



CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

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***First Congregational Church of Stanton
Stanton, Michigan***

Established in 1874

REVISED: April 23, 2023

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STANTON ~ Constitution and Bylaws

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CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name by which this church is to be known in law is THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STANTON.

ARTICLE II - LOCATION

This church shall have its location and principal place of worship in the City of Stanton, County of Montcalm, and State of Michigan.

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The First Congregational Church of Stanton exists to glorify God through worship, righteous living, and service to Him and others. We may employ a pastor in order to help us grow in our faith and knowledge of God; to lead us in worship of God; to model for us a life of faith and righteousness; and to encourage us toward godly service to one another and within our community.

ARTICLE IV - DOCTRINE

Generally, we adhere to the confessional creeds of the historic church such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Westminster Confession. As Congregationalists, we respect the freedom of individuals to earnestly and prayerfully study the Scriptures and be led by God into sound understanding. We hold to the maxim: *In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity*. Our "essentials" include:

The Bible

- We believe the Bible is the 66 books of the Old and New Testament and is the authoritative Word of God for mankind.
- We believe the Bible has been written by men but inspired by God and preserved by Him throughout the centuries.
- We believe the Bible is foundational for informing us of everything we need for godliness, both as a church as well as individuals.
- We believe the Bible is holy and is the final authority on all matters it addresses.

God

- We believe in one holy God expressed in three persons: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit.
- We believe that God is the designer and creator of all things.
- We believe that God sovereignly reigns over all He has made and that He is providential over the affairs of mankind.
- We believe that God invites us into a meaningful, corporate, and personal relationship with Him and that He loves us as a perfect Father loves His children.

Jesus

- We believe that Jesus was both human and divine in nature and that this is a profound mystery.

- We believe that Jesus was born of Mary, a virgin, and that He was conceived in her by the power of God's Holy Spirit.
- We believe God the Son took on humanity in order to secure salvation for His brothers and sisters—the church.
- We believe that Jesus lived a sinless life, that He died as our substitute, that He was buried and rose again on the third day. We believe that He ascended into heaven where He is now and will remain until His imminent, triumphal, physical return.

Holy Spirit

- We believe the Holy Spirit indwells all who belong to God's family, the church.
- We believe the Holy Spirit is our guide for understanding truth.
- We believe the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to live obediently to God and to persevere in their faith.

Salvation

- We believe that salvation is a gift of God's grace and that it cannot be earned in any way.
- We believe that salvation describes the condition of those who are kept from God's judgment against unholiness.
- We believe that God's wrath was poured out on Jesus and that, through this, we receive forgiveness of sin and righteous standing in God's sight.

- We believe that Jesus' resurrection from the dead was the ultimate conquering of death, and that like Him, we too shall one day be resurrected to eternal life.

Church

- We believe the church is a worldwide body of believers in God, through faith in Jesus, indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- We believe the church is God's family and that every person is gifted and called to serve within that family in some capacity.
- We believe it is good and proper for local congregations of believers to unite around shared faith and understanding of God and His Word.

BYLAWS

(The terms “church” and “congregation” are used interchangeably in this document to refer to The First Congregational Church of Stanton/FCC.)

ARTICLE I - COVENANT

The covenant, by which this church exists as a distinct body and which every member accepts, is as follows:

“We are banded together as a Christian church to maintain the worship of God, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, to develop in one another a conscientiousness of our relations and duties to God and to each other and to inspire one another with love for truth, passion for righteousness, and enthusiasm for service. To this end we pledge our loyalty to Christ and covenant with each other to strive to express His spirit in our individual and corporate lives, to work together as a Christian community, and to submit ourselves to the government of this church--worshiping, giving, praying for its increase, its purity, its peace, and seeking in every way to make it a power for the building up of the Kingdom of God.”

ARTICLE II – POLITY

The government of this church is vested in its members who are in full standing and of legal age (*Article V - Membership, section 5, page 8*), and it is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. As an independent church, we recognize our right and privilege to perpetuate the heritage of Christian faith by: 1) formally endorsing

(i.e., licensing) gifted Bible teachers; or 2) extending formal recognition of ordination to those in gospel ministry who are called, qualified, and proven.

ARTICLE III – AFFILIATIONS

Although we may participate in denominational arrangements with other Christian churches or organizations, both formally and informally and for purposes such as fellowship or cooperative ministry, we do so only to the extent that affiliating partners honor the Holy Bible as the final authority of matters of faith, life, and truth. In addition, affiliations may be terminated when it is determined by the Church Council that such affiliations no longer correspond to the purposes of our church as expressed in our church covenant (*Article I - Covenant, page 6*).

ARTICLE IV – FAITH AND PRACTICE

As an outward expression of our inward faith and corresponding to the biblical examples and traditional practices of the historic Christian church, we celebrate the public, corporate observances of Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and Holy Matrimony. In addition, we seek to uphold the time-honored tradition of declaring God's truth through the preaching of the Scriptures along with regular study of the Bible and its doctrines; to display ongoing conformity to the character of Christ Jesus; and to make these truths known to others.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

1. Qualifications – The membership shall consist of those persons who have been baptized and have given public assent to the covenant of the church and have been publicly welcomed into its fellowship.

2. Reception – Prospective members shall meet with the Diaconate or its representative to affirm their Christian baptism and their willingness to give public assent to the covenant of the church. After a motion to receive these members is approved by the Diaconate, a public reception shall be held at any regular worship service.

3. Responsibilities – Full-standing membership presumes ongoing commitment to our church covenant (*Article I – Covenant, page 6*) and includes the following responsibilities:

- Loyalty to Christ
- Commitment to fellow members
- Involvement in the church’s ministries
- Cooperation with church government
- Regular corporate worship
- Faithful financial support
- Praying for our church’s purity and peace

4. Rights and Privileges - Under the laws of the state, only such members who have attained the age of eighteen years shall have the right to vote upon questions involving the acquisition and disposition of property, the expenditure of money, and the calling and dismissal of a pastor. These same rights and restrictions apply to all business matters that come before the church body whether collectively or in committee. In addition, these same members are those who are eligible to fill official capacities on boards and committees where church membership is required.

5. Membership Standing—Full standing shall be the presumed status of those members who faithfully fulfill the responsibilities listed above (*Article V – Membership, section 3, page 8*). Membership privileges and voting rights may be suspended for any members who, for twelve (12) or more consecutive months, have voluntarily withdrawn themselves from those membership responsibilities which are readily observable. Membership rolls, determination of standing, suspension, or reinstatement to full standing, is managed cooperatively by the Diaconate and Senior Pastor. Suspensions

and reinstatements shall be acknowledged in the meeting minutes of the Diaconate and shall be referred to the clerk for recording. While rights and privileges can and may be suspended apart from a member's consent, reinstatement cannot occur without the member's request. The Diaconate may elect to delay reinstatement pending the conclusion of weighty church business.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES

The officers shall be as follows:

- Minister
- Moderator
- Vice Moderator
- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Financial Secretary
- Resident Agent
- Historian

The boards shall be as follows:

- Church Council
- Diaconate
- Board of Trustees

The standing committees shall be as follows:

- Missionary
- Christian Education
- Auditing
- Gifts and Memorials
- Ministerial Support Committee
- Endowment
- Nominating

From time to time, other committees may be deemed advisable. The terms of officers and members of boards and committees shall become effective January 1 following the annual meeting.

OFFICERS

1. Minister – A minister shall be called or dismissed by a majority vote of the members in full standing who have attained the age of eighteen years and are present at a meeting for that purpose in accordance with *Article V - Membership, section 4*. The minister shall be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the church and to this end shall fulfill the following specific duties:

- a) To proclaim the Gospel, teach the scriptures, administer the sacraments, and have under his/her care all services of public worship.
- b) To be active in pastoral service to the families of First Congregational Church and surrounding community.
- c) To administrate the ministries of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees appointed by the church.
- d) To be an ex officio member of all boards and committees except when matters concerning the pastor are considered. The pastor shall have a voice but no vote.
- e) To provide leadership in consultation with the Board of Trustees for the hiring, supervision, and dismissal of any ministry staff (which may include but is NOT limited to the parish administrator/secretary, music director, youth/assistant pastor) and to make recommendations to the Trustees with regard to any remuneration for the staff.

2. Moderator – A Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church to serve for two years or until a successor is elected.

- a) Shall be considered the lay coordinator of the church and be an ex officio member of all boards and committees. He/She shall have voice but no vote in the affairs of the boards and committees, except where this document assigns official responsibilities on any committee.
- b) Shall preside over all quarterly and/or special meetings of the congregation and also serve as the chairperson of the Church Council.
- c) Shall be responsible for chairing the Ministerial Support Committee (*page 20*).
- d) The Moderator shall activate a Search Committee (*Church Council, item e, page 14*) when needed.
- e) Shall be responsible for organizing and directing the service of installation of a new minister.

3. Vice Moderator – A Vice Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church to serve for two years or until a successor is elected and shall, in the absence of or at the request of the Moderator, perform all the duties of that office assisting the Moderator in attending meetings and other duties assigned by the Moderator. The Vice Moderator shall convene a Nominating Committee in September of each year. Boards and Committees shall inform the Vice Moderator of those persons recommended to serve on the Nominating Committee, which are determined at their August meetings.

4. Clerk – A Clerk shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year or until a successor is elected:

- a) Shall keep a complete record, in a book provided for that purpose, of all the affairs of the church, including, but not limited to: memberships, baptisms, deaths, and marriages.
- b) Shall, in the event of no parish administrator or secretary, bring to the notice of the church all communications intended for the church when not otherwise provided.

- c) Shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings, where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.
- d) Shall perform all other duties that usually pertain to the secretaries of assemblies.

5. Treasurer – A Treasurer shall be appointed from the congregation by the Board of Trustees at their first meeting following the annual meeting to serve for one year or until a successor is appointed. The Treasurer shall be a member of the church or a Trustee. The Treasurer:

- a) Shall oversee the financial assets of the church to ensure that those assets are managed and safeguarded in a proper and prudent manner. In addition, shall be the primary signatory for the checking account. The other signatories on the checking account shall be the chairperson of the Trustees and the Moderator. When signing checks, these positions shall follow the requirement of the position of Treasurer.
- b) Shall oversee the activities of the Financial Secretary and shall review bills/invoices prior to signing checks.
- c) Shall review the financial records of the church monthly to ensure that the records are being handled properly, entries are conducted in a timely manner, and that the bank reconciliation has been properly completed.
- d) Shall recommend the Money Counters to the Trustees for approval; shall oversee their activities and ensure they are performing their duties properly.
- e) Along with the Financial Secretary, shall provide financial reports to the Trustees each month and to the Church Council at its quarterly meetings or as requested.
- f) The Treasurer shall prepare a proposed annual budget for the Trustees (*Financial Secretary, item g, page 13*).

6. Financial Secretary – A Financial Secretary shall be appointed and serve at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, and:

- a) Shall maintain the financial accounting records of the church and provide for the day-to-day bookkeeping of the church's financial activity.
- b) Shall record donations/contributions to the church and be the primary person responsible for developing the end-of-year donor statements.
- c) Shall provide for the payment of bills, invoices, payroll, and other obligations of the church as directed by the Trustees and in accordance with the annual church budget.
- d) Shall reconcile the checking account and other bank accounts utilizing the church's bookkeeping software.
- e) Shall provide any and all records as requested by the Treasurer and/or the Audit Committee.
- f) Shall provide reports for the Treasurer, Trustees, and the Congregation as required or requested.
- g) Shall, with the Treasurer, prepare and submit a proposed annual budget to the Trustees for consideration.
(BOARDS, Section 3, Board of Trustees, item i, page 16.)
- h) Shall develop and/or maintain the business manual for the church that outlines and describes the responsibilities, functions, and processes used in managing the financial resources of The First Congregational Church of Stanton.

It is recommended that the Treasurer and Financial Secretary attend at least one meeting each year of the standing committees of the church.

7. Resident Agent – A Resident Agent shall be a congregationally elected church member of First Congregational Church and elected for an indeterminate period. The Resident Agent's duty shall be to sign all legal documents for the church as required from time to time.

8. Historian – A Church Historian shall be elected at the annual meeting to serve for a term of three years or until his/her successor is elected. It shall be the historian's duty to record significant events in the life of the church in a book provided for that purpose. Such recordings of events may be at the discretion of the Historian, but may also be requested by officers, boards, committees, or members of the church.

BOARDS

1. Church Council – The Church Council shall be the executive body of the church and shall consist of the Moderator (who serves as the chairperson), Vice Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Resident Agent, the Historian, and the Chairpersons of all standing committees and boards. This Council shall meet quarterly, or at the call of the Moderator, or at the call of three members of the Council.

- a) It shall confer on the general work of the church. It may act for the church in matters of common concern to the church membership, but all such matters shall be referred to the congregation for action upon the request of any one member of the Council.
- b) It shall promote harmony in the workings of the various departments.
- c) It shall consider and recommend to the church such aims and methods as may increase its usefulness.
- d) It shall select an Interim Pastor when needed.
- e) It shall establish a method by which a Pastoral Search Committee is selected when needed.
- f) It shall offer written suggestions of Bylaw revisions to the congregation as may be needed.
- g) It shall fill all vacancies in accordance with BYLAWS, Article VII, Vacancies, page 22.
- h) It shall provide for hiring and dismissal of staff not otherwise provided for in the Bylaws.

2. Diaconate – The Diaconate shall consist of at least six people representing, as much as possible, a generational cross section of men and women, two-thirds of whom must be members in full standing. Two members shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for a term of three years.

It shall be their duty, in cooperation with the Minister, to look after the spiritual interests of the church, and to attend to the following duties:

- a) To provide for regular and special services of worship; to schedule, prepare, and serve the Lord's Supper; to assist in baptisms and reception of new members; and to secure suitable pulpit supply to cover vacations and illness.
- b) To take an active interest in serving the needs of the sick and needy, attend to those who appear to be inactive, and to encourage them in their personal faith and towards active participation.
- c) To be supportive to any members who are in difficulty.
- d) To actively promote the witness of the church to the community and to recruit new members.
- e) To act on all membership changes and to report these actions at the Annual Church meeting.
- f) To provide for ushers, greeters, changing of altar cloths, flowers, and holiday décor in the sanctuary.
- g) To delegate one person from the Diaconate to serve on the Nominating Committee and one person from the Diaconate to serve on the Ministerial Support Committee.

3. Board of Trustees – The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least six members, at least two of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting for a three-year term. Two-thirds of the Trustees must be members in full standing. After serving a full term, a person shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has expired. It shall be their duty to act in all matters as determined *by Act No. 53 of the Public Acts of Michigan for 1901 and all amendments thereto*. They shall:

- a) Have the responsibility for all matters relating to business management and stewardship. They shall keep copies of all contracts.
- b) Have charge of hiring, supervising, and dismissal of the custodian and/or other staff necessary to maintain the facilities and shall establish remuneration for church personnel (*see ARTICLE VI, OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES, OFFICERS, section 1, item e, page 10*).
- c) Maintain proper liability, property, bonding, and workmen's compensation insurance.
- d) Establish building committees as needed.
- e) Be responsible for all physical assets of the church and ensure the security of church facilities.
- f) Serve as the legal entity to act on behalf of the church in buying and selling property, signing contracts, and borrowing or loaning funds.
- g) Receive and disburse funds acquired for the corporate life of the church as the church may direct. In the event of an expense of more than 10% of current budget, not provided for in the budget, consent of the congregation shall be secured before the money is expended, except in circumstances of dire emergency.
- h) Report all receipts and disbursements at the annual meeting of the church, including the amount of any reserve or special funds, and give an accounting of any expenditure charged against these funds. The reserve funds shall not be used without the consent of the congregation at a meeting duly called for that purpose.
- i) By September of each year, facilitate a budget process that includes meeting with committees, and:
 - 1) Meeting with the Pastor to negotiate an annual remuneration for the pastor and staff.
 - 2) Consulting with committees, boards, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer when formulating the budget.

- j) Set aside 5% of the weekly general fund offering as a maintenance fund until that balance reaches \$35,000, at which time this be reduced to 2%. When the balance in the maintenance fund falls to \$30,000, the rate shall again be raised to 5%.
- k) Annually appoint delegates as follows: one (1) person to serve on the Nominating Committee and one (1) person to serve on the Ministerial Support Committee.
- l) Appoint the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Money Counters.

MINISTRY COMMITTEES

While the general governance of First Congregational Church is managed by the Church Council, the Diaconate, and Trustee boards, various subset ministry committees are vital to the life of our local church. Over time, certain committees emerge and vanish according to FCC needs, member gifting, and interest. Unless otherwise specified by these bylaws, the following guidelines shall apply to all committees whether currently existing or developed at a later date:

- 1) Special ministry committees shall have no less than three (3) members, one of whom serves as chair person.
- 2) Official committee meetings shall be published and open to any interested FCC parties. While guests may attend or even participate in discussion/ activities, only official membership with voting privileges shall be conferred according to these bylaws.
- 3) The chairperson of each ministry committee shall be an ex-officio member of the FCC Church Council and shall provide a report of all activities, written or verbal, at the quarterly Church Council meeting.
- 4) Chairpersons of ministry committees may authorize expenditures or disburse funds from assigned budget line items according to the group's recommendations.
- 5) New ministry committees may be developed on an ad-hoc basis with approval by the Boards of Trustees and Diaconate. Members of the ad-hoc

team may be appointed by mutual consent of the pastor and each board chairperson.

- 6) For an ad-hoc ministry to gain “official standing as a FCC committee”, a request must be made in writing to the Church Council. The request shall include the purpose of the new committee and how it lends itself to the overall gospel ministry at FCC.
- 7) Ratification for “official standing” of an ad-hoc group may be made at the regular annual meeting following the group’s first full year of existence.
- 8) “Official standing” means that the committee member vacancies of the newly formed group will be elected positions with alternating three (3) year terms. Inaugural members will be elected for 1, 2, and 3-year terms. If more than three inaugural members are elected, their terms shall be staggered as evenly as possible.
- 9) After serving a full three-year term, members shall take one year off from the ministry committee. Exceptions for consecutive terms may be made with unanimous approval of the remaining committee members, the Pastor, and the Church Moderator.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Missionary –

The Missionary Committee shall work in close cooperation with the Minister. It shall:

- a) Study information available and in consultation with the Minister, and where appropriate, determine the mission outreach of the church.
- b) Make recommendations about which efforts to support and develop a budget for that purpose, which is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for consideration in the annual budget.
- c) Distribute information and promote mission enterprises for the church’s support throughout the year.
- d) Receive from the Financial *Secretary* a report of all benevolence monies; disbursing and keeping a complete record thereof; and report the same at the annual meeting.

- e) Administer the Emergency Aid Fund for assistance to those in need by direct action or through a sub-committee which shall report to the Church Council on a quarterly basis.

2. Christian Education –

Spiritual formation is at the heart of a biblical church. A Director of Christian Education shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve for a period of one year or until a successor is elected. The Director shall report to the church council at quarterly meetings. The CE Director shall work closely with the Pastor to provide biblically informed instruction for the entire congregation. The Christian Education ministry committee shall include: the CE Director (who acts as chairperson) and all CE ministry directors (e.g., Youth Director, Music Director, Children's Church youth ministry, etc.). The CE Ministry committee shall:

- a) Develop, implement, and monitor church-wide CE goals and objectives.
- b) Provide for a suitable learning environment for groups and classes.
- c) Recruit and select volunteers in accordance with the FCC Child Protection Policy (*see policy definitions in Policy Handbook*).
- d) Train teachers/leaders/nursery workers and any other CE volunteers and select and train (as needed) ministry leaders for VBS, Bible studies, Sunday morning classes, children's church, teen and children's ministry (both internal and outreach).
- e) Work with teachers/leaders to select curriculum.
- f) Delegate one (1) person from the CE department to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- g) Make recommendations and develop a budget which is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for consideration in the annual budget.

3. Auditing –

An Auditing Committee shall consist of two persons serving two-year alternating terms, one to be elected at each annual meeting. It shall be their duties to audit all financial records of the church and to report their findings to the quarterly Church Council and the annual meeting. Any irregularities shall be reported immediately to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

4. Gifts and Memorials –

The Gifts and Memorials Committee shall consist of no less than three (3) members, one of whom serves as chair person, and work in close cooperation with the Minister. The members shall serve three-year alternating terms, one to be elected at each annual meeting.

- a) They shall receive and record all gifts and memorials designated to the church and place them in a special account.
- b) They will be responsible for the usage of these funds, determining such usage by consulting with the Minister and the appropriate board or committee involved.
- c) They shall additionally be responsible for specially designated gifts to the church honoring the purpose(s) for which they were given.
- d) They shall present a report at the annual meeting.

5. Ministerial Support –

In order to preserve and encourage the well-being of our senior minister and the pastor/parish relationship, a Ministerial Support Committee shall be elected annually by the Church Council at the first meeting of the year. It shall consist of four members: one from the Diaconate, one from Trustees, the Moderator (who will act as chairperson), and one from the congregation-at-large. All members shall serve for a one-year term.

The committee shall:

- a) Meet with the Minister at least twice each year to assess the general state of the ministry, get a perception of the quality of the ministry, and inquire about the general needs of the minister.
- b) Continue to support ongoing training, evaluate present ministry tools—software, books, etc.—and recommend updates for ministry development.
- c) Provide support for ministerial staff and families through prayer.
- d) In the event a need arises, the Ministerial Support Committee may serve as a liaison to facilitate resolution of conflict, and if needed, may seek the support of a trained mediator(s) to assist with the resolution.
- e) The committee shall provide a welcome and orientation to new FCC ministers and staff.
- f) Make recommendations and develop a budget which is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for consideration in the annual budget.
- g) The minister shall be notified of all meetings of the committee.
- h) All information shall be held in a strict, confidential manner.

6. Endowment – (See addendum).

7. Nominating –

This committee shall consist of four (4) persons: one (1) member from the Diaconate, one (1) member from the Christian Education Committee, one (1) member from the Board of Trustees, and the Vice Moderator. The first meeting shall be called by the Vice Moderator. This committee will work with the minister to determine suitable candidates. Boards and Committees are to have representatives selected by September of each year.

ARTICLE VII – VACANCIES

Vacancies in any of the offices, boards, or committees named in Bylaws Article VI shall be filled until the next annual meeting by appointment of the Church Council at which time any term which has not expired shall be filled by election.

ARTICLE VIII – CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Annual Meeting – The annual meeting shall be held on the fourth Sunday of October, following the morning worship service.

“Notice of the meeting specifying the time, place, and object thereof, shall be read from the pulpit or published in the church Sunday bulletin on the **two successive Sundays** preceding such meeting on which services shall be held; Provided, however, that in case it is proposed to amend the Articles of Association, the proposed amendment shall be read from the pulpit on the **three successive Sundays** immediately preceding such meeting on which services shall be held; and the proposed amendment shall not itself be amended in any material point in the same meeting. And provided further, that if there should be no Sunday afternoon or evening service per se at which the notice herein required may be given, said notice may be posted on the church door or published in the town, city, or county newspaper whose circulation among the members is greatest, for three weeks preceding such meeting, specifying the time, place, and object thereof.”
(The preceding paragraph enclosed in quotation marks is taken from the State Law and cannot be amended and must be strictly complied with.)

The agenda shall include annual reports from the Minister, the various officers, boards, and committees; the election of officers and committees; the adoption of the budget; and other such business as may properly come before the meeting. A report made at the annual meeting shall be for the preceding twelve months. In the event of a lack of quorum, the meeting will be held on the following Sunday.

2. Special Meetings – Special meetings shall be called in the manner specified above. A meeting may be requested by the Minister, the Church Council, or the written application of any five members of legal age. A request for a special meeting may be made to the Moderator.

3. Quorum - Thirty persons or fifty percent (50%) of full-standing members shall constitute a quorum at any annual or special meeting of the church. Decisions rendered shall require a majority of the voters present except where a two-thirds (2/3) majority is herein required.

4. Quorum for Boards and Voting Committees – For boards and voting committees, a quorum is necessary for official business. A quorum is defined as more than fifty per cent (50%) of the members. Decisions rendered shall require a majority of the voters present.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

These Articles of Association and Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of full-standing members present at any annual meeting of the church or at a meeting called for that purpose, the proper notice given as referred to in BYLAWS, ARTICLE VIII, page 22

ARTICLE X – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order (latest revision) shall govern all deliberations of the Organization.

ADDENDUM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STANTON
ENDOWMENT FUND
305 North Camburn Street, Stanton, MI 48888

WHEREAS, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind – time, talents, the created world and money, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources; and

WHEREAS, Christians can give to the work of the church through bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, charitable gift annuities, assignment of life insurance, and transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate); and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the congregation to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion to their Lord expressed by the grantors and in accord with the policies of this congregation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this congregation, in an annual meeting assembled on January 29, 1995, approve and establish on the records of the church a new and separate fund to be known as THE ENDOWMENT FUND (hereafter called the “FUND”) of the First Congregational Church of Stanton Endowment Fund, 305 North Camburn Street, Stanton, Michigan 48888;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the purpose of the FUND is to enhance the mission outreach of First Congregational Church of Stanton Endowment Fund apart from the general operation of the congregation; that no portion of the income generated by the FUND shall be used for the annual operating budget of the congregation (Option: that only in particular, temporary, difficult circumstances, and where integrity of gift restrictions permit, may this congregation, by action in meeting assembled, use a portion of the FUND income for its own support services); that, except where authorized otherwise in the terms of the gift, all principal amounts will be retained and only the income expended;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following Plan of Operation set forth the administration and management of the FUND.

ENDOWMENT FUND PLAN OF OPERATION

1. **The Committee** – The committee shall consist of four members, two of whom shall be members in full standing of the First Congregational Church of Stanton. The term of each member shall be three (3) years.

No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms. After a lapse of one (1) year, former COMMITTEE members may be re-elected. The senior pastor and the moderator/vice moderator of the Church Council shall be advisory members of the COMMITTEE. The Church Council of the congregation shall nominate for the COMMITTEE and report at the annual congregational meeting in the same manner as for the offices and committees. In the event of a vacancy on the COMMITTEE, the Church Council shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting of the congregation, at which time the congregation shall elect a member to fulfill the term of the vacancy.

The COMMITTEE shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed by it in the best interest of the FUND. A quorum shall consist of three (3) members. A majority present and voting shall carry any motion or resolution.

The COMMITTEE shall elect from its membership a chairperson, financial secretary, and recording secretary. The chairperson, or member designated by the chairperson, shall preside at all committee meetings. The **financial secretary** shall maintain complete and accurate books of accounts for the FUND and shall sign checks and all other necessary documents on behalf of the congregation in furtherance of the purposes of the FUND. The books shall be audited annually by a Certified Public Accountant or other appropriate person who is not a member of the COMMITTEE.

The COMMITTEE shall report on a quarterly basis to the Church Council and, at each annual or special meeting of the congregation, shall

render a full and complete audited account of the administration of the FUND during the preceding year.

The COMMITTEE may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of Endowment Fund income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments or legal matters as it deems to be in the interest of the FUND.

Members of the COMMITTEE shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the FUND except to the extent such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross negligence. No member shall be personally liable as long as he/she acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence. Each member shall be liable only for his/her own willful misconduct or omissions, and shall not be liable for the acts or omissions of any other member. No member shall engage in any self-dealing or transactions with the FUND in which the member has direct or indirect financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in which his/her personal interest would conflict with the interest of the FUND.

All assets are to be held in the name of the First Congregational Church of Stanton Endowment Fund.

Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the FUND, including stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the COMMITTEE. Transactions will be reported to the Church Council quarterly.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME – The COMMITTEE shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures.

The principal of the Endowment Fund requires 100% vote of the Endowment Committee and 90% majority vote at a congregational meeting to allow invasion of endowment principal.

Income from the FUND shall be distributed annually and at such other times as deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish the following purposes:

- a) Scholarships or grants to the church family of the First Congregational Church of Stanton for the purpose of attending college or seminary; church-related camping or leadership conferences; or such other training which enables our church to grow in Christian faith and service to God's people.
- b) Outreach into the community including, but not limited to, seminaries, social service agencies, institutions and agencies to which this congregation relates, and to special programs designed for those persons in our parish who are in spiritual and/or economic need.

Donors may specify how their gifts are to be used. Programs for support shall be recommended by the COMMITTEE and approved by the Church Council for funding.

3. AMENDING THE RESOLUTION – “BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any amendment to this resolution, which will change, alter, or amend the purpose for which the FUND is established shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members in full standing present at a meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this resolution.”

4. DISPOSITION OR TRANSFER OF FUND – “BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event First Congregational Church of Stanton ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the FUND shall be at the discretion of the Church Council in conformity with the approved congregational constitution and in consultation with the Conference Minister in any Conference to which this Congregation may belong at such time.”

5. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION – “This resolution, recommended by the Church Council and accepted by the congregation at a legally called congregational meeting, is hereby adopted.”

