

Bylaws
of
Bethlehem
United Church of Christ
of Ann Arbor, Michigan



BUCC Bylaws – Approved June 1 2025

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Bylaws
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1 **Bethlehem United Church of Christ**
2 **Bylaws**

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4 These Bylaws, along with the Articles of Incorporation, are the foundation for the governance of
5 Bethlehem United Church of Christ.

6
7 **Article I Name**

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9 The name of this organization shall be Bethlehem United Church of Christ of Ann Arbor,
10 Michigan (referred to in these Bylaws as the “Church” and “BUCC”).

11
12 **Article II Purpose**

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14 It shall be the purpose of this organization to provide a Christian congregation for worship, to
15 give glory to God, and to promote the teachings of Jesus Christ.

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17 **Article III Affiliation**

18
19 The Church shall be a member of the United Church of Christ. The Church is vested in its
20 members and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes, accepts,
21 and supports the covenantal relationship of mutual counsel and cooperation with the United
22 Church of Christ.

23
24 In keeping with its mission and vision, and in accordance with the standards and guidelines of
25 the United Church of Christ, BUCC has been designated as an “Open and Affirming”
26 congregation of the United Church of Christ. (May, 2016)

27
28 **Article IV Doctrine**

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30 The Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and accepts biblical Holy Scriptures as its
31 authority in matters of faith and practice, and is in accord with the beliefs as expressed in the
32 United Church of Christ.

33
34 **Article V Membership**

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36 **Section 1 Eligibility**

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38 BUCC is an open and affirming congregation, accepting into Church membership all who believe
39 in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior without regard to age, race, nationality, ethnicity, economic
40 circumstance, marital or family status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender
41 identity, gender expression or any other basis of discrimination.

42
43 Membership in the Church shall be open to any person who has been baptized in the Christian
44 faith and has either (1) been confirmed into a Christian Church or (2) made public confession of
45 faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

46
47 Upon the recommendation of the Pastor, Members may be received into BUCC by Baptism,
48 Confirmation, confession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or presentation of a letter of transfer from
49 another church. All new members shall be conferred the rights and responsibilities of membership
50 with BUCC during a service of mutual covenant between those joining and members of the
51 congregation.

52
53 **Section 2 Privileges**

- 54
- 55 1. All members are entitled to share in the fellowship and spiritual blessings of the
56 Church, to the services of the pastor(s) and lay ministers of the Church, and to the
57 Christian sympathy and support of all other members.
 - 58 2. All members of the Church in good standing shall be deemed active and are entitled
59 to voice and vote at meetings of the Governing Body.
 - 60 3. All Active Members shall be eligible to hold elected office of the Church. No one
61 may simultaneously hold more than one elected office of the Church. The pastor(s)
62 of the Church shall not be eligible to hold elected office of the Church.

63
64 **Section 3 Responsibilities**

65
66 Active Members shall participate in person and/or remotely the Church's worship services; share
67 in the life and work of the Church; contribute financially to the Church's support and
68 benevolence; and support the spiritual welfare of the Church's membership and the community
69 to the best of their abilities.

70
71 Members who are unable to meet these responsibilities due to age, military service, attendance at
72 college, financial hardship, or illness or infirmity shall be exempt from these responsibilities.
73 Such members and/or their advocates shall notify the pastor(s) and/or Church of such
74 circumstances.

75
76 Those who are not exempt and do not fulfill responsibilities of Active Membership, shall be
77 designated Inactive Members and notified if possible. Inactive Members forfeit eligibility to vote
78 in Church matters.

79
80 All members shall at all times extend the love of Christ to all.

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82 **Section 4 Release**

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84 Any member shall be granted a letter of transfer of membership upon request. Any member may
85 remove themselves from the membership rolls through written notice to the Church.

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87 **Section 5 Review & Termination**

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89 The Member Engagement Ministry Team, in consultation with the pastor(s), shall periodically
90 but at least every three years, review the membership rolls. The updated membership rolls shall
91 be shared with the Church office and Leadership Council.

92
93 Members whose contact information is unknown or who have not communicated with the
94 Church or contributed to its support for a period of three years, shall be moved to an inactive
95 list. The Member Engagement Ministry Team shall make good faith efforts to communicate
96 with Inactive Members to encourage their renewed participation in the life of the Church.
97 Inactive Members remaining on the inactive list for a period of seven years shall be
98 automatically removed from membership rolls and notified if possible.
99

100 Any former member desiring to resume participation in the Church may return and through
101 engagement in the life of the Church and written request, restore their membership status.
102

103 Members who violate our Safe Church Policy are subject to immediate termination of
104 membership. Such persons are ineligible to return.
105

106 **Section 6 Others Participating in the Bethlehem Community**
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108 Individuals who are unable or otherwise not in a position or not ready to become members of the
109 Church, or those who are on the inactive list, are welcome to attend worship, request and receive
110 newsletters and other similar communications from the Church, participate in programs and
111 other events offered by the Church, and otherwise participate in the life of the Church. Such
112 individuals are eligible to serve as unelected members of Ministry Teams, and serve as appointed
113 or volunteer members of task forces or other groups, including those created by the Governing
114 Body, Leadership Council or the pastor(s). Such individuals shall have the right to attend
115 congregational meetings and, at the discretion of the President, voice their opinions, but shall not
116 be entitled to vote.
117

118 **Article VI Governance**
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120 **Section 1 Governing Body**
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122 **A. How Assembled**
123

124 The Governing Body of the Church shall be the members of the Church assembled in a duly
125 called congregational meeting. Meetings may be held in person, remote, or hybrid using
126 available and accessible electronic and/or phone platforms. A quorum shall consist of 25
127 members. A quorum, once established at a duly called congregational meeting, shall exist until
128 the meeting is adjourned. The Governing Body shall hold an annual meeting and may hold other
129 meetings as set forth in these Bylaws. The vote of a majority of those attending and voting at
130 any such congregational meeting shall be the will of the Church.
131

132 Any duly called meeting of the governing body, leadership council, executive committee,
133 ministry team or any other committee, may, at the discretion of the chairperson(s), be held by
134 means of a teleconference communication system or a video conference communication system,
135 or any other similar electronic communication facility, that permits all members participating in
136 such meeting to hear each other during the meeting. Members who attend the meeting through

137 such communication system shall be deemed to be personally present at that meeting for the
138 purposes of determining a quorum and may participate in the business of the meeting including
139 exercising any voting privileges to which they are entitled.

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142 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

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The Governing Body:

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1. Shall hold an Annual Meeting as set forth in Article VIII of these Bylaws.
- 147 2. Shall hold other congregational meetings as set forth in Article VIII of these
148 Bylaws.
- 149 3. Shall have the sole responsibility for calling a settled pastor and shall have the
150 sole right to terminate the Church's relationship with the settled pastor.
- 151 4. Shall have sole authority to approve unbudgeted expenditures of \$15,000 or more.
- 152 5. Shall have sole authority to approve the purchase or sale of real property.
- 153 6. May establish committees, task forces or other groups to further the purposes of
154 the Church.
- 155 7. Shall have sole authority to merge with or enter into any agreement of formal
156 association with another congregation.

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Section 2 **Leadership Council & Executive Committee**

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A. Composition

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The Leadership Council shall be a nine-member body, consisting of an Executive
163 Committee made up of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and Treasurer, and the
164 five chairs of the Ministry Teams – Worship, Business (Facilities Subcommittee chair),
165 Member Engagement, Education, and Outreach, each with one vote.

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The Leadership Council is to meet a minimum of four times per year. The Executive
168 Committee is to meet a minimum of ten times per year. Ministry Teams are to meet as
169 needed.

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171

At any duly called meeting of the Executive Committee and/or the Leadership Council, a
172 quorum shall consist of a majority of its respective members. Once established at a
173 particular meeting, a quorum exists until the meeting is adjourned.

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B. Roles and Responsibilities

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The Leadership Council:

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1. Is responsible to the Governing Body.
- 180 2. Shall meet within two weeks of the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body and
181 shall meet regularly thereafter, a minimum of four times per year
- 182 3. Shall keep a record of its proceedings.

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4. Shall, in consultation with the pastor(s) and the governing body, engage in strategic planning for the future of the Church and, in collaboration with the various Ministry Teams, set the overall policy and direction of the Church.
 5. Shall work with the pastor(s), other staff, the Ministry Teams, and other laypersons to implement that strategic direction.
 6. Shall coordinate with Ministry Teams and other groups of the Church considering policies or actions that would affect the strategic planning of the Church or the overall policy and direction of the Church before any such actions are implemented.
 7. Shall establish policies and procedures related to the overall strategic direction of the Church and shall review and revise existing policies and procedures related to the overall strategic direction of the Church. Upon adoption, the Leadership Council shall provide any such policies and procedures to the Secretary.
 8. Shall review and act on requests from any Ministry Team, committee, subcommittee, or other group of the Church regarding new or proposed changes to policies.
 9. Shall receive a recommended annual operating budget from the Finance Subcommittee and, upon approval, recommend the operating budget to the congregation.
 10. Shall hire any interim pastor, establish the terms and conditions of employment of any interim pastor, and have the authority to terminate a relationship with any interim pastor.
 11. Shall assemble and provide support to a search committee for a settled pastor when there is a vacancy, comprised of church members in good standing, and in collaboration with the interim pastor, if present.
 12. May create committees and task forces to assist in carrying out the Leadership Council's responsibilities or other functions related to the Church.
 13. Except as to the office of President, shall, in consultation with the Member Engagement Ministry Team, appoint members to fill any vacancies of elected positions of the Church until the following Annual Meeting.
 14. Shall serve as the Board of Directors of the Church.

216 **The Executive Committee** (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer):

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1. Is responsible to the Governing Body.
 2. Shall meet within two weeks of the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body as part of the leadership council meeting and shall meet regularly thereafter a minimum of ten times per year.
 3. Shall keep a record of its proceedings.
 4. Shall call an Annual Meeting of the Governing Body as set forth in Article VIII of these Bylaws.
 5. Shall call special meetings of the Governing Body as set forth in Article VIII of these Bylaws.

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6. Shall establish the terms and conditions of employment of the settled/associate pastor(s). In establishing the financial terms of the pastors' relationships with the Church, the Executive Committee shall coordinate with the Finance and Personnel subcommittees.
 7. Unless otherwise directed by the Governing Body, shall consider and act on recommendations of the pastor(s) and Personnel subcommittee, within the financial parameters established in the budget and the strategic parameters set by the Leadership Council, to call additional ordained staff or to terminate a relationship with existing ordained staff, with the exception of the settled pastor.
 8. Shall be responsible for the enforcement of the employment manual policies for all employees, including ordained staff.
 9. Shall receive, review and act on requests from any Ministry Team or other group of the Church for unbudgeted expenditures greater than \$5,000 but less than \$15,000, including those requests which are to be drawn from restricted and/or designated accounts. The Executive Committee may approve such requests if in its judgment the request is an appropriate expenditure and the financial condition of the Church supports the expenditure. The Executive Committee may request the input of the Finance Subcommittee in making its determination. The Executive Committee shall advise the Governing Body of any approved requests at the next duly called meeting of the Governing Body.
 10. Shall receive, review and promptly act on, in accordance with these Bylaws, reports from the Member Engagement Ministry Team with respect to members not meeting their membership responsibilities, or reports or incidents involving members which may warrant termination of membership (e.g. violation of Safe Church Policy).
 11. Shall annually, or more often if requested in writing by a quorum of the Governing Body, provide a summary written report of its activities to the congregation.

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C. President

260 The President:

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1. Shall preside over all congregational meetings.
 2. Shall preside over all Leadership Council and Executive Committee meetings.
 3. Shall, in consultation with the pastor(s) and other members of the Leadership Council, set the agenda for Leadership Council and Executive Committee meetings.
 4. Shall serve as a member ex officio of all Ministry Teams and may attend meetings of the various Ministry Teams in consultation with the chair of the various Ministry Teams, offering counsel as appropriate.

- 270 5. May delegate his or her responsibility to the Vice President to preside over
271 congregational, Leadership Council, or Executive Committee meetings should the
272 President be unable to attend.
273 6. To the extent authorized by the Governing Body, shall, with the Secretary, sign all
274 deeds and all contracts in excess of \$15,000 on behalf of the Church.
275

276 **D. Vice President**

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278 The Vice President:

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280 1. Shall preside over congregational meetings or Leadership Council meetings upon
281 delegation of the President due to the President's inability to attend.
282 2. Shall preside over any congregational meeting or portion of such meeting where the
283 business of the meeting pertains to the President.
284 3. Provides advice and counsel to the pastor(s) and Executive Committee with respect to
285 personnel matters of the Church staff.
286 4. Shall review and recommend to Leadership Council, at least every three years,
287 changes to the Bethlehem personnel practices including all of those identified in the
288 Bethlehem Employment Manual
289 5. Shall ensure that all employed staff receive a formal written performance evaluation
290 at least annually and will share those evaluations with the Executive Committee.
291 6. Shall ensure that non-pastoral compensation is reviewed annually and as needed as
292 detailed under the personnel subcommittee responsibilities.
293 7. In the event that the Vice President is deemed conflicted by the Executive Committee
294 on any staff evaluations, the President will assume the responsibility for those
295 individuals.
296 8. The Vice President shall establish and serve as chair of a Personnel Subcommittee of
297 the Business Team to support their efforts.
298 9. Shall fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the President if (s)he is unable to do so.
299

300 **E. Secretary**

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302 The Secretary:

- 303
304 1. Shall record, prepare, and distribute Minutes of all meetings of the Governing
305 Body, Leadership Council, and Executive Committee.
306 2. Shall ensure that current Bylaws and policies, including but not limited to
307 financial, personnel, safe church, and cemetery, are maintained and accessible to
308 the Governing Body.
309 3. Shall receive, review, and distribute to the appropriate party any official
310 correspondence of the Church and facilitate any required response.
311 4. To the extent authorized by the Governing Body, shall, with the President, sign all
312 deeds and all contracts in excess of \$15,000 on behalf of the Church.
313

314 **F. Treasurer**

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316 The Treasurer:

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- 318 1. Shall be responsible for the overall administration of the financial assets of the
319 church, as directed by the Leadership Council or the Governing Body.
320 2. Shall coordinate regularly with the Business Team concerning the finances of the
321 Church.
322 3. Shall serve as the lead of the Business Team’s finance subcommittee.
323 4. Shall make monthly reports to the Leadership Council/Executive Committee
324 concerning the finances of the Church.
325 5. Shall make an annual report to the Governing Body concerning the finances of the
326 Church.
327 6. May, in consultation with the Pastor(s), utilize the support of designated office
328 staff in carrying out the Treasurer’s responsibilities.
329 7. Shall work with the Business Team in the preparation and presentation of the
330 annual budget.
331 8. Shall work with the finance sub-committee in preparing, conducting, and
332 reporting of any findings of the external audit, to be completed at least every three
333 years.
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Section 3 Ministry Team and Committee Uniform Responsibilities

336

All Ministry Teams, committees, and subcommittees shall:

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- 338 1. Coordinate with the Executive Committee to request and provide for appropriate
339 funds to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the team.
340 2. Establish, review and revise procedures related to its function. Upon adoption,
341 the team shall provide any such procedures to the Secretary.
342 3. Submit for endorsement to the Leadership Council any proposed policies or
343 actions that would affect the strategic planning of the Church or the overall policy
344 and direction of the Church.
345 4. Develop and maintain a repository of information and documents relevant to the
346 team’s responsibilities for continuity.
347 5. Regularly report on its activities to the Leadership Council and shall annually
348 provide a summary written report of its activities to the congregation for the
349 annual meeting.

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Section 4 Business Team

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Composition: Shall include: the Finance Subcommittee, Personnel Subcommittee, and
352 the Facilities Subcommittee.
353

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4.1 Finance Subcommittee

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A. Composition

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358 The Finance Subcommittee:
359
360 Shall be composed of the Treasurer, as elected by the Governing Body, who serves as the lead
361 representing the Finance Subcommittee to the Executive Committee and Leadership Council;
362 and such other individuals as the treasurer may include to assist in carrying out its roles and
363 responsibilities.

364 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

365
366 The Finance Subcommittee:

- 367 1. Shall secure the funds necessary and appropriate to support the Church.
- 368 2. Shall annually prepare, in consultation with the Leadership Council, other
369 Ministry Teams, and the pastor(s) an operating budget for consideration and
370 endorsement by the Leadership Council.
- 371 3. Shall, after endorsement by the Leadership Council, present the annual budget to
372 the Governing Body for its approval.
- 373 4. Shall encourage giving toward and oversee the Church's monetary funds,
374 including Memorials and Gifts, investments, and any endowment funds.
- 375 5. Shall, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, develop and execute the
376 Stewardship Giving program.
- 377 6. Shall ensure that the monetary funds of the Church are prudently invested.
- 378 7. Shall cooperate with Bethlehem Cemetery Board with respect to the investment of
379 funds overseen by the Bethlehem Cemetery Board.
- 380 8. Shall receive and review requests for unbudgeted expenditures not to exceed
381 \$5,000.00. The Finance Subcommittee may approve such requests if the financial
382 condition of the Church supports the expenditure and the request is a valid
383 expenditure of Church resources.
- 384 9. Shall work in conjunction with an external auditor for audits to be performed at
385 least every three years to verify the proper handling of Church funds, including
386 the Cemetery funds, and the accuracy of the financial records of the Church.
- 387 10. Shall promptly report audit findings and recommendations to the Leadership
388 Council and the Governing Body.

389 **4.2 Facilities Subcommittee**

390 **A. Composition**

391
392 The Facilities Subcommittee shall be composed of one or two members elected by the Governing
393 Body who shall serve as chair or co-chairs and such other individuals as the chair(s) may include
394 to assist in carrying out its roles and responsibilities. The Chair of the Facilities Subcommittee
395 or their designee will represent the Subcommittee as a voting member at Leadership Council
396 meetings.

402 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

403
404 The Facilities Subcommittee:

- 405
406 1. Shall develop and implement plans to maintain, preserve and improve Church
407 properties, except Bethlehem Cemetery.
408 2. Shall oversee the use and management of the facilities, in cooperation with the
409 church staff who maintain the church calendar and assist with arranging any
410 necessary support.
411 3. Shall appoint an advisory group who will oversee and advise policies and
412 practices, for periodic and long-term rental of church property.
413 4. Shall evaluate and procure appropriate insurance for Church properties.
414 5. Shall establish, review, update, and manage security procedures, including
415 building opening and closing procedures.
416

417 **4.3 Personnel Subcommittee**

418 **A. Composition**

419
420 The Personnel Subcommittee shall be composed of a minimum of three members in good
421 standing from the Governing Body, including the Vice President who shall serve as the Chair.
422 The other members of the Personnel Subcommittee shall be recommended by the Vice President
423 to the Leadership Council for their appointment. The Vice President shall serve as the
424 representative at Leadership Council and Executive Committee meetings.
425
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427 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

428
429 The Personnel Subcommittee:

- 430
431 1. Shall review and recommend to Leadership Council, at least every three years,
432 changes to the Bethlehem personnel practices and policies, including those identified
433 in the Bethlehem Employment Manual.
434 2. Shall refer enforcement of personnel policies to the Executive Committee.
435 3. Shall develop and implement procedures for the hiring and dismissal of non-pastoral
436 staff.
437 4. Shall develop and implement procedures for the fair and equitable performance
438 evaluation of all employees.
439 5. Shall provide all employees, including clergy, with a formal written performance
440 evaluation at least annually and will share those evaluations with the Executive
441 Committee.
442 6. Shall review at least annually all non-pastoral employee salaries and all forms of
443 compensation.

- 444 7. Shall work in conjunction with the Executive Committee to determine appropriate
445 recommendations for annual performance compensation, which may include lump
446 sum, base salary adjustments, or other forms of compensation.
447 8. Shall share with the Governing Body annually the total compensation for each
448 employee, including clergy.
449 9. Shall maintain strict confidentiality in personnel matters and employee personal
450 information.

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Section 5 Education Ministry Team

A. Composition

457 The Education Ministry Team shall be composed of one or two member(s) elected by the
458 Governing Body, who shall be the Chair or Co-Chairs, and such other individuals as the
459 Education Ministry Team may include to assist in carrying out its roles and responsibilities.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

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The Education Ministry Team:

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1. Shall work with the pastor(s) and designated staff to support children, youth, and young adult Christian education programs, including confirmation programs.
2. Shall work with the pastor(s) and designated staff to develop and implement regular programming and activities that empower and encourage fellowship, faith development and leadership opportunities among children, youth (middle school & high school), and young adults.
3. Shall coordinate with other ministry teams and the congregation, to involve and integrate children, youth, and young adults into the wider life and ministries of the Church.
4. Shall work with the pastor(s) and designated staff to support adult Christian education programs.
5. Shall be responsible for granting educational scholarships from designated funds, if any.
6. Shall implement and ensure adherence to Safe Church Policy for all activities and programs involving children, youth, and young adults.

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Section 6 Worship Ministry Team

A. Composition

485 The Worship Ministry Team shall be composed of one or two members elected by the Governing
486 Body, who shall be the Chair or Co-Chairs, and such other individuals as the Worship Ministry
487 Team may include to assist in carrying out its roles and responsibilities.

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B. Roles and Responsibilities

The Worship Ministry Team:

1. Shall work with the Pastor(s) to support the spiritual life of the congregation through worship.
2. Shall assist the Pastor(s) with respect to Holy Communion and Baptisms.
3. Shall assist the Pastor(s) with other aspects of regular and special worship services with the goal of making such worship experiences meaningful and fulfilling.
4. Shall assist the pastor(s) with worship planning.
5. Shall ensure training for and coordinate with volunteers and staff, for providing audio and streaming support for worship services, including funerals as needed.
6. Shall coordinate with the Altar Guild, for preparing and serving communion; changing paraments to appropriate liturgical color; filling, lighting and extinguishing candles, and other such needs for worship services.
7. Shall coordinate with the pastor(s) and Music Director for worship music.
8. Shall coordinate scheduling, training, and activities of liturgists, greeters and ushers.
9. Shall encourage a welcoming environment to all, with special attention to guests and prospective members within the church building.
10. Shall engage and encourage all BUCC members to foster a positive impression, by extending the love of Christ to all.

Section 7 Member Engagement Ministry Team

A. Composition

The Member Engagement Ministry Team shall be composed of one or two members elected by the Governing Body, who shall serve as Chair or Co-Chairs, and such other individuals as the Member Engagement Ministry Team may include to assist in carrying out its roles and responsibilities.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

The Member Engagement Ministry Team:

1. Shall encourage the involvement of new and continuing members in the life of the Church.
2. Shall develop and implement programs and activities to provide fellowship opportunities for the Congregation, including opportunities for youth, adults and families.
3. Shall coordinate fellowship following weekly worship services and foster additional fellowship activities by serving as a resource for other individuals and groups interested in planning activities and programs.

- 533 4. Shall engage in and coordinate activities to support members in need due to health
534 and other reasons.
535 5. Shall regularly review member attendance at worship and other church sponsored
536 events and make good faith efforts to connect with members becoming less
537 active.
538 6. Shall ensure records of active and inactive members, transfers, marriages, deaths,
539 and baptisms are maintained.
540 7. Shall conduct a review of the membership rolls of the Church at least every three
541 years, in accordance with Article V.
542 8. Shall be responsible to the congregation to identify and present at least two weeks
543 in advance of the Annual Meeting one or more eligible candidates to fill all open
544 elected positions identified in the Bylaws.
545 9. Shall advise the pastor(s) and Leadership Council of the candidates for the open
546 elected offices prior to the Leadership Council's call of the Annual Meeting.
547 10. Shall, upon request, assist the various Ministry Teams in identifying individuals
548 with the aptitude for and interest in serving as unelected members.
549

550
551 **Section 8 Outreach Ministry Team**

552
553 **A. Composition**

554
555 The Outreach Ministry Team shall be composed of one or two members elected by the
556 Governing Body, who shall be the Chair or Co-Chairs, and such other individuals as the
557 Outreach Ministry Team may include to assist in carrying out its roles and responsibilities.
558

559 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

560
561 The Outreach Ministry Team:

- 562
563 1. Shall identify opportunities for and inspire involvement in demonstrating
564 Christian love by supporting our neighbors, through service, advocacy for
565 marginalized populations, gifts-in-kind, and/or finances.
566 2. Shall identify local, regional and global ministry partners, to assist in meeting
567 mission and ministry goals.
568 3. Shall coordinate with and support other BUCC groups or teams with respect to
569 their outreach activities.
570

571
572 **Section 9 Pastoral Relations Committee**

573
574 **A. Composition**

575
576 The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of one or two member(s) elected by the
577 Governing Body, who shall serve as Chair or Co-Chairs, a representative of the Executive

578 Committee, and one member each recommended by the pastor(s). With multiple pastors, they
579 may also mutually agree upon one member to represent them collectively.
580

581 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

582
583 The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) is a standing committee of the church whose
584 advisory mission is to support the pastors' leadership while also promoting a constructive,
585 open, mutually satisfying relationship between the pastor(s) and members of the
586 congregation. It is recommended that the PRC meet no less than quarterly with each pastor.
587 The pastor(s) must be present for meetings.

- 588 1. The PRC shall help the congregation have reasonable expectations of the pastor(s).
- 589 2. The PRC shall help the pastor(s) to have a clear understanding of the congregation's
590 hopes, expectations, priorities, and concerns.
- 591 3. The PRC will provide an opportunity for the pastor(s) to reflect and confer in
592 confidence about personal concerns, hopes, ambitions and frustrations.
- 593 4. The PRC shall provide an arena for helpful and honest dialogue and serve as a
594 reconciling agent for mediation between the pastor(s) and congregation.
- 595 5. The PRC shall enhance the effectiveness of the church's mission by promoting a
596 constructive, caring, and healthy relationship between the pastor(s) and congregation
597 in an atmosphere of mutual confidentiality, trust and truthfulness.
- 598 6. In its role the PRC shall not supplant the Leadership Council but serve in an advisory
599 capacity and resource to Leadership Council regarding the pastor(s).
- 600 7. The PRC shall serve as a resource to and support for the pastor(s).
- 601 8. The PRC shall serve as a mechanism through which the congregation can care
602 personally for its pastor(s).
- 603 9. If the PRC is unable to resolve any conflict between the congregation or any
604 member(s) of the congregation and the pastor(s), they will refer the issue to the
605 Personnel Subcommittee and/or Member Engagement Ministry Team and/or the
606 Leadership Council for further action.

607 608 **Section 12 Bethlehem Cemetery Board**

609 610 **A. Composition**

611
612
613 The Bethlehem Cemetery Board shall be composed of six members elected by the Governing
614 Body. The Bethlehem Cemetery Board shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and
615 Treasurer from its members.

616 617 **B. Roles and Responsibilities**

618
619 The Bethlehem Cemetery Board:
620

- 621 1. Shall be responsible for the administration and maintenance of Bethlehem
622 Cemetery and the funding of those activities.
623 2. Shall designate a member to serve as a liaison to the Finance Subcommittee with
624 respect to the investment of funds overseen by the Bethlehem Cemetery Board.
625 3. Submit for endorsement to the Leadership Council any proposed policies or
626 actions that would affect the strategic planning of the Church or the overall policy
627 and direction of the Church.
628 4. Shall be responsible for developing, reviewing, revising, and maintaining its own
629 policies and procedures related to the administration and maintenance of
630 Bethlehem Cemetery assets.
631 5. Maintain a repository of information and documents to be available upon request
632 to interested members of the Governing Body.
633 6. Shall cooperate with and participate in any audit of the Church's or cemetery's financial
634 records as needed.
635 7. Shall annually provide a summary written report of its activities and finances to
636 the congregation at the annual meeting.
637

638 **Article VII Terms of Elected Office and Term Limits**

639
640 All terms of office begin upon adjournment of the Annual Meeting at which the individual is
641 elected and run until the adjournment of the Annual Meeting at which the individual's successor
642 is due to be elected.
643

644 **Section 1 Leadership Council**

645 **A. President**

646
647 The President's term shall be one year. The President shall be eligible to serve no more than
648 three consecutive elected one-year terms.
649

650
651 If there is a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall fill the responsibilities of
652 President until the next Annual Meeting.
653

654 **B. Other Executive Committee Members**

655
656 The terms of Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary shall be one-year terms. A member may
657 serve a maximum of 9 years total consecutively in any combination of Executive positions
658 including president, excluding any partial mid-year term appointments.
659

660 After a minimum hiatus of one year from serving on the Executive Committee, a member may
661 again be elected to the Executive Committee in any position including president.
662

663 **C. Other Leadership Council Positions & Pastoral Relations Committee**

664
665 The terms of the five chairs of the Ministry Teams – Worship, Business (Facilities Subcommittee
666 chair), Member Engagement, Education, and Outreach on the Leadership Council shall be two
667 years with no term limits. Likewise, the terms of the elected Chair/Co-Chairs of the Pastoral
668 Relations Committee shall be two years with no term limits.

669
670 **Section 2 Bethlehem Cemetery Board**

671
672 [The terms of office of the individuals elected to the Bethlehem Cemetery Board shall be three
673 years. The terms of the six members of the Bethlehem Cemetery Board shall be staggered such
674 that two of each expire each year. Individuals elected to the Bethlehem Cemetery Board shall be
675 eligible to be elected to no more than two consecutive three-year terms. No individual shall
676 serve on the Bethlehem Cemetery Board for more than seven consecutive years.]

677
678 **Article VIII Meetings of the Governing Body**

679
680 There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Governing Body, held no earlier than May 1 and no
681 later than June 15 of each year. The Leadership Council shall select the date, time and place for
682 this meeting. At the Annual Meeting, the Governing Body shall (1) elect, by majority vote of
683 those members present and voting, eligible members to fill all open elected positions of the
684 Church for the following fiscal year beginning June 1; (2) receive and act on an annual budget
685 for the June 1 to May 31 fiscal year as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee and
686 Leadership Council; (3) receive annual reports from each ministry team and committee; and (4)
687 conduct any other business that may come before it.

688
689 Any duly called meeting of the governing body, leadership council, executive committee,
690 ministry team or any other committee, may, at the discretion of the chairperson(s), be held by
691 means of a teleconference communication system or a video conference communication system,
692 or any other similar electronic communication facility, that permits all members participating in
693 such meeting to hear each other during the meeting. Members who attend the meeting through
694 such communication system shall be deemed to be personally present at that meeting for the
695 purposes of determining a quorum and may participate in the business of the meeting including
696 exercising any voting privileges to which they are entitled.
697 Special meetings of the Governing Body may be called by the Leadership Council at its
698 discretion.

699
700 The Leadership Council shall, upon written request of at least 25 members, call a special meeting
701 of the Governing Body to be held no more than 30 days after the written request is received. The
702 written request shall specify the purpose of the requested meeting of the Governing Body.

703
704 At special meetings of the Governing Body, only such business as has been specified in the
705 notice of the special meeting may be voted upon.
706
707

Commented [PL1]: What are the state requirements? Is there an advantage to extending or eliminating term limits? Ask for input from MJ?

Commented [PL2R1]: Per MJ, no changes at this time.

708
709 At least 14 days' advance notice shall be given of the time, place, and purpose of all meetings of
710 the Governing Body. Such notice shall include, at a minimum, (1) verbal and/or written notice
711 at, or immediately before or after, worship service(s) and (2) notification through other reliable
712 means, utilizing such technology as may exist at the time, designed to reach members of the
713 congregation.

714
715 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, all decisions of the Governing Body shall be made
716 by majority vote of those members present and voting.

717
718 **Article IX Administration**

719
720 **Section 1 Pastor**

721
722 **A. Qualifications and Selection**

723
724 The Pastor shall be an ordained minister who has been recommended or approved by the
725 Covenant Association or the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ. If there is a
726 vacancy in the position of Pastor, the Leadership Council shall, in consultation with the search
727 committee, nominate a candidate to be voted on by the Governing Body. Only one candidate
728 shall be considered at a time.

729
730 **B. Responsibilities**

731
732 The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church and oversee its day-to-day administrative
733 activities. The Pastor:

- 734
735 1. Shall care for the general welfare of the congregation.
736 2. Shall preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and
737 oversee all worship services.
738 3. Shall minister to the sick and those otherwise in need.
739 4. Shall administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the Leadership
740 Council, the Ministry Teams, and other staff.
741 5. Shall support the Leadership Council in its role of strategic planning for the future
742 of the Church and setting the overall policy and direction of the Church.
743 6. Shall serve as a member ex officio of the Leadership Council and attend
744 Leadership Council meetings except to the extent the Leadership Council is
745 discussing the performance and evaluation of the Pastor. The Pastor shall have a
746 voice on matters coming before the Leadership Council, but shall not be entitled
747 to vote. If the Pastor is unable to attend a Leadership Council meeting, he or she
748 is entitled to delegate such responsibility to an Associate Pastor or other ordained
749 staff.
750 7. Shall recommend to the Leadership Council the call or termination of ordained
751 staff within the parameters established in the budget and the strategic direction
752 established by the Leadership Council.

- 753 8. Shall be responsible for directing, developing, and evaluating ordained staff in
754 cooperation with the Personnel Subcommittee.
755 9. Shall assist in directing non-ordained staff, in cooperation with the Personnel
756 Subcommittee and in accordance with the Employment Manual.
757 10. May request the Leadership Council to establish committees or task forces or hire
758 additional staff which would assist in fulfilling the pastoral role or otherwise
759 support the Church.
760 11. Shall have the right to grant or deny requests for other clergy to perform any
761 religious ceremony in the Church, none of which shall be performed without the
762 Pastor's consent. The Pastor shall have the right to delegate the responsibility of
763 leading a worship service to an authorized guest minister or lay member(s) during
764 the temporary absence of the Pastor or for a particular special occasion.
765 12. Shall annually provide a summary written report of his or her activities to the
766 congregation for the annual meeting.

767 If there is a vacancy in the position of Pastor, any interim Pastor selected under these Bylaws
768 shall carry out these responsibilities.
769

770
771

772 **Section 2 Associate Pastor(s)**

773

774 The Church may employ one or more Associate Pastors within the budgetary limits established
775 by the Governing Body. Unless otherwise specified by the Governing Body, it shall be the
776 responsibility of the Leadership Council, acting on a recommendation of the Pastor, if any, to
777 hire Associate Pastor(s). Unless otherwise specified by the Governing Body, it shall be the right
778 of the Leadership Council, acting on the recommendation of the Pastor, if any, to terminate any
779 relationship with any Associate Pastor. Any individual employed as an Associate Pastor shall be
780 recommended or approved by the Covenant Association of the Michigan Conference of the
781 United Church of Christ.

782

783 Associate Pastor(s) shall have such duties and responsibilities as set forth in their terms of
784 employment or as otherwise directed by the Pastor and the Executive Committee. Such
785 individuals shall perform their responsibilities under the direction of and with the counsel of the
786 Pastor, Executive Committee, and Personnel Subcommittee, in accordance with the Employment
787 Manual and other related policies and procedures.

788

789 Associate Pastor(s) may, from time to time, be delegated or otherwise requested to attend
790 meetings of the Leadership Council, which responsibility they shall fulfill.

791

792

793 **Article X Property**

794

795 The Church may in its corporate name acquire real and personal property by purchase, gift,
796 devise, bequest, or other lawful means. The Church may utilize its real and personal property for
797 any lawful purpose, and may transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign,

798 or convey such property. The Church may receive and hold in trust both real and personal
799 property. The real property, personal property, and all monies of the Church shall be under the
800 care of the Board of Directors, which is the Leadership Council.

Commented [PL3]: Still contemplating this....

801
802 Church properties shall be held as a sacred trust by the Leadership Council, which shall have the
803 ultimate responsibility for keeping the church edifice and other properties belonging to the
804 Church in proper repair. The Facilities Subcommittee is responsible for the preservation and
805 improvement of Church properties, except the burial grounds known as Bethlehem Cemetery,
806 which shall be managed by the Bethlehem Cemetery Board.

807 808 809 **Article XI Conflicts of Interest**

810
811 Whenever a member of the Leadership Council or other individual serving in an elected position
812 has a financial or family interest in any matter coming before them, the affected person shall
813 (1) fully disclose the nature of the interest and (2) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and
814 voting on the matter. Any vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only
815 when a majority of disinterested individuals present and voting determine that it is in the best
816 interest of the Church to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall
817 record the disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

818 819 **Article XII Rules of Order**

820
821 The rules contained in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall guide in
822 all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

823 824 825 **Article XIII Amendment**

826
827 Proposed changes to these Bylaws shall first be referred to the Leadership Council, which shall
828 report its recommendation to the Governing Body at the next duly called congregational meeting.
829 Any change to these Bylaws requires a two-thirds majority affirmative vote of all active
830 members present and voting.

831 832 833 **Article XIV Dissolution**

834
835 In the event of the dissolution of the Church, after providing for the debts and obligations of the
836 Church, the Governing Body shall determine the disbursement of remaining assets to such
837 charitable entities it deems worthy, and which may include the Michigan Conference of the
838 United Church of Christ.

839
840
841 Adopted by vote of the Governing Body on October 19, 2014.
842

843 Effective Date: January 25, 2015
844
845 Amended by vote of the Governing Body on June 14, 2020
846
847 Amended by vote of the Governing Body on June 9, 2024
848
849 Adopted by vote of the Governing Body on June 1, 2025 – effective immediately

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
 423 Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Governance Schematic

