

Constitution

Bridgeport United Church of Christ

Article One NAME

The name of this church shall be Bridgeport United Church of Christ (UCC).

Article Two GOVERNMENT AND FELLOWSHIP

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. It is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body, but accepts the obligations and mutual counsel and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to share in its common aims and work.

Open and Affirming Covenant

As members of a Christian community of faith, Bridgeport United Church of Christ has been strengthened by its struggles to act within the spirit of that faith against the prejudices and injustices that prevail in much of society today. We have extended our spiritual horizons, opened our doors to welcome all who seek a church home, and put the Good News message that we preach into practice.

As one expression, Bridgeport UCC covenants to live as an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcoming people regardless of sexual or gender orientation into the full life, membership, leadership and employment of this church.

Bridgeport Church furthers covenants to seek to live as a multi-cultural, multi-racial, intergenerational community, continuing to break down the barriers of separation between communities based on race, sex, age, culture, language, class and other social differences, celebrating our diversity while affirming our unity in Jesus Christ.

Article Three DURATION

Bridgeport United Church of Christ, founded in 1998, was incorporated on September 16, 2001 and will remain in existence until the congregation votes to dissolve, pursuant to Article Ten of this Constitution.

Article Four MEMBERSHIP

Article Four - Section 1 Eligibility

Bridgeport UCC welcomes into membership all persons:

- who seek a church home and wish to extend their spiritual horizons;
- who propose to live in the way of love for God and neighbor as self, proclaimed by Jesus;
- and who commit to putting this Good News message into practice through our church's ministry.

Bridgeport UCC strongly encourages that adults not previously baptized consider their readiness for baptism when becoming new members.

Article Four - Section 2 Procedure for Receiving New Members

In dialogue with the pastor and church members, persons seeking membership shall seriously and prayerfully reflect upon their beliefs and dedication to the joys and responsibilities of church membership. At such time that each person's journey of seeking and faith leads her or him to embrace the commitment of membership in Bridgeport UCC, the person shall request that her or his name be recorded as a member. The congregation shall lovingly welcome the new member at a worship service.

Article Four - Section 3 Responsibilities

Each member of Bridgeport UCC is graced with the joys and responsibilities of church membership. Each person is a necessary part of the Body of Christ. When each part cares and participates for the whole, the Body is healthy. Each person's joys and responsibilities consist of:

- seeking individual and community spiritual growth through active participation in worship, small groups and other opportunities;
- prayers and action on behalf of other members and the wider community, and
- financial support.

Article Four - Section 4 Termination

Persons who no longer wish to be considered members of Bridgeport UCC may request that their names be removed from the membership roll. Their requests will be honored.

Members whose address has become unknown or members who have not participated or been in contact in any way with the church for one year, except members who are homebound or in nursing homes, shall be considered inactive. If no contact can be

established, the Governing Body may consider voting to remove those names from the membership roll.

After an invitation to address the Governing Body, the membership of a member who demonstrates an overt and/or harmful disregard for the people, mission and place of Bridgeport UCC may be terminated by a majority vote of the Governing Body. If the concerns are resolved at a later date, in a manner satisfactory to the Governing Body, membership may be restored.

Article Five ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

Article Five - Section 1 Officers

The officers of the church shall be:

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Past-Officer

The President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by the congregation for terms of two (2) years. Elections will be held at the end of odd years with terms starting in January of even years. In the event of the election of a new set of church officers, one of the outgoing officers will serve as Past-Officer for six (6) months to one (1) year. All church officers must be members of the church.

As needed, elections may be held at other times during the year to fill vacant positions. Election announcements shall be made during at least two regular Sunday services at least four (4) weeks before the congregational meeting to elect a replacement officer.

The officers may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in performing their duties, but they may not receive other compensation.

Article Five - Section 2 Pastor

The Pastor of Bridgeport United Church of Christ is the spiritual leader of the congregation. The Pastor shall be chosen by the church whenever a vacancy occurs, shall hold office without limitation of time, and may be installed or recognized by the Governing Body when Pastor and church so desire.

The general duties of the Pastor include the following:

- Shall preach the Word and administer the rites and sacraments of the Christian church;

- Shall, with church volunteers, oversee the Christian education of the parish;
- Shall respond to the pastoral care needs of the congregation;
- Shall offer weekly direction to the church staff, meet with and serve as a voting member of the Governing Body, and meet with other church bodies as requested and shall be kept advised of these bodies' activities;
- Shall be responsible, in conjunction with the Governing Body, for the oversight of the fiscal health of the church and the management of the church's physical facilities;
- Shall represent the congregation in denominational, ecumenical and community settings; and
- Shall make a report of the year's work at the Annual Meeting of the church.

The pastoral relationship may be dissolved either by the church or by the Pastor by written notice of such intention three months in advance. The calling or dismissal of a Pastor is to be done upon the recommendation of not less than two-thirds of the Governing Body, and shall require a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the church present at a meeting specifically called for that purpose.

Article Five - Section 3 **Governing Body**

Bridgeport UCC is a non-profit corporation and is governed by the Demitasse (a.k.a. the church council), which consists of the following:

- The Pastor (or Pastors)
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Members from the congregation
- Representatives from each operating church team

Membership on the Demitasse is open to all members of the congregation who choose to attend Governing Body meetings.

The President shall chair each meeting of the Demitasse or alternatively, on a quarterly basis, the church council may elect a Convener, who shall act as the Chairperson of the council for that quarter.

The Demitasse will seek to make decisions by consensus whenever possible. If that is not possible, the Convener will table the issue until the next regular meeting of the church council. At that time, a vote will be taken. Only members who have attended at least 70% of the regularly scheduled Demitasse meetings in the 12 months preceding the vote, as recorded in the meeting minutes, shall be eligible to vote.

The Convener, or her/his appointed substitute should she/he be unavailable, shall preside at Demitasse meetings. The duties of the Demitasse include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Shall determine general policies and give specific directions as it desires for the conduct and management of church activities;
- Shall have ultimate authority over all personnel issues, including but not limited to the hiring, terminating, disciplining, and reviewing, of all employees, excluding the pastor(s);
- Shall have the right to enter in and oversee leases, contracts, and other legal agreements as deemed necessary for the maintenance, welfare, and continuance of the church; but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer real property, without consent of the congregation giving specific authority;
- Shall prepare an annual budget, for adoption by majority vote of the congregation;
- Shall oversee the raising of funds, through an annual stewardship campaign and other means, and shall monitor and develop procedures for incoming funds;
- Shall provide for the maintenance, upkeep, and improvement of all church property;
- Shall monitor use of church facilities by outside groups;
- Shall monitor procedures for all incoming funds and provide prompt payment of all salaries and expenses;
- Shall disburse all monies bequeathed to the church, unless a use is specified by the decedent or their family;
- Shall monitor investment monies;
- Shall review the need for changes in this Constitution ;
- Shall take other action as needed to protect the health and welfare of the church; and
- Shall establish ad hoc groups as needed to accomplish tasks and responsibilities.

Article Five - Section 4 **Teams**

The mission of Bridgeport UCC shall be carried out by its members acting as individuals and as part of small groups. The Demitasse shall annually establish a system of teams and ad hoc task groups to carry out the church's mission, activities and business. All meetings are open to the congregation and minutes will be kept & distributed regularly. At a minimum these teams will encompass the following functions:

- Education;
- Worship;

- Justice and Witness;
- Community Life
- Stewardship;
- Personnel;
- Facilities;
- Administry

The Pastor-Church Relations Committee is an advisory committee. It does not act in an administrative or supervisory capacity, nor does it record minutes.

A majority of the members of all church teams shall be members of the church. Each team shall select its own leaders. A majority of team members present constitutes a quorum for meetings of the body. Team leaders are expected to serve for a term of at least one year and to attend the monthly meetings of the Demitasse.

Article Five - Section 5 **President**

The duties of the President shall include but are not limited to the following:

- ♦ Membership on Demitasse
- ♦ Develop agendas for Demitasse
- ♦ Convene and facilitate meetings
- ♦ Membership on the Administry Team
- ♦ Be the public voice of Bridgeport UCC with the pastor
- ♦ Represent the congregation to the conference and at conference meetings
- ♦ Be a visible presence within the congregation regarding the work of the church.
- ♦ Check in with the Teams on progress in accomplishing their annual goals, team membership, and assist with the coordination of work across the Teams.

Article Five - Section 6 **Secretary**

The duties of the Secretary shall include but are not limited to the following:

- Membership on Demitasse and Administry Team
- Shall keep an accurate record of all church proceedings;
- Shall keep a register of church membership;
- Shall keep a record of all baptisms;
- Shall issue letters of transfer;
- Shall make an annual report;
- Shall be the Statutory Agent;
- Shall be responsible for filing the necessary documents with the Oregon Secretary of State to maintain the church's status as a non-profit organization; and

- Shall be responsible to collect and safe keep official records and other important documents, which shall be accessible and open to inspection to all members of the church.

Article Five – Section 7 **Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be responsible, acting in conjunction with a Deposit Secretary who is appointed by the Governing Body, for receipt, deposit and disbursement of all funds paid into the church.

The following funds shall be kept in separate accounts:

1. Current Operating Funds - including all money received for the support of worship and the payment of current expenses. This fund shall be subject to the limits set forth in a duly approved budget, or as amended by a vote of the congregation;
2. Capital Campaign Fund.
3. Wellness Fund

The Treasurer shall attend Demitasse and Administry Team. The Treasurer shall submit a monthly written report to the Demitasse and a written annual report to the congregation summarizing all receipts and expenditures for the year. This report shall be subject to certification by an auditor, as specified in Article Five - Section 7.

Article Five - Section 8 **Auditor**

A CPA or other qualified independent auditor may be chosen annually by the treasurer with the approval of the Demitasse, to audit the accounts of the church. The auditor shall confer with the Treasurer as necessary, and will present an annual report of audit findings.

Article Five - Section 9 **Financial Secretary and Deposit Secretary**

The Financial Secretary of the church may be appointed annually by the Governing Body and shall keep a record of all funds given to the church by each donor and shall present a copy of such record to each donor quarterly. If the Governing Body does not appoint a Financial Secretary, the Treasurer shall act in this capacity.

A Deposit Secretary shall be appointed annually by the Governing Body and shall be responsible for counting all monies received by the church and depositing such money in the bank and other duties as assigned.

The Financial Secretary and Deposit Secretary shall attend Administry Team.

A report of such receipts shall be given each month to the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

Article Five – Section 10 **Past Officers**

The Past Officer will attend Administry Team meetings and attend Demitasse meetings as requested by the officers.

Article Six REPRESENTATIVES

The church shall be represented by delegates, appointed by the Governing Body in consultation with the Pastor, to meetings of the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Article Seven BUSINESS MEETINGS

Article Seven - Section 1 **Congregational Meetings**

The church shall hold at least one Congregational Meeting annually

- The Budget Meeting shall be held annually in January. The purpose of the meeting is to adopt the budget for the coming year and to receive annual reports from the previous year and to consider plans for the upcoming year.

At this meeting, any other business which would naturally come before such a meeting shall be transacted, including the election of officers every two years.

The date of all church meetings shall appear in the Bridgeport email update and weekly church bulletins not less than two weeks in advance.

Article Seven - Section 2 **Special Meetings**

Special business meetings of the Demitasse may be called by the Pastor or shall be called by the President upon written request of any ten members of the church, specifying the object thereof. Such notice shall be published in the Bridgeport email update and weekly church bulletins not less than two weeks in advance.

Article Seven - Section 3 **Quorum**

A congregational vote may only be taken with a quorum present. A quorum at any congregational meeting shall consist of 30% of Bridgeport's current membership. A majority vote of the quorum present shall ordinarily be decisive, unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.

Article Eight AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the quorum present and voting at a congregational meeting. The proposed change shall be publicly announced by letter or in the Bridgeport email update and weekly church bulletin at least two weeks before action is taken.

No change, however, shall be made concerning denominational affiliation except by three-quarters vote of all members of the church. Said proposed change shall be presented to the church in writing at a congregational meeting not less than one month before the time of proposed action. Such proposed change shall also be publicly announced at each worship service preceding such proposal.

Article Nine POLICY

The constitution, bylaws and policies of all church and church sponsored organizations shall be in agreement with, and subject to, the church constitution and policies as set forth by the Governing Body of the church or the membership insofar as these documents and actions are applicable.

Article Ten DISSOLUTION

In the event the members of the church shall vote for dissolution of the church, all real estate, properties, goods, monies and funds belonging to this church shall, after payment of any indebtedness, bills and claims, become the property of the Central Pacific Conference 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.

Adopted by vote of the congregation, September 16, 2001.