

**BYLAWS OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST PARKER HILLTOP**  
**DRAFT 06/13/2017**

**Section 100.** These Bylaws, consistent with the Constitution of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop, further define and/or regulate the Church offices, ministerial offices, ministry teams, and membership. They also describe its free and voluntary relationship with the Southeastern Association and Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, and with the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, its Executive Council, and the Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries.

**Article I. The Pastoral Ministry**

**Section 101.** A Search Committee of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop will be formed to fill pastoral or other ministerial vacancies. This search committee slate will be formed by the Church Council and elected by the active members of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop at a special congregational meeting.

**Section 102.** In filling a vacancy or securing interim pastoral services during the period of a vacancy, the Search Committee will report the vacancy, and seek the counsel of the Conference or Association placement committee through the Conference Minister.

**Section 103.** The Search Committee will request that the Conference Minister secure relevant information about any candidate whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.

**Section 104.** The Search Committee will present a candidate it recommends to the congregation of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop, which will determine whether it wishes to call the candidate recommended. The presentation process of the candidate to the congregation will be determined by the Search committee, of which may include the presentation of a sermon by the candidate on the day of the vote. A minimum vote of 2/3rds of the congregation present at a duly called meeting will be required for approval of the candidate.

- Section 105.** The terms of the call will be presented to the Association, and the call format will be one agreed on by the Southeastern Association, Rocky Mountain Conference and the Search Committee. A copy of the call agreement will be given to the United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop's Council and the minister called.
- Section 106.** When an Ordained, Licensed, or Commissioned Minister accepts the call to United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop, the Minister and United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop will join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. If a minister who is not yet ordained, but who is qualified by the Association to accept a call, in fact accepts a call to the ministry of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop, the Minister and the Church will join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of ordination and installation.
- Section 107.** When a minister authorized by Southeastern Association, or United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop decides to terminate the pastoral relationship, notice of the decision is to be sent forthwith to the Conference Minister and the Association.
- Section 108.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop shall select a ministerial leader who has active ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ, or has privilege of call in the UCC, or is a minister with active standing with their ecumenical partner, the Disciples of Christ.
- Section 109.** If serious issues or divisive conflicts arise between the members of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop and its ministerial leadership, the Council and/or Pastor Parish Team will seek the assistance of the Southeastern Association or Conference Minister.
- Section 110.** Should the Southeastern Association and/or Conference Minister have reason to question the fitness for ministry of any of the pastors of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop, every effort will be made to cooperate fully in the investigation, to remain in covenant with all parties, and to provide appropriate leadership and nurture for the congregation during and after the fitness review.

**Section 111.** The Senior Pastor and any Associate Pastors of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop must have or obtain active ministerial standing in the Southeastern Association and be duly installed by the Association. United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop strongly encourages and expects its clergy leadership to participate in the greater work of the Association, Rocky Mountain Conference, the national UCC, and ecumenical ministries.

**Section 112.** Ministers of the Church shall be able to have information about who has pledged their financial support for the Church in any given year, and will be informed of any comments on the pledging documents that affect a member's standing in the Church or spiritual health. The ministers shall not request information from the Financial Secretary or any giver as to the dollar amount of the pledge.

**Section 113.** The Church Secretary will not open sealed pledge envelopes, but will put them in a safe place for the Financial Secretary to collect. All individual pledge information shall be confidential and not subject to disclosure to any other Church member.

## **Article II. The Church Council**

**Section 200.** The Council of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop is its primary governing body, accountable directly to the membership.

**Section 201.** The Church Council shall consist of five (5) to Ten (10) voting members, which shall include the Moderator and Vice Moderator. To serve on Church Council, a person must have been an active member of the church for a full year prior to the time of the Council election. To be considered for Vice-Moderator, a person must have served on Council for a minimum of a full year at the time of the Council election, and be vetted by the Nominating Team. To be considered for Moderator, a person must have served on Council for a minimum of two full years at the time of the Council election, and be vetted by the Nominating Team.

**Section 201a.** Church Council terms shall be three (3) years. However, the term may be extended for currently-serving Vice Moderators and Moderators to finish out their full terms, and for Vice Moderator, this may include a following full term as Moderator.

A person must have at least one year off before being nominated to serve on Council again.

**Section 202.** Persons wishing to be Council members and/ or Church Officers shall first be interviewed and vetted by the “Nominating Team” (NT).

**Section 203.** Vacancies may be filled by appointment by the Council until the next scheduled meeting of the Congregation.

**Section 204.** The Church Pastor will have voice, but no vote at Council meetings. The Pastor may bring items to the attention of Council, and may veto any vote that violates the freedom of the pulpit, violates the core values of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop as expressed in “The Ordained Minister’s Code” and the “Local Congregation in Relation to its Pastor” (Attached), or the Terms of Call of the Pastor.

**Section 205.** The Council will meet monthly or more often, as needed, and no less than 7 times each year. Unless previously announced, Council meetings will take place in the Church. A quorum will consist of one more person than half of its voting members. Action may be taken by the Council in a meeting, in the event a quorum is not present, subject to quorum approval at the next called meeting. Electronic voting will be permitted.

**Section 206.** The Council’s work will include: reviewing, modifying and approving the budget of the Church; setting goals for the congregation; reviewing recommendations of the Ministry Teams and approving all actions; reviewing the work of all Teams; approving new initiatives of Teams, and taking such action as it deems necessary to promote the mission of the Church.

**Section 207.** The Council shall, from time to time, convene additional Ministry Teams to assist in attaining its goals. It will specify the purpose of these Teams and oversee their work. Each ministry team shall have a Council liaison assigned, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or

by approval of Council. The Council liaison will be a voting member and may or may not serve as the leader of the ministry team as the team decides.

**Section 208.** The Church Council shall be responsible for hiring staff employees of the church, setting and revising the terms of compensation, and general oversight of all staff employees. The Pastor (Senior Minister and Head of Staff) will be responsible for the day-to-day supervision of church staff employees. Where such employees work directly with the Pastor, the Church Council will strongly weigh the views of the Pastor when performing this oversight function. Specific duties, responsibilities and review of the church staff employees may be delineated in a job description approved by the Church Council.

**Section 209.** The financial records of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop shall be reviewed internally every two (2) years at the direction of the Financial Responsibility Team. A review team shall be appointed by the Council. Every five (5) years a professional external review of all financial accounts shall be conducted.

**Section 210.** The Council shall report on its work to the Congregation at least monthly through the posting of the minutes, except those minutes of Executive Sessions, which shall remain confidential, unrecorded, and unpublished.

**Section 211.** Any member of Church Council or the Pastor of the Church may call for an Executive Council Session. The sole business of the session will be the item presented in the call for the session. All members of Council who are present and the Pastor must agree that the session should be closed, confidential, and unrecorded. Reasonable efforts shall be made to give notice to all Council members and the Pastor of the meeting time and place, if possible, at least 24 hours in advance.

**Section 212.** A petition filed within the church body for the removal of a Council member or Officer of the Church or church member/attendee will be handled collaboratively. Said petition may initially be directed to Council or to the Pastor, or directly to either the Pastor Parish Team or to the Standing Response Team. (See section 301 and following for procedure). In situations where resolution is not

reached using this process, Council will make the final decision, by majority vote as to how to proceed.

### **Article III. Ministry Teams**

**Section 300.** A Pastor-Parish Team shall exist as a vehicle to promote and maintain open and healthy relationships between the Pastor and the congregation in which confidentiality and trust is the foundation for constructive and caring communication. The members of the team shall consist of: the Pastor, plus three persons, selected jointly by the Pastor and the Moderator from the active membership of the congregation. New members of the team will be approved by Council. The term of the team service shall be three years, renewable for one term. The terms of office shall be staggered as the team shall decide. The leader of the Pastor-Parish Team shall serve as the liaison to Council should one of the other team members not be actively serving on Council.

**Section 301.** A Standing Response Team (SRT) shall exist to work collaboratively with the Council and the Pastor in situations related to the possible removal of a member/attende of the church, an Officer of the church, or a member of the Council. If an issue is brought directly to the SRT, the leader of the SRT shall immediately contact the Pastor and the highest-ranking Officer of Council not directly involved in the complaint.

**Section 301a.** The Standing Response Team shall consist of three members, one who has been a former member of the Council, one from the Pastor Parish Team, and one who has been an active member of the church for at least two years and has served on at least one ministry team. Prospective members shall be interviewed and vetted by the Nominating Team (NT) and then appointed by the Council. The term of the members shall be three years, renewable for one term. The initial terms of office shall be staggered as the team shall decide. The church shall provide an annual training session for the team. The team may add to it active church members

with special skills for the duration of a specific response. Such persons will first be approved by Council. The work of the Team will be semi-confidential, their work being shared only with the Council, the Pastor, the Conference Minister (if called in for needed support or intervention), and the person or persons directly involved in the situation.

**Section 302.** Nominating Team. The purpose of the team is to interview, vet, and present to Council the candidates needed to fill open Council, Church Officer, and Standing Response Team positions.

**Section 302 a.** The Nominating Team will consist of either three or five persons, including a former Council member and others who have been members of the church for at least three years prior to the start of their term. The team members will be selected by and asked to serve by the Council for a period of three years, renewable for one term. The initial terms of office shall be staggered as the team shall decide. The church will vote on the members of the team at an announced and duly convened Congregational Meeting.

**Section 302b.** The tasks of the Nominating Team are:

1. To recruit members for Council and for the various Church Officer positions;
2. To vet persons who have expressed an interest in filling Church Council and/or Church Officer positions; and
3. To fill vacancies on Church Council or Church Officer positions until the next Congregational meeting; and,
4. To interview and select the members of the SRT.

**Section 303.** Ministry Teams may be created at the suggestion of Council and/or the Pastor to carry out specific ministries of the Church. The terms of service, size of the team, and quorum/voting rights will be determined by the team. Teams shall have a Council liaison unless as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or with approval of Council. Ministry teams will determine their creative projects and functions with the oversight of the Pastor and/or Council.

## Article IV. Organizational Structure

**Section 400.** The United Church of Christ seeks to be broadly inclusive and representative in its organizational structure, with accountability resting as much as possible in the entire congregation along with its partners in authorizing ministry the Southeastern Association or Rocky Mountain Conference. The organizational structure shall be represented by a mix of gender or other demographic characteristic of United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop's congregation.

**Section 401.** The Pastor's service may be terminated by a 2/3 vote of the active members of the congregation. If a minister's active ministerial standing is withdrawn for any reason, such loss of active ministerial standing, if not restored, shall be grounds for dismissal as minister in the Church.

**Section 402.** The Council will be responsible for coordinating congregational review and response to proposals and actions of the national, regional, and local settings of the United Church of Christ.

**Section 403.** The bylaws will be reviewed every two years. The review will be conducted by a team consisting of two or more current Council members, at least one active congregation member, and the Pastor. Any time the Council determines that the bylaws need to be amended, a team with the above composition is to be formed to write and submit the amendments to the Council for consideration. Amendments favorably received by the Council are to be published on the website, and hard copies then submitted to the congregation for a 30-day review and comment period. The review and comment period is to be announced from the pulpit and published on the website. The Council may act upon the amendment(s) following the comment and review period. A simple majority vote of the Council is required. The actions will be reported to the congregation.

## Article V. Congregational Meetings, Quorum, and Voting

**Section 500.** There are two (2) categories of congregational meetings.

### **Section 500a. The Annual Congregational Meeting**

This will be held in January each year, directly following the worship service. **The Annual report will be posted on the Church website, and hard copies made available to the membership two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. An additional hard copy shall be retained in the Church Office.**

**The Annual Report** shall include the following:

Agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting

Pastor's Report

Moderator's Report

Clerk's Report

Treasurer's Report

Financial Secretary's Report

Presentation of Slate of New Council Members

Presentation of Slate of Church Officers

Ministry Teams Report

**The business to be conducted at the Annual Congregational Meeting** will include, but not be limited to: adoption of the new Budget, Receipt of the Report of the Nominating Committee, and election of Church Council members and Church Officers.

### **Section 500b. Special Congregational Meetings**

Special Congregational Meetings may also be called by either the Moderator or by the Pastor with written (email) notice to the Council and the active membership two (2) weeks prior to the meeting, **or as soon as possible if a two-week notice is not possible.**

The Agenda for the public session shall be limited to the stated reason for the special congregational meeting.

**Section 501.** The quorum for the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be 50% of the average annual adult worship attendance for the prior year, exclusive of special and holiday worship services. A quorum will not be required for Special Congregational Meetings unless a vote will be taken, in which case the quorum shall be 50% of the average

annual adult worship attendance for the prior year, exclusive of special and holiday worship services.

**Section 502.** The method of voting shall be determined by a motion, which must be seconded (if not brought by Council or a ministry team), and passed by majority vote of the active members present. Written absentee voting is permitted; proxy voting is not permitted.

**Section 503.** For all other meetings where votes will be taken, including during ministry team meetings, a quorum will be achieved at one person more than half the active members of the body.

**Section 504.** Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution of the Church or in the Bylaws of the Church, a majority vote of those present will be required to carry a vote. Where acclamation cannot be reached in congregational meetings, in Council meetings, and in ministry team meetings in voting, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be used to resolve motions and voting.

## **VI. Covenantal Relationships**

**Section 600.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop is an Open and Affirming Church as that term is used within the denomination.

**Section 601.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop is a UCC Safe Church as that term is used within the denomination.

**Section 602.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop is an Accessible to All Church as that term is used in the denomination.

**Section 603.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop will carry a general liability insurance policy with the UCC National Insurance Board, with limits and terms no less than in the previous calendar year.

**Section 604.** United Church of Christ Parker Hilltop is a progressive Church within the Christian faith. We revere scripture as our most sacred resource for understanding: our historical faith, our relationship with God as a Church, our call from Jesus to act in all things with compassion and justice, and our living relationship with God's Holy Spirit. We construe scripture historically, sacramentally, and metaphorically, rather than literally so as to support all human and other life, to celebrate the love of God for all

God's children, and to extend the Good News of Jesus Christ to all persons without exception. We are a non-creedal Church; we affirm the responsibility of every member to make this faith their own reality in Worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.

The goal of coordinating the organization of the Local Church with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ is to strengthen our covenantal partnerships. May we humbly seek to follow where Christ leads, and to do so as companions on the journey.