programs to welcome newcomers into our community and invites them into our church family
- C. Participates in membership reviews See Article I Section 6 B
- D. Works with Pastor to contact inactive members

6. Nominating serves a two year term

- A. Consists of four people (2 new to replace 2 retiring each year)
- B. Provides a complete list of nominees for church offices and committees, special appointments and delegates, consulting with the pastor regarding nominees for Pastor/Parish Committee on or before September 1st of each year
- C. Presents a slate of nominations to the Official Board after all nominees have agreed to serve. The slate will be posted two weeks prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- D. Submits to the Official Board names of persons to fill unexpired terms
- E. Fills committee vacancies throughout the year

7. Pastor-Parish Relations serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year

- A. Consists of three to five (3-5) members
- B. Supports Pastor and listens to his/her needs
- C. Provides communication link between Pastor and Congregation
- D. Is a trusted confidant
- E. Relays issues to Pastor

- F. Promotes healthy relationships between Pastor and Congregation
  - G. Organizes annual review of the Church ministries
    - 1. Review committee consists of the following: Search Committee member (for two years after a new Pastor has been called), Moderator, Vice Moderator, a member of the Diaconate, Pastor/Parish Relations, Christian Education and Youth plus a member-at-large, (one not serving on any of the previous named committees)
    - 2. Reports results to the Board thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting; a deviation from this timeline is acceptable when a new Pastor is called.
8. Trustees Committee serves a 2- year term with at least two members remaining each year
- A. Consists of five to six (5-6) members
  - B. Holds in trust all properties of the church
  - C. Sees that same is cared for properly (insurance, boiler and other inspections and pest control)
  - D. Arranges for personnel to maintain buildings and grounds
9. Worship serves a 2-year term with at least two members remaining each year
- A. Consists of three to five (3-5) members
  - B. Provides/invites programs to enhance the worship
  - C. Prepares sanctuary for worship services and seasonal decorating (includes paraments, candles, greeters, and bulletins)
  - D. Maintains Bibles, hymnals, musical instruments, robes, and marquee
  - E. Coordinates the music program
  - F. Is responsible for altar flowers
  - G. Works closely with Diaconate on related responsibilities
10. Association and Conference Delegate
- A. Serves as a member-at-large on the Official Board. Membership elects one alternate delegate and may appoint one youth representative
  - B. Acts as official delegate to the Association and Conference
  - C. Attends all Central Association meetings as a voting delegate
  - D. Attends the Annual Meeting of the Conference as a voting delegate
  - E. Reports to the Congregation and to the Official Board all pertinent information from the Association and Conference
  - F. Provides for discussion of Conference agenda items before the Annual Meeting of the Conference and for the Association agenda items when needed
  - G. Represents the congregation at ecclesiastical councils, ordinations, and installations in the Association (The Boards and congregants have the authority to suggest voting by the representative)
  - H. Reports monthly to Board and submits a written report at the Annual Meeting
11. Historian
- A. Collects news articles and pictures representing the life and activities of members and friends of St. Paul's family
  - B. Organizes scrapbook as historical memorabilia
12. Madrid Home Communities Representatives

- A. Act as official delegates and representatives of St. Paul's members and friends at the annual and other meetings of the Madrid Home Communities
- B. Act as a liaison between members living at MHC and the MHC board

#### **ARTICLE VI: GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITIES AND CHURCH EQUIPMENT**

These guidelines are intended to assist members and friends with information as one prepares and conducts activities in a manner that brings honor to God.

- A. Community groups must receive Official Board approval to use the building.
- B. Individuals may use the downstairs fellowship room and kitchen for personal special events. Except for wedding ceremonies/rehearsals and for funerals, all hosts and guests are expected to remain in the downstairs area unless prior approval is obtained.
- C. All usage dates must be cleared with the Pastor.
- D. The Financial Secretary will be in charge of deposits and fees collected.
- E. The Trustees must be notified at least three (3) days in advance to provide for heating and cooling needs.
- F. Notify the church custodian of social events at least two (2) weeks ahead.
- G. Make arrangements at least three (3) days in advance with Lay Life and Work Chairperson or Trustees Chairperson to have building unlocked/locked.
- H. All food, coffee, punch, ice, paper products, printed bulletins, flowers will be provided by requestor except for funeral lunches.
- I. No smoking, alcohol (except for communion), or animals (except service animals & blessing of the animals ceremony) will be allowed anywhere on church property.
- J. No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary.
- K. No standing on pews or cushions; no tape, tacks, pins, nails, or staples on pews or walls is allowed.
- L. Candles must be obtained or approved by the Worship Committee.
- M. A trained church Sound Technician or designee must be notified if the sound system is to be used and must be present to handle that equipment.
- N. The copy machine and computer are for official church use only.
- O. Paper products in the kitchen are the property of Lay Life and Work Committee for official church use only.
- P. The floor is to be swept, kitchen cleaned, lights and fans turned off. (air conditioner and heat go off automatically)
- Q. Remove any leftover food or beverages from refrigerators.
- R. Remove all trash to designated area outside.
- S. Tables, chairs, other furnishings must be returned to original location and in condition found before the next church activity (i.e. Saturday evening before Sunday Church School and Worship service).
- T. Members of St. Paul's wishing to borrow items from the kitchen must make request from Lay Life and Work Chairperson; to borrow old tables/chairs the request must be made from the Trustee Chairperson.
- U. For events held at a location outside the church, it is suggested to use rental equipment.

#### **ARTICLE VII: RULES OF ORDER**

Roberts Rules of Order will be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and By-Laws.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: STANDING RULES**

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1. The Official Board keeps a record of rules adopted by the church and by the church board. At least two complete copies are maintained by the Board Secretary.

2. All committees and organizations likewise keep a record of their rules. At least two complete copies are maintained by the Board Secretary. The Secretary makes an additional copy of the pertinent rules for each newly appointed or elected committee member or executive officer. The secretary distributes updated policies and procedures at the planning meeting in January.

3. Finances:

A. The fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

B. The funds of St. Paul's are kept in two accounts to be used for separate purposes. The General Fund consists of a chart of accounts prepared by the Finance and Mission Committee with the approval of the Official Board. These accounts represent the daily operations of the church and pastoral support. Pledges and general collections are deposited to this account unless otherwise specified by donor. A budget is approved yearly at the annual meeting to regulate this account. As long as there are funds available, a committee may spend

up to their budgeted amount without further approval by the Board. Any expenditure above budget must be approved before the transaction occurs. In the

event of income above or below the budgeted amount, the Board may amend the budget accordingly. Budgeted amounts may be carried forward to the next fiscal year with Board approval.

C. Designated Funds consist of monies received from pledges, special offerings or gifts. The Board assigns categories as necessary with the assistance of the Finance and Mission Committee. The Official Board may combine, eliminate, or establish new accounts as well as transfer money from the general accounts for accruals.

D. It is the policy of St. Paul's to donate at least 25% of any fundraising monies to a charity outside the local church unless all the proceeds of such fundraisers are being applied to a special need of the congregation (roof, step repair, etc.). Such a fundraiser will require prior Board approval.

4. All organizations connected with the church and using its facilities are regarded as integral parts of the church and under its general jurisdiction.

5. No rule is valid which violates the letter or spirit of the constitution and by-laws of St. Paul's United Church of Christ.

#### **ARTICLE IX: AMENDING THE BY-LAWS**

These By-Laws may be amended by the membership of St. Paul's at a regular or specially called Congregational Meeting. All amendments are published and presented to the congregation at a regular or specially called Congregational Meeting and voted upon at the next regular or specially called Congregational Meeting as long as two (2) months have expired between presentation of the amendment and the vote securing its

passage. A two-thirds vote, of a quorum present, is needed in favor of the amendment to secure its passage.

#### **ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION**

In the event the members of the church vote for dissolution of the church, all real estate, properties, goods, monies and funds belonging to this church will, after payment of any indebtedness, bills and claims, become the property of the Central Association of the United Church of Christ, subject only to such limitations as may be provided in any bequests or other gifts making up the invested reserves of the church.

#### **ARTICLE XI: ADOPTION**

The provisions of these by-laws become effective with approval by congregational vote and supersede any and all articles, rules, by-laws or amendments previously adopted by this church.