

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF THE  
TEHACHAPI COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

(Revised January, 2018)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The official name of this church shall be the TEHACHAPI COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in Tehachapi, California; however, we will commonly be called, TEHACHAPI COMMUNITY CHURCH, UCC.

ARTICLE II: CHARACTER

SECTION 1. The purpose of this church is to build and equip a fellowship of people seeking to grow spiritually and worship God; to help one another in the Christian life; to support the work of and to be of service to God and humankind in our local and global communities.

SECTION 2. The control of the policies of this church shall be vested in its members. While this church is bound to no ecclesiastical authority, it seeks to covenant with the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share the aims and work of the church universal.

SECTION 3. The faith of this church rests, not in a creed or special set of beliefs, but in God as the creator and sustainer of all life. We endeavor to live in accordance with our Mission Statement which follows:

“We are people on a continuing journey within the mystery of God, seeking justice in our neighborhood and world, relying on the presence of Christ’s Spirit to show us when and where we are to serve.”

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. There shall be two classes of members, regular and affiliated. Requests for membership shall be received by the Pastor and the Care, Hospitality, and Growth Ministries Team.

SECTION 2. Regular members are those persons who have publicly entered into covenant with this church by confession of Christian faith, by presentation of a satisfactory letter of transfer from another church, or by renewal of a covenant; and who will endeavor to support this church, to share in its organized work, and to be faithful to the essentials of Christian living.

SECTION 3. Affiliated members are those persons who, being members of another church but wishing to leave their letter in their home church, have publicly entered into a covenant with this church. Contact with their home church will be made to ascertain their standing in that church. Their membership is automatically dropped when they leave the community or voluntarily disassociate themselves from this church.

SECTION 4. A person may become an “active participant” upon request to the Pastor and the Pastor’s approval of their request, if they have actively supported the church for at least six months by sharing in its work, and by endeavoring to be faithful to the essentials of Christian living.

SECTION 5. Both regular and affiliated members, as well as active participants, are entitled to the full privileges of membership, including the right to vote and hold office.

SECTION 6. Any membership may be terminated upon request for a letter of transfer to another church, or upon request for release from membership.

SECTION 7. After a period of one year, a member whose address has been unknown, has neither communicated with the church, attended its services, nor contributed to its support may, upon recommendation of the Leadership Team and approval of the church body at the Annual Meeting, be transferred to the retired list. If after passage of a second year, the member’s address is still untraced or the member has not indicated a desire to renew active connections with the church, the member’s name may be dropped from membership upon recommendation of the Leadership Team and approval of the church body at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 8. Should a member’s actions become detrimental to the church, the church, on recommendation of the Leadership Team,\* may censure such member, suspend, or terminate membership by a two-thirds vote at a duly called meeting of the church body; but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ.

SECTION 9. Covenant:

The church covenant is: “We covenant with God and with one another to walk together on our faith journey. We accept diversity and support the spiritual growth of individuals and the church community through the love of God, prayer, study, and practice. We endeavor to be loyal to this fellowship, to help one another in the Christian life, to support the work and to be of service to God in our local and global communities.”

#### ARTICLE IV: THE PASTOR

SECTION 1. The Pastor’s responsibility is the spiritual welfare of the church and all whom it serves. The Pastor’s primary purpose is to help people gain a closer relationship with God and be concerned with anything which separates people from God. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Leadership Team and all standing boards and committees. The Pastor shall be responsible for developing cooperative relations with the Conference and Association of which the church is a member.

SECTION 2. The Pastor shall be called by action taken at any regular or specially called meeting of the church. The employment contract, negotiated by the Search Committee, shall be approved by the church body, and signed by both the Pastor and the officers of the church.

\*Scriptural guidelines include: Matthew 18:15-18; II Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1-2.

SECTION 3. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved upon the resignation of the Pastor, or written request by the church. Such action must be initiated by the Pastoral/Staff Relations Committee and approved by two-thirds of the members present at a special meeting of the church body. Dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the church shall be according to terms of the aforementioned contract, unless mutually agreed otherwise.

SECTION 4. An **Interim Pastor** may be called by the Pastoral Staff/Relations Committee. The Interim Pastor shall have all responsibilities of an installed Pastor and will attend meetings of the wider United Church of Christ when possible.

#### ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

SECTION 1. **All officers and leaders of Ministry Teams** shall be elected by the church body at the Annual Meeting for terms as provided in the following sections. They shall hold office until their successors have been elected. The Leadership Team shall have the authority to fill by appointment all temporary vacancies of any church office.

SECTION 2. The **Church Moderator** shall be the lay spokesperson of the church, chairperson of all business meetings of the church body, chairperson of the Church Leadership Team, and an ex officio member of all Ministry Teams and ad hoc committees or “flex teams.” The Moderator will appoint short-term ad hoc committees or “flex teams” to serve in these areas: Stewardship, Budget, and Nominating. The Moderator shall be elected for a term of two (2) years.

SECTION 3. An **Assistant Moderator** may be elected. The Assistant Moderator shall be a member of the Leadership Team and an ex-officio member of all Teams and committees. The Assistant Moderator shall observe & assist the Moderator throughout the year and shall act and preside in the absence of the Moderator. The Assistant Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year, and may be re-elected. The Assistant Moderator may be elected Moderator.

SECTION 4. The **Clerk** shall be a member of the Leadership Team and will keep a record of the proceedings of the church and of the Church Leadership Team. The **Clerk** shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports; notify all persons elected to offices and committees; give legal notices of all meetings when such notices are necessary; conduct all correspondence so far as this is not otherwise provided for, and perform such other duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of a clerk or secretary of an assembly. The Clerk shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be reelected. The **Clerk**, working with the **Church Secretary**, shall keep a register with addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal, and a record of baptisms and marriages. The **Pastor** shall issue letters of transfer when requested, notifying the churches to which they are addressed and shall notify the **Clerk** of this action.

SECTION 5. The **Treasurer** shall keep a record of income and expenses as required by the Church, disperse funds under the supervision of the Board of Trustees, and be custodian of all financial documents not under the purview of the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Leadership Team, a member of the Budget Team, an ex officio member of the

Stewardship Team, and an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer keeps track of the financial state of affairs of the church, and reports monthly to the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be reelected.

SECTION 6. The **Financial Secretary** shall collect monies from the offerings and other sources, with the help of trained Counters, deposit monies in the bank as soon as possible, keep records by name of offerings and other sources of monies received, submit quarterly reports to the donors, and give the Treasurer copies of all deposits with specifics as to their intended usage. The Financial Secretary shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be reelected.

## ARTICLE VI: MINISTRY AND STANDING TEAMS

SECTION 1. The purpose of the eight Ministry and Standing Teams shall be to establish regular channels through which all phases of living out our faith in community may be done effectively. Leaders of all teams shall be elected as provided in ARTICLE V, Section 1. A member **may fill** may serve as a team member on one (1) or more teams simultaneously. Team members shall be self-selected or recruited by the chairperson, preferably for terms of two (2) years and may serve again at will. Each ministry team shall have between three (3) and nine (9) members. Team members will be commissioned by approval at each Annual Meeting. A team leader may serve for two (2) years and may be reelected. The leader of each Team will serve on the **Church Leadership Team**. Team meetings are held as needed, but it is recommended that Teams meet at least quarterly. Email and telephone "meetings" may be utilized as long as the consensus of the full Team membership is considered in making decisions. Monthly reporting of the Team's activities or decisions (for communication purposes) are included within the Leadership Team Meeting.

SECTION 2. The **Worship and Music Ministry Team** shall cooperate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual interest of the Church and community.

They will serve with the Pastor and Music Leaders in seeking to provide meaningful worship experiences for the church – both on Sunday mornings and for other seasonal and supplemental worship events.

They will assist in the preparation and administration of the sacraments.

They will recruit, train, and support volunteers to lead worship including lay readers (liturgists), ushers, Communion servers, and acolytes.

SECTION 3. The **Education and Spiritual Growth Ministry Team** shall cooperate with the Pastor in creating, supervising and providing appropriate resources for the faith formation, education, and spiritual growth of children, youth and adults.

They will be responsible for the recruitment, training, and support of all leaders within its programs.

They will be responsible for all other matters in the development of opportunities for spiritual growth and faith formation throughout the church – including retreats, trips, workshops, and intergenerational events.

**SECTION 4.** The **Care, Hospitality and Growth Ministry Team** shall be responsible for the church community, providing compassionate care, fellowship/friendship, marketing and community outreach. They will welcome visitors, assimilate members, and assist the outreach and growth of the church. This team, led by a Team Leader, has three primary ministries: **Called to Care Ministry; Hospitality Ministry; and Growth Ministry.**

1. **Called to Care Ministry** will coordinate and support the compassionate care ministry of the church. They will also keep in contact with those in the church's worshipping community (members and non-members.) One person shall serve as the Designated Minister, responsible for scheduling meetings, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Care and Growth Team Leader. The Designated Minister for Called to Care Ministry, with the assistance of the Clerk, shall make an annual survey of the church membership roll and report their findings to the church Leadership Team who will submit recommendations regarding necessary revisions at the Annual Meeting. (Ref. Article III, Section 7.)
2. **Hospitality Ministry** will support fellowship events, such as coffee hours following worship services on Sunday, potluck suppers, receptions and fellowship activities. One person shall serve as the Designated Minister for Hospitality Ministry, responsible for scheduling meetings or events, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Care and Growth Team Leader.
3. **Growth Ministry** will promote the church's image in the community and invite people to worship, fellowship, and serve with us. They will also reach out to potential new members to make them feel welcome. One person shall serve as the Designated Minister for Growth Ministry, responsible for scheduling meetings, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Care and Growth Team Leader.

**SECTION 5.** The **Social Justice Ministry Team, led by a Team Leader**, shall be responsible for three primary ministries: **Environmental Ministry; Faith in Kern Ministry; and Open and Affirming Ministry.**

1. **Environmental Ministry** shall be responsible for environmental initiatives and activities of the church, including use of environmental resources and caring for creation. One person shall serve as the Designated Minister for Environmental Ministry, responsible for scheduling meetings, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Social Justice Team Leader. The Designated Minister will coordinate and communicate with the Trustees regarding environmental issues affecting the gardens and grounds of the church property.
2. **Faith in Kern Ministry** shall be responsible for researching issues and organizing community action initiatives to improve the lives of people living in Kern County.

One person shall serve as the Designated Minister for Faith in Kern Ministry, responsible for scheduling meetings, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Social Justice Team Leader.

3. **Open and Affirming Ministry** shall be responsible for initiatives in support of people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning (LGBTQ). One person shall serve as the Designated Minister for Open and Affirming Ministry, responsible for scheduling meetings, coordination, and serving as liaison to the Social Justice Team Leader.

**SECTION 6.** The **Community Service Ministry Team** shall be responsible for initiatives of service within our local community and related communication with the church.

This team shall be responsible for the benevolent giving of the church in support of local needs.

They shall be responsible for coordination with other churches and social agencies in the community.

They shall cooperate with the Education and Spiritual Growth Team in providing opportunities in which children and youth may also participate.

**SECTION 7.** The **Global Missions Team** shall be responsible for initiatives related to our global mission partners and related communication with the church.

This team shall be responsible for the benevolent giving of the church in support of Global Missions.

They shall be responsible for communication within the church and within the church's wider settings, including the Conference Global Ministries Committee.

They shall cooperate with the Education and Spiritual Growth Team in providing opportunities in which children and youth may also participate.

**SECTION 8.** The **Board of Trustees team** shall be responsible for maintaining facilities and administering the financial and legal affairs of the church.

They shall be responsible for the housekeeping, maintenance and improvement of grounds and buildings, including supervision of custodial staff.

They shall monitor the adopted budget during the year. No budget category may be exceeded except by majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

They shall arrange for an audit of the church accounts at least every three (3) years.

They shall not have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer real property without specific authorization by the church body.

SECTION 9. The **Personnel & Pastoral/Parish Ministry Team** shall consist of the Moderator and at least four (4) members elected for terms of three (3) years. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of this team. This team will participate in personnel decisions and shall review and maintain records of all contracts, job descriptions, salaries and other employment procedures and policies. The team shall ensure that employee evaluations are conducted in a timely manner and will review the pastor's salary annually and make its recommendation to the Budget Flex Team. The team will work with the Pastor to provide pulpit supply and will also be responsible for providing interim ministry. The Moderator serves as the authority who reviews and signs documents, such as contracts, employment agreements and evaluations, and serves as a liaison with the board of trustees and other relevant actors. Confidentiality shall be maintained as appropriate.

The Team Leader and Pastor shall appoint a Pastoral/Parish Relations Subcommittee which will support the pastor and foster communications between the pastor and the congregation. This subcommittee will meet at least quarterly.

## ARTICLE VII: THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM

SECTION 1. The **Church Leadership Team** shall be comprised of the Pastor (ex officio), the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator (if one is currently elected), the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the leaders of all eight Ministry and Standing Teams and the chairpersons of the following “flex” (ad hoc) teams: Stewardship (if standing), Budget (if standing), Fund Raising (if standing), and Search (if standing). In the absence of its leader, a ministry team should be represented by a delegated substitute.

SECTION 2. It shall be the function of the Church Leadership Team to visualize the entire task of the church, to advise the Pastor of the general direction of the church's activities, to cooperate with the Pastor in the formulation of a well-rounded program, and to correlate the major activities of the church as planned and administered by the Ministry Teams.

SECTION 3. The Church Leadership Team shall meet at least ten (10) times during each year. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator, the Pastor or by any three (3) members of the Church Leadership Team. In the absence of the Moderator and the Assistant Moderator, the Team Leader of the Board of Trustees or any member of the Leadership Team appointed by the Moderator for that purpose shall preside. A majority of the members of the Church Leadership Team shall constitute a quorum. All Leadership Team meetings are open. Non-team Leaders shall have voice, but not vote.

## ARTICLE VIII: FLEX (AD HOC) TEAMS

SECTION 1. There shall be a **Nominating Flex (Ad hoc) Team** appointed by the Moderator with the approval of the Church Leadership Team. The committee shall consist of two to three (2-3) members. The Pastor and the Moderator shall be ex officio members of the team. This team shall be responsible for presenting, at the Annual Meeting, an appropriate slate of candidates willing to serve as church officers and chairs of the ministry teams.

SECTION 2. There shall be a **Budget (Ad hoc) Team** whose duty shall be to recommend a budget for the coming year. The budget shall be approved by the church body at the Annual Meeting. The team shall consist of delegates from each team, the Treasurer, and any other interested member. Each Team will be invited to submit their annual budget requests for the budget team to consider. The Moderator shall be an ex officio member of the team.

SECTION 3. There shall be a **Stewardship Flex (Ad hoc) Team** consisting of a Trustee and at least one (1) other member appointed by the Moderator. This committee shall work with the Pastor to plan an effective Stewardship program. The Treasurer shall be an ex officio member of this committee.

SECTION 4. There shall be a **Fund Raising (Ad hoc) Team** whose duty shall be to plan fund raising events and seek to increase funding through various means, including grants, endowments and online giving. The team shall communicate and assist in coordinating fund raising events with other church teams. The team shall consist of 2-3 members, with the Moderator and Treasurer being ex officio members.

SECTION 5. There shall be a **Search Team (Ad hoc)** when a new Pastor is to be called. The Moderator will present team members for Leadership Team approval. The Search Ministry Team will consist of at least three (3) members. The team will be responsible for selecting a final pastoral candidate following Conference guidelines. The team will negotiate the terms and conditions of the pastoral employment contract using guidelines approved by the Leadership Team based on recommendations from the Board of Trustees.

SECTION 6. Flex (Ad Hoc) Teams: Church members are encouraged to form additional flex (ad hoc) teams as need or interest dictate. These teams may be short-term or long-term in nature. "Flex" teams are formed to accomplish a study, investigation, or well defined task. A flex team is recruited by a ministry team leader or is self-selected. If self-selected, then the team must be comprised of at least one member affiliated with the church. The self-selected flex team must present a proposal to the leadership team that includes a definition of the project, a funding plan, and a staffing plan.

## ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

SECTION 1. There shall be one stated meeting of the church body yearly (the Annual Meeting) during the month of January. The time, place and agenda shall be determined by the Church Leadership Team.

SECTION 2. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Moderator, the Church Leadership Team, or any ten (10) members of the church. The nature of the business to be transacted must be stated in the call, which must be made at least one (1) week in advance and announced from the pulpit.

SECTION 3. One third of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SECTION 4. All meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

## ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. These bylaws may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or properly called special meeting of the church body.

Revised:

June 1, 2003

February 22, 2004

January 13, 2008

February 27, 2009 - Policies attached

September 16, 2012

January 28, 2018

### POLICY #1

#### Tehachapi Community Congregational Church Policy Statement

#### Checking Accounts and fundraisers.

1. Church groups may not open separate checking accounts. All monies must go through the general church account.
2. Fundraisers for specific projects must be approved by Board of Trustees.
3. Funds raised for specific projects are to be deposited in the church treasury as designated funds.
4. Funds not expended for the specific project will revert to the general fund after a project is completed.
5. Funds not expended from the Designated Memorial Fund account by the end of one year from initiation will revert to the general fund and be expended by the Board of Trustees.

Policies 2-4 were adopted at the Council meeting of October 26, 2008. Policy 1 was updated and Policy 5 added at the Annual Meeting of January, 28, 2018.

### POLICY #2

Following the election of new officers, action will be taken at the Annual Meeting to appoint current signers on the banking accounts and safe deposit box. The minutes will reflect this action and changes will be made at the bank as soon as possible.

This policy was adopted at the Council meeting of November 23, 2008.