**BYLAWS**

**OF THE**

**NORWALK CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**(Approved November 2012)**

(Still need one more vote for Charitable Bequest Policy)

**ARTICLE I.**

**OFFICERS OF THE BOARD AND CONGREGATION**

A. Election and Term of Office

1. The congregation at its annual meeting shall elect for terms of one (1) year the following officers:

a) Chairperson of the Board, who shall serve as Chairperson of the Congregation.

b) Vice-chairperson of the Board, who also shall service as Vice-chairperson of the Congregation.

c) Secretary of the Board, who also shall serve as Secretary of the Congregation.

d) Treasurer of the Board, who also shall serve as Treasurer of the Congregation;

e) Financial Secretary to receive the moneys and pledges and to record the same.

B. Qualifications

1. Officers must be members of the congregation. Upon election the officers shall become full voting members of the Board.

2. Officers must be active in the congregation’s life and give evidence of seeking to grow in their own understanding and practice of Christian life. Such evidence would include the following:

a) Attendance at worship services and stated meetings of the congregation.

b) Show a willingness to fulfill assignments in behalf of the congregation.

C. Responsibilities

1. The Chairperson shall preside at all stated and special called meetings of the congregation, Official Board and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of chairperson.

2. The Vice-chairperson shall serve to support the Chairperson, preside in his/her absence at meetings of the congregation, Official Board and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of Vice-chairperson.

3. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and Official Board and provide for these minutes to be reviewed and approved by their respective bodies.

4. The Treasurer shall pay all accounts of the congregation as authorized by the budget or special action of the Official Board when such items are not in the budget, provide accurate records of all expenditures, make regular written monthly reports to the Official Board, provide for an annual report of both income and expenditures for the Official Board and the Congregation.

5. The Financial Secretary will record all giving to the church and provide year-end statements for charitable giving. The Financial Secretary, while maintaining confidentiality, shall help the Stewardship and Finance committee identify trends in giving.

D. Non-Discrimination

1. Officers of the Board and/or Congregation will be elected without regard to sex, race, age, disability, national origin, or color.

**ARTICLE II.**

**OFFICIAL BOARD**

A. Membership

1. Membership of the Official Board shall be composed of the five (5) elected officers, three (3) at-large members, one (1) Trustee the Past Chair of the Board, one (1) youth representative and the chairpersons of the departments.

2. The Minister(s) of the Congregation shall serve as ~~a~~ ex-officio member(s), without vote, of the Official Board.

B. Election and Term of Office

1. All elected Board Members are elected for a term of one (1) year.

C. Authority

1. The Official Board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in the constitution or otherwise delegated to it by the Congregation.

2. In keeping with traditions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the ultimate authority of the Congregation shall rest with the Congregation. All organizations within the Congregation shall be responsible to and report regularly to the Official Board and through it annually to the Congregation.

3. The Official Board shall concern itself primarily with policy rather than administration matters, taking into full account the responsibility of the Congregation to the total nurture, witness and mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the needs of the immediate community in which the members of the Congregation live.

4. All business meetings of the Official Board shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Parliamentary Procedures.

5. Nine (9) members present shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present shall be needed to pass motions.

D. Responsibilities

1. The Official Board shall conduct its affairs in harmony with the constitution and the bylaws of the Congregation.

2. The Official Board shall be responsible for overseeing the business affairs of the Congregation and providing for the planning, coordination, resourcing, evaluation and implementation of the work and activities of the Congregation.

3. The Official Board shall establish departments and/or committees related to the basic characteristics of the Congregation and church.

a) The Chairperson of the Official Board shall appoint the chairperson of each standing department from the membership of the Congregation at large with the exception of those otherwise defined by these bylaws.

b) The chairperson of each standing department shall name the members of the respective department with the exception of those otherwise defined by these bylaws.

4. The Official Board shall establish, when necessary, a pulpit committee for the purpose of securing a minister for the Congregation. Membership and responsibilities of the pulpit committee shall be described in Article III.B.1 of the Bylaws.

5. The Official Board shall outline for the minister(s) those goals expected of him/her. This is not meant to imply giving instruction on how to accomplish these objectives.

6. The Official Board shall establish other committees as needed for the conduct of its work.

7. The Official Board shall receive monthly written or oral reports from its departments and committees and from other organizations within the Congregation. The chairpersons of the departments, if unable to attend the Official Board meeting, should submit a written report the Sunday prior to the board meeting.

8. The Official Board shall receive the proposed annual budget of the Congregation from the Stewardship and Finance Department and recommend its approval or approval with amendment to the Congregation at its annual meeting. Subsequent over-expenditure or requests for additional funds from organizations within the Congregation shall be approved or disapproved by the Official Board.

9. The Official Board shall recommend to the Congregation the calling of the minister(s).

10. The Official Board shall require an audit of the Treasurer’s books annually or upon call of the official board, whichever is more frequent and upon a change of Treasurer. The audit shall be due within two (2) months of the end of the fiscal year, and shall be reported to the Board.

11. An officer may be designated an “Emeritus” by the Board, but would retain no voting privileges on the Board.

12. If a Trustee, at-large board member or Officer is unable to complete his/her term of service the Official Board will direct the Nominating Committee to present the name of a replacement to fulfill the remainder of the term.

**ARTICLE III.**

**MINISTER(S)**

A. Responsibilities

1. The Senior Minister of the Congregation shall be the chief administrator of the Congregation, and in cooperation with the Associate Minister and Chairperson of the board and the Official Board, encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the congregation in compliance with the Congregation’s constitution and the bylaws and the policies and procedures of the Congregation and the Official Board.

2. The minister(s) shall give special attention to the training of the Congregation’s leaders.

3. The minister(s) shall be ex officio member(s), without vote, of all boards, committees, departments, commissions, task groups and constituency groups of the Congregation.

4. The minister(s) shall be responsible for the church records of membership, transfer and baptism.

B. Selection

The minister(s) shall be chosen by the Congregation as hereinafter described:

1. A Pulpit Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson and approved by the Official Board. It shall be selected of qualified members of the Congregation as defined in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation.

2. The Pulpit Committee shall recommend a prospective minister to the Official Board.

3. The Official Board, at a stated meeting, with ten days written notice, may approve the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee by at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board present. Upon approval, the Official Board shall recommend calling on the prospective minister to the Congregation.

4. The Congregation at a stated or called meeting may approve the recommendation of the Official Board by at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting.

5. Upon approval of the Congregation, a call shall be extended to the prospective minister by the Official Board, in behalf of the Congregation.

C. Terms of Call

1. An agreement of call setting forth the salary to be paid to the minister and other conditions of the call shall be provided to the minister, with a copy filed in the church office, with the chairperson of the Personnel Department, and with the Regional Office.

2. The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated upon sixty (60) days notice, unless the agreement of call states otherwise.

D. Resignation

1. Voluntary resignation of a minister shall be submitted to the Board in writing, after consultation with the Chairperson of the Board.

2. Involuntary resignation of a minister shall be dealt with confidentially between the minister, the Chairperson of the Board, the Personnel Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee and may include consultation with a Regional Minister of the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest. The final decision on this matter shall be vested with the Official Board.

**ARTICLE IV.**

**TRUSTEES**

The Congregation, at its Annual Meeting, shall elect Trustees for terms of three (3) years and at the rate needed to keep their number at five (5).

A. Qualifications

The qualifications for Trustees shall be the same as described for the Officers of the Board and Congregation in Article I.B. of the Bylaws and Article IV of the Articles of Incorporation.

B. Responsibilities

1. Trustees shall hold title to the property of the Congregation and act as legal agents for all related matters at the direction of the Official Board. They shall also supervise all maintenance and insurance of the property of the Congregation.

2. It shall be the responsibility of each Trustee who is elected to the Official Board to attend each meeting of the Board in observance of a personal commitment to do the Lord’s work. Two Trustees serve on the Official Board: the Chair of the Property Department and one additional Trustee selected from the elected Trustees.

**ARTICLE V.**

**DEPARTMENTS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

The church program shall be administered through eleven (11) departments and one (1) standing committee. The eleven departments shall be as follows: Membership/Evangelism, Christian Education, Worship, Stewardship and Finance, Property, Outreach, Memorial/Wills & Bequests, Pastoral Relations, Pastoral Partners, Personnel and Youth. The standing committee shall be: Nominating.

1. The Departments will be responsible to the Board.
2. Each Department shall be obligated to report to the Board at each of the Board’s regular meetings.
3. Each Department shall prepare an annual budget request to be submitted to the Stewardship and Finance Department for consideration in the annual church budget.

4. All department chairpersons are to be named by the Chairperson of the Board with the approval of the Board, with the exception of the Trustees, who will elect their own chairperson.

5. Each department chairperson will have the option to select an on-going planning committee or assign short term tasks to willing congregational members.

A. Membership/ Evangelism Department

1. Oversee the welcoming of visitors and orientation of new members.

2. Evaluate congregational hospitality and work to make Norwalk

Christian Church a warm and welcoming congregation.

3. Plan and administer fellowship events, including the fellowship time following worship services.

4. Develop and promote multiple forms of communication to promote participation in congregational life.

B. Christian Education Department

1. Supervise the Church Sunday School and other Christian education programs.

C. Worship Department

It shall be the purpose of the Worship Department to promote and develop the devotional and prayer life of the church. It shall be the responsibility of the Department to:

1. Plan and analyze regular worship services.

2. Plan special religious services.

3. Work cooperatively with the music director

4. Provide devotional materials

5. Oversee supplies and resources needed for worship

6. Recruit and coordinate Worship Leaders and Diaconate (all participants of the congregational life of the church are eligible to serve as worship leaders and diaconate):

Worship Leaders are to be responsible for facilitating worship. Their duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Prepare the sanctuary and supporting materials for worship services.
2. Modeling hospitality for the congregation in welcoming visitors.

c) Assist the pastor in leading worship and presiding at the Lord’s Table during communion.

Members of the Diaconate are to be responsible for servant ministries. Their duties shall include, but not be limted to:

1. Preparing and serving communion
2. Collecting the offering (if the offering plate is passed)
3. Oversee supplies for communion
4. Clean up communion supplies following worship

D. Stewardship and Finance Department

1. Prepare the church’s annual budget in cooperation with all departments to be presented and approved by the Official Board.

2. Encourage giving to support the annual budget of the church through an every member canvass or by other means.

3. Establish adequate bond coverage through Trustees for those persons handling church moneys.

4. Promote stewardship and stewardship education within the congregation

E. Property Department

1. Qualifications of members

a) Each Trustee shall serve as a member of the Property Department.

2. Responsibilities

a) Supervise the church building, church property and all general equipment, including care, repair, decoration protection and grounds upkeep.

b) Supervise the purchase and installation of all new equipment.

c) Review all requests for use of the church building or equipment, including permission or refusal to use same.

d) Maintain adequate insurance coverage, including but not limited to: officer, director and other personnel liability coverage and property coverage on buildings, equipment, and any other church property.

e) Update policies regarding the plans and use of church and equipment, subject to approval of Official Board.

f) Employ and promote responsible stewardship of natural resources by improving energy efficiency, reducing waste, and employing sustainable practices.

F. Pastoral Relations Department

1. Pastoral Relations Department (PRD) shall consist of 6 members, one of which shall be the chair.. For continuity within PRD, at least two will have served the previous year. Within the PRD, three members will be designated as a subcommittee to serve as liaisons for the Senior Minister and the remaining three designated as liaisons for the Associate Minister. This committee will be responsible to the Board, and shall maintain the confidentiality of information presented at meetings.

2. The responsibilities of the department shall include, but not be limited to:

a) Serve as liaisons in maintaining agreeable relationships between members of the congregation and the ministers.

b) Provide support to the ministers and help define the ministers’ roles to the congregation. This is based on the ministers’ priorities which the committee may help evaluate.

c) Encourage prayerful support of the ministers and congregation.

d) Assist in mediating any conflicts with or between ministers.

G. Outreach Department

1. It shall be the purpose of this department to create and foster a world vision within the church and its auxiliary organizations and to lead in planning and administering the program of local and world outreach and social involvement.

2. It shall be the responsibility of the department to:

a) Plan and promote a definite program of missionary education in every department of the church.

b) Recommend the church’s annual goal and percentage of Disciple Mission Fund giving.

c) Enlist support for missions and social action causes; care for local and general mission and outreach needs not otherwise provided for.

d) Sponsor interdenominational activities and projects of social action.

e) Promote General Assemblies, conferences, worships and retreats.

f) Maintain records of all missionary giving and action in the church.

g) Administer the disbursement of budgeted outreach funds.

H. Memorial / Wills and Bequests Department

1. It shall be the purpose of the Memorial/Wills and Bequests Department to establish and maintain a procedure for the orderly and proper disposition of cash funds or property which are received as memorials, bequests or other gifts.

2. It shall be the responsibility of the department to:

a) Counsel family (donor) as to appropriate gift.

b) Assist in purchase if desired.

c) Maintain accurate public records of all memorial, bequests and gifts.

d) Write notes of appreciation to family (donor).

e) Regularly publicize to the congregation the location of and revisions to this record of memorials.

f) Maintain an approved list of various items suitable for memorials in accordance with the needs of the church.

g) Secure all memorials in accordance with the policy outlined by the Official Board as regards to memorials, bequests, and gifts.

3. Audit and Reporting

a) The fund shall be audited annually as designated by the Stewardship and Finance Department.

b) A written financial report shall be made annually to the congregation. It shall include new gifts to the fund, growth of assets, income and distribution of income, information about how gifts may be made to the fund.

4. Terms and Officers

1. The Memorial/Wills and Bequests Department shall consist of a chairperson, Chair of the Official Board, Treasurer of the Church, representative from the Trustees, and an At‑large member.

(1) The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Official Board for a three year term.

(2) The Chair of the Official Board shall serve as a part of his/her regular duties as Board Chair.

(3) The Treasurer of the church shall serve as part of his/her regular duties as Treasurer.

(4) A representative from the Trustees shall be selected by the Trustees and confirmed by the Official Board on a yearly basis.

(5) An at-large member shall be agreed upon by the Official Board and the Chair of the Department for a three year term.

**Charitable Bequest Policy**

1. Preamble

a) Norwalk Christian Church of Norwalk, Iowa, a local congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is a fellowship of believers in Christ dedicated to promoting the love of God and neighbor among the peoples of earth. In order to help sustain that mission in the future, the following policy for charitable bequests has been developed.

2. Purpose

a) The purpose of this policy is to establish a pre-determined basis and procedure for the disposition of funds or other property which is received by this congregation as a bequest or as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

3. Administration and Disposal of Designated Funds

a) All funds received as the result of a specific bequest or the beneficiary of a life insurance policy will be designated as a bequest. Such funds will be disposed of under the provisions stated in said policy or testator’s will, provided the terms and conditions of any such endowment or bequest are in agreement with the ideals expressed in the Preamble of this policy.

4. Disposals of Undesignated Funds

a) If the designated purpose for which the bequest was made has already been achieved, or funds are received as undesignated bequests, such moneys will be disposed of in the following manner:

b) Seventy-five percent (75%) of all bequests, special gifts, or life insurance policy benefits shall be invested in the name of Norwalk Christian Church of Norwalk, Iowa, by the Memorial/Wills and Bequests Department. These investments shall be considered semi-permanent in nature and none of the principal shall be used for any other purpose.

c) The interest income received on these investments shall be divided as follows:

(1) Forty percent (40%) for improvement and/or debt retirement, recommendation for use by church Board of Trustees and subsequent approval by Official Board.

(2) Thirty percent (30%) for an educational fund to be administered by the Memorial/Wills and Bequests Department. The Department will give priority status to education grants to individuals pursuing a field of ministry.

(3) Twenty percent (20%) for use by the general fund of the church, to be transferred annually

(4) Ten percent (10%) for Outreach, to be transferred annually.

d) The remaining 25% of all bequests, special gifts, or life insurance policy benefits shall be divided by the same manner as received interest in Paragraph c), (1) through (4).

5. Exceptions to stated distribution policy:

a) In the event the congregation should experience a time of severe strain and stress, such as drastic economic downturn, damaging demographic trends, relocation of the congregation, or other unpredictable crisis, it may choose to amend the distribution policy for a limited time to create a bridge to a more secure financial condition in the foreseeable future.

b) Exceptions to the stated distribution policy may be accomplished one year at a time under the following conditions:

(1) Action must be recommended by the Official Board after careful study of the alternative.

(2) A written proposal for the amended distribution must be given to the congregation in advance of its decision in accordance with the Congregational Bylaws.

(3) The action must be approved by 75% of the congregation voting at two successive meetings.

6. Amendment of Policies

a) Amendments to this Charitable Bequest Policy may be made only as follows:

(1) Action must be recommended by the Official Board after careful study of the alternative.

(2) A written proposal for the amended distribution must be given to the congregation in advance of its decision in accordance with the Congregational Bylaws.

(3) The action must be approved by 75% of the congregation voting at two successive meetings.

I. Youth Department

1. The purpose of this department will be to encourage and facilitate the growth, education and fellowship of all youth.

2. It will be the responsibility of this department to:

a) Coordinate with Christian Education regarding activities, study materials, and other programs for youth.

b) Promote Christianity and Christian values among youth.

c) Plan and direct Christian-oriented social and special events for youth.

d) Work with parents and community to provide Christian leadership.

J. Personnel Department

1. The purpose of the Personnel Department is to provide guidance and oversight for all church employees.
2. It shall be the responsibility of this department to:

a) Develop the employment policies of the Church, for approval by the Board.

b) Develop and periodically update job descriptions for all Church employees, and review the appropriate job description with each employee.

c) Conduct annual performance evaluations for all non-pastoral church employees.

d) Review employee salaries and benefits and make proposals to the Stewardship and Finance Department.

e) Make recommendations to the board for hiring any new or additional non-pastoral staff.

f) Keep all necessary non-pastoral positions of the church filled as needed.

g) Facilitate a pastoral evaluation at a minimum of every three years or at the request of the board for all ministerial staff.

3. The Personnel Department will consist of four (4) members of the congregation. Each member will be appointed by the Board Chairperson and approved by the Board for a four (4) year term.

K. Pastoral Partner Department

1. The purpose of this department is to provide visitation and pastoral support to all members of the congregation. The department will consist of members of the congregation who feel called to provide this type of ministry. Members will serve on a voluntary basis, and the number of members and term of service will be as needed to maintain a viable program.

2. It shall be the responsibility of this department to:

1. Develop and implement a Pastoral Partners Program to provide a structured program of visitation and pastoral support to all members of the congregation.
2. Seek and train members of the congregation to enable them to provide the initial program
3. Continue to seek and train a sufficient number of new members to replace members who end their participation in the program.
4. Hold regular meetings as needed to continue training and support of participating members.
5. Coordinate with and support the ministers in the pastoral care of the congregation.

3. The Coordinator of the Pastoral Partners Program will be selected by the Senior Minister to provide oversight, administration, and to report to the Board.

L. Nominating Committee

1. The chairperson of the Official Board shall appoint a nominating committee chairperson at the regular September meeting. This committee chairperson shall have approval of the Board. This committee shall consider the membership of the church with a view toward filling various vacancies among Officers, at-large board members a youth representative and Trustees, and toward proposing such additional names for these offices at a regular meeting of the Official Board, which may accept, reject, or amend the report as the majority rules and then bring its finding as a recommendation before the Annual Meeting of the congregation. This committee should function for the year of appointment only.

2. The Nominating Committee is instructed to present a list of nominees equal to the number of vacancies in elected positions. If any vacancy of an elected position occurs during the year the Nominating Committee shall propose a candidate for the vacant position to the Official Board.

**ARTICLE VI.**

**AMENDING BYLAWS**

A. These Bylaws may be altered or amended by a majority vote of members present at any annual meeting or special meeting of the congregation duly and legally called, providing a notice stating the nature of such contemplated amendment together with the time and place of said meeting, shall have been given not less than 14 days before said meeting by mailing copies of such notice to the members of the congregation at their last known address.

**ARTICLE VII.**

**SPECIAL MEETINGS**

A. Special meetings of the congregation shall be called by the chairperson, vice-chairperson or secretary upon request from the Official Board or upon request signed by one-third or more of the members of the congregation who are eligible to vote. Notice thereof shall be given in the same manner as for an Annual meeting, except that the call of a special meeting shall state the purpose thereof.

**ARTICLE VIII.**

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING PROCEDURE**

A. First order of business will be to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

B. Second order of business will be to elect the new Officers, at-large board members, Trustees, and youth representative.

C. Third order of business will be the discussion and approval/disapproval of proposed budget and consideration of projected church goals.

D. Other business.

E. For those members of the congregation who are unable to attend a congregational meeting where a vote is to be held, a provision for absentee ballots shall be made as follows:

1. When requested by a voting member of the congregation, a blank absentee ballot will be prepared detailing the items that are to be voted on at the meeting.

2. The ballot and return envelope shall be pre-numbered in a manner that will both protect the confidentiality of the voter and provide security against abuse of ballots.

3. The voting member shall complete and return the ballot in the return envelope.

4. Upon receipt, church staff shall indicate on the face of the envelope the date that the ballot was received.

5. The ballot shall only be opened by the appropriate officiating member of the congregational meeting. It shall be opened at the time all other ballots are tabulated.

6. The absentee ballots shall be destroyed with all other ballots at the conclusions of the vote tabulation.

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