

CONSTITUTION
OF
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(UCC) IN TRYON, NC

This Constitution was adopted by the Congregation at a special meeting on **add date adopted**. It replaces the Constitution adopted on January 14, 1959 and all subsequent amendments to that Constitution.

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ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church will be The Congregational Church (UCC) in Tryon, NC.

ARTICLE II. MISSION

The mission of this church will be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of worshipping and serving God. We are an open and affirming church. The Congregational Church of Tryon welcomes persons of all ages, races, social and economic circumstances, sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, abilities, and church backgrounds to participate in the life and ministry of our church.

ARTICLE III. GOVERNANCE

1. This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline.
2. 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 North Carolina. This church accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share the common aims and work of that body insofar as they do not conflict with our faith and covenant.

ARTICLE IV. DOCTRINE

This church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Each member will

have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith and covenant, therefore, are not tests of faith, but represent an expression of the spirit in which this church interprets the Word of God.

1. Faith: We place our trust in God, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love; and in Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior; and in the Holy Spirit, who renews, comforts, and inspires the people of God.
2. Covenant: We are united in striving to know the will of God (as taught in the Holy Scriptures) and in seeking to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We affirm that it is the mission of the whole Church, and therefore our mission, to proclaim the Gospel to all the world both in our words and through our deeds. While we are committed to worshipping God together, we are also united in our dedication to serving God through the increase of knowledge, the institution of justice, the blessings of peace, and the realization of human unity. As did our forebears, we acknowledge our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

The members of this church are all persons who are classified as either Active Members or Associate Members, as defined in the Bylaws. Each member will have the right to vote at meetings of the church.

ARTICLE VI. WORSHIP SERVICES

1. Regular Services: Service(s) of worship will be at specific hours each Sunday. In case of inclement weather, services may be cancelled by the Minister in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Board.

2. Holy Communion: Holy Communion, or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, will be celebrated not less than four times a year, and will be available at any time through the church's Minister(s). Holy Communion is open to everyone, regardless of age or church affiliation.
3. Other Services: Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer and/or study may be held as determined by the Minister.

ARTICLE VII. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the congregation will be held each year on a date to be specified by the Governing Board. Written or electronic notice thereof will be distributed no less than two Sundays in advance of the meeting. At this meeting, the congregation will receive and act upon the annual reports of the Minister(s) and the Governing Board, and ministry teams and committees of the church as may be requested to report. Any matters of importance to the church may be presented and voted upon at this meeting. Voting will be by written ballot (in person or electronically) if five or more qualified voters so request.
2. Special Meetings: Special meetings will be called by the Minister, by the Governing Board, or upon the written request of 25 members of the church. The nature of the business to be transacted will be stated in a written and/or electronic notice to the members, which will be distributed no less than two Sundays prior to the meeting.
3. Quorum: A quorum will consist of 25% of the Active and Associate members of the church.
4. Official Year: The official year of the church will begin July first. All members of the Governing Board will assume their duties immediately upon their election and will continue in office until their successors are elected.
5. Voting Methods
 - a. Normally each member must be present in order to cast his or her vote.

- b. The Governing Board may authorize the use of a signed absentee ballot or an online ballot for motions under consideration at a specific meeting, with the understanding that the exact wording of such a motion will be made available in advance of the vote. If there is a subsequent amendment or modification of that motion, the final tally will be delayed for two weeks, during which time those persons who have previously submitted absentee ballots will have an opportunity to submit a new absentee ballot on the modified motion.
6. Parliamentary Procedure: *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* will govern all meetings of this church.

ARTICLE VIII. MINISTER(S)

1. It is here recognized and affirmed, to the glory of God, that the ministry of this church includes both laity and clergy. All who are part of the life of this church are ministers, called to use the gifts which God has given them in service and praise.
2. There will be one or more persons within the church who, through their Ordination and Call, serve the church as Ministers (denoted with a capital M). Such ordained clergy who serve as Ministers of this church will be called by the church, in consultation with the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ, after it has sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Ministers may carry the title Minister, Associate Minister, Assistant Minister, or some other, as defined in the call.
3. Ordained clergy who serve as Ministers of this church will share responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the church. This will include seeking to enlist persons as followers of Christ, visiting the sick, the bereaved, and other members of the church, preaching the gospel, teaching the Christian faith and life, administering the sacraments, leading public worship, and administering the activities of the church in cooperation with the Governing Board and the various teams and committees.
4. The Minister(s) will be called using the process as defined in the United Church of Christ Search and Call document. The candidate will be presented to the Congregation at a special

meeting called for that purpose; acceptance by at least a two-thirds majority of those voting is required.

ARTICLE IX. GOVERNING BOARD

1. Election: The church shall have a seven-member Governing Board, consisting of the Minister and six lay members of the church.
2. Governing Board Structure: Each year, the Governing Board will organize and elect its own officers, consisting of the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Treasurer, the Clerk, and two members at large.
3. Officers of the Corporation: As an incorporated body in accordance with the provisions of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the congregation designates the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Treasurer, and the Clerk of the Governing Board as the officers of the Corporation.

ARTICLE X. GOVERNING STRUCTURE

1. Structure: The governing body of this church will be the congregation, assembled in annual or special congregational meetings. It alone will have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real property.
2. The Governing Board
 - a) The Governing Board will be the governing body of the church when a congregational meeting is not in session.
 - b) The Governing Board will have full arbitration powers between and among all teams, committees, and Ministers.
 - c) The Governing Board will have oversight into teams and committees responsible to it for matters assigned to them.
 - d) The Minister will have oversight over church staff, teams, and committees as a whole.

ARTICLE XI. FINANCE

1. Offerings: The Church shall emphasize the values and principles of Christian Stewardship as it seeks the financial support of its life and mission. All members of the church shall be given opportunities to make annual declarations of their intent to give to the church. Special offerings or pledges for specific causes may be scheduled by the Governing Board and/or the congregation.

2. Permanent Funds
 - a) The Finance Committee, under the direction of and with the approval of the Governing Board, shall meet at least four (4) times per year and shall provide advice (which will include a desired percentage of return on investment) and recordkeeping support to the designated investment company for the Church's investment accounts and permanent funds. The quarterly review should include a review of the current holdings in each portfolio as well as information from an independent investment rating company. The designated investment company must notify the Finance Committee of any major changes to any of the fund management or the fund strategy.
 - b) As used in this article, the term "corpus" is defined as the principal sum or capital of the fund, the fair market value of which will fluctuate.
 - c) As used in this article, the "available return" is defined as the portion of a permanent fund that may be appropriated for expenditure by the Governing Board under the provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 36E, or future codifications of North Carolina law, considering the following relevant factors:
 - 1) The duration and preservation of the permanent fund;
 - 2) The purposes of the church and the permanent fund;
 - 3) General economic conditions;
 - 4) The possible effect of inflation or deflation;
 - 5) The expected total return from income and the appreciation of fund corpus;
 - 6) Other resources of the Church; and
 - 7) The investment policy of the Church.

3. The annual report must include the income/disbursements to/from these permanent funds.

4. The General Endowment Fund
 - a) This fund shall receive all legacies not specifically designated by the donors to some other purpose for furthering the work of the church. To this fund shall be added endowment contributions and gifts in the form of memorials, which are not specifically designated for a special purpose.
 - b) The available return of this fund may be used to supplement the current expenses of the church, by action of the Governing Board. A portion of the corpus in excess of the available return may be withdrawn by the Governing Board from the fund for an unforeseen condition or contingency, provided that the portion of the corpus so withdrawn shall not exceed 10% of the corpus value as of December 31 of the prior year. The withdrawal must be reported (orally and written) to the congregation within two weeks of the withdrawal. The fund shall not be accessed in this manner more than once in any given calendar year in aggregate.
 - c) Except as otherwise provided in this article, the corpus of the fund other than portions allocated to the available return may be used only for a purpose recommended by the Governing Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at its annual meeting or a special meeting.
 - d) The Governing Board shall have responsibility for the investment of this fund and may establish policies for such investment. Presentation of the needs of the church to persons contemplating the writing of wills and making capital gifts may be made on suitable occasions.

5. The Building Endowment Fund
 - a) The purpose of this fund is to provide for future capital replacement/improvements and/or expansion of existing physical facilities. This fund is not intended to be a building maintenance fund.
 - b) The fund shall receive all legacies and gifts specifically designated by the donors to the fund. The total return from income and the appreciation of the corpus of the fund shall be reinvested in the corpus. The corpus and the available return of the fund may be used

only for a purpose recommended by the Governing Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at its annual meeting or a special meeting.

- c) The Governing Board shall have responsibility for the investment of this fund and may establish policies for such investment. Presentation of the needs of the church to persons contemplating the writing of wills and making capital gifts may be made on suitable occasions.

6. The Outreach Endowment Fund

- a) The purpose of this fund is to supplement the regular budget to providing extraordinary mission (local, national, or worldwide) projects as approved by the Governing Board and the congregation.
- b) The fund shall receive all legacies and gifts specifically designated by the donors to the fund.
- c) The available return of this fund may be used to supplement the current benevolence budget of the church, by action of the Governing Board. The corpus of the fund other than portions to allocated available return may be used only for a purpose recommended by the Governing Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at its annual meeting or a special meeting.
- d) The Governing Board shall have responsibility for the investment of this fund and may establish policies for such investment. Presentation of the needs of the church to persons contemplating the writing of wills and making capital gifts may be made on suitable occasions.

7. The Scholarship/Youth Endowment Fund

- a) The purpose of this fund is to supplement the budget providing youth programs and scholarships as approved by the Governing Board and the congregation.
- b) The fund shall receive all legacies and gifts specially designated by the donors to the fund.
- c) The available return of this fund may be used by action of the Governing Board for scholarships and youth programs/projects. The corpus of the fund other than portions allocated to the available return may be used only for a purpose recommended by the

Governing Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at its annual meeting or a special meeting.

- d) The Governing Board shall have responsibility for the investment of this fund and may establish policies for such investment. Presentation of the needs of the church to persons contemplating the writing of wills and making capital gifts may be made on suitable occasions.
8. Other funds may be established by the Governing Board as required, in accordance with such standards which it may propose or which may be donated to the Church and accepted by the Governing Board.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote at any annual or special meeting, provided that a notice specifying the time of meeting and substance of the proposed amendment will have been given to the congregation in writing or electronically at least two Sundays prior to such meeting.