

The Bylaws
of
The Tulare United Church

Article 1 – Purpose

We are a united people of God, living with Jesus Christ at the cornerstone of our lives. By the grace of God and faithful use of the resources the Lord has given us, the avowed purpose of Tulare United Church, as it continues and fulfills the missions and ministries of the Salem United Church of Christ, St. John’s United Church of Christ, and the Tulare United Methodist Church, shall be to worship God, to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, to realize Christian fellowship and unity within Tulare United Church and the church universal; and to reach out in loving service to all humankind.

Article II – Governing Body

- A. The government of the Tulare United Church shall be vested in the congregation under Christ, assembled in duly called meetings; and otherwise through the Tulare United Church Board on behalf of the congregation. The vote of a majority of full members in good standing present in-person or via virtual means as deemed appropriate by the Board at duly called meetings shall be the action of the church, except where a greater majority is required.
- B. Reserved to the congregation shall be authority for the acquisition and disposal of real property, building projects, changes in the constitution or bylaws, and the election of officers.

Article III – Denominational Relationships

- A. The Tulare United Church shall be fully affiliated with both the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. The Tulare United Church shall send delegates to association, district and conference events of both denominations, support local and extended ministries, and join in any mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ.
- B. The Tulare United Church shall report an equal part of the total membership (one-half) to each denomination and such membership shall be reported with a note to the effect that the report is that of a united church, which therefore has double membership listed.
- C. Denominational apportionments or askings shall be divided equally.

Article IV – Pastor

- A. It shall be the duty of the Pastor with the congregation as appropriate, to attend to the spiritual welfare of the congregation, preach the Word of God, have care of all services of worship, administer the Sacraments, reach out to the unchurched of the community, instruct youth in confirmation, direct Christian education, comfort the sick and distressed, direct the activities of the congregation in cooperation with the Tulare United Church Board, committees and organizations, set a good example to the people, keep records and prepare reports for the

44 congregation and as required by each denomination, and be an ex-officio member of the Tulare
 45 United Church Board, committees and organizations of the church.

46 B. The Pastor shall represent the congregation at denominational meetings.

47 C. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. Either the congregation, Pastor, or
 48 denominational leadership may terminate the relationship by giving at least sixty day notice, or
 49 by mutual agreement. The pastoral relationship is terminated immediately if the Pastor's
 50 ministerial standing is revoked.

51 D. Pastoral leadership shall be either from the United Church of Christ or from the United
 52 Methodist Church in accordance with the discipline or polity of the respective denomination.
 53 Primary consideration shall be given to the qualities of the person needed for the ministry in the
 54 Tulare United Church. The Pastor shall be called or appointed with regard to sequence when
 55 possible. Both denominations shall be free to suggest qualified candidates. Terms of the
 56 call/appointment shall be negotiated by the Tulare United Church Board in consultation with
 57 the United Methodist District Superintendent or the United Church of Christ Conference
 58 Minister.

61 Article V – Members

62 A. All members are entitled to share in the fellowship and spiritual blessing of the church, to the
 63 services of the Pastor, and to Christian sympathy and support.

64 B. It is the responsibility of all members to take an active part in all functions of the Church for
 65 the glory of God and the building of Christian life and character to the best of their ability. This
 66 includes upholding the constitution and bylaws of the church, regular attendance at worship
 67 services, sharing in the financial support of the church, prayer, a spirit of Christian fellowship
 68 towards all, promoting and participating in the Christian Education programs of the church,
 69 obedience to the Word of God, and participation in the various activities and organizations of
 70 the church.

71 C. All members of the Tulare United Church shall be under the discipline of the governing body
 72 according to the rules agreed upon in harmony with the constitutions of the denominations.

73 D. All full members in good standing are entitled to voice, vote and office.

74 E. Members may choose to remove their names from membership of Tulare United Church by
 75 transfer to another Christian church or by request. Tulare United Church may remove a person
 76 from membership after three continuous years of no contact. Three attempts will be made to
 77 contact the member before final removal. All persons removed from membership are listed in
 78 the annual report for that year.

81 Article VI – Meetings

82 A. Annual Meetings - The congregation shall hold an annual meeting in January of each year to
 83 conduct business and hold elections, with the exact date being determined by the Tulare United
 84 Church Board, and with invitations to attend sent to the District Superintendent and the
 85 Conference Minister.

86 B. Special Meetings – A special meeting of the congregation may be called by the Pastor, the
 87 Tulare United Church Board, or upon written request of five percent of the full members in
 88 good standing.

89 C. The time, place and purpose of all congregational meetings shall be announced publicly from
 90 the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

91 D. Full members in good standing shall be entitled to cast one vote, which vote must be in
 92 person.

94 Article VII – Elections

95 A. Members of the Tulare United Church Board shall be elected by vote of the congregation at
 96 the annual meeting. The Tulare United Church Board at its meeting immediately following the
 97 annual meeting shall organize itself.

98 B. Members of the Tulare United Church Board shall be elected for a three year term of office,
 99 with terms arranged so that one-third are elected each year. No person may hold office for more
 100 than two terms in succession. Elected members shall assume their duties following the annual
 101 meeting.

102 C. When vacancies occur during the year, the chairperson shall have the authority to appoint a
 103 person to fill the position for the remainder of the term, upon approval of the Tulare United
 104 Church Board.

106 Article VIII – The Tulare United Church Board

107 The Tulare United Church Board shall be directly responsible to the congregation as a whole,
 108 under Jesus Christ. The Tulare United Church Board shall have the responsibility for directing
 109 the activities, life and ministry of the Church; evaluating programs and policies; preparing short
 110 and long term goals; directing and transacting the business of the church other than that which
 111 must be brought before the congregation in duly called meetings; appointing committees
 112 necessary to perform the ministry of the church, including but not limited to: Christian
 113 Education, Denominational Relations, Pastor-Parish Relations, Missions, Stewardship,
 114 Worship, and Nominating; determining the size and appointing members to standing and
 115 special committees; appointing a church historian, approving and authorizing the payment of
 116 bills, and ensuring that decisions of the congregation are carried out. The Tulare United Church
 117 Board shall be the Trustees and the Finance Committee for the Tulare United Church.

118 B. The Tulare United Church Board shall meet monthly or at the call of the Pastor or
 119 chairperson.

120 C. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for Tulare United Church Board meetings.

121 D. Organization:

122 1. At the first meeting immediately following the annual meeting, the Tulare United Church
 123 Board shall elect or appoint officers.

124 a. Chairperson – The chairperson shall conduct meetings of the Tulare United Church Board
 125 and all congregational meetings, may serve as an ex-officio member of all boards and
 126 committees, and in cooperation with the Pastor, shall have the responsibility to organize and
 127 schedule the use of the church facilities.

128 b. Vice Chairperson – The Vice Chairperson shall perform the Chairperson’s duties when
 129 the Chairperson is absent, and shall serve as a member of the Pastor-Parish Relations
 130 Committee.

131 c. Secretary – The Secretary shall keep minutes of all congregational business meetings and
 132 all Tulare United Church Board meetings. The Secretary shall also keep a complete roll of the
 133 members of the church and their addresses; keep a record of all baptisms, confirmations,
 134 marriages, and funerals, reception of new members, transfers, dismissals and deaths occurring
 135 within the Tulare United Church.

136 d. Treasurer – The treasurer shall receive a record of all deposits from the Financial
 137 Secretary; be responsible for paying, as authorized, from the church treasury all local church
 138 expense payments, including mission contributions; submitting reports to the Tulare United
 139 Church Board and congregational business meetings; presenting books to be audited at the end
 140 of the year; shall function as a member of the Finance and Stewardship Committees; shall keep
 141 all records of any Memorial Funds, and/or Building Funds.

142 Article IX – Financial Secretary

143 The Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting by the congregation for a term of
 144 one year. The Financial Secretary shall receive and record all church receipts, including all
 145 individual gifts; deposit money in the bank and make deposits known to the Treasurer; submit
 146 reports to the Tulare United Church Board and at congregational business meetings; provide
 147 offering envelopes to members upon request; and provide periodic individual statements of
 148 giving to members.
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151 Article X –Committees

152 A. The Christian Education Committee – This committee shall determine policy for all
 153 educational work of the church; coordinate Sunday School activities (in coordination with the
 154 Sunday School superintendent), appoint teachers and approve curricula (in coordination with
 155 the Sunday School superintendent); direct and advise youth educational and recreational
 156 activities and programs, encourage development of Bible study groups, oversee Vacation Bible
 157 School; consult with the Pastor on Confirmation studies; be the authoritative body for any
 158 grievances concerning Christian Education groups and activities; and promote leadership
 159 training for members. The CE Committee shall have seven members – one will be a
 160 representative from the TUC Board and one will be the Sunday School Superintendent. The
 161 Pastor will be a “voice but no vote” part of the CE Committee and will not count as one of the
 162 seven members. The chairperson will be chosen from within the committee. The CE Committee
 163 will meet on a regular basis but not less than four times a year. All decisions made by the CE
 164 Committee will be presented to the TUC Board for final approval.
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166 The Sunday School Superintendent shall oversee Sunday School activities and programs,
 167 serve on the Christian Education Board; shall recommend appointments of Sunday School
 168 teachers and aides, shall recommend materials for use, and organize programs.

169 B. The Denominational Relations Committee – This committee shall be composed of the
 170 delegates to the United Church of Christ Conference and Association meetings, the Annual

171 Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the person elected as Lay Leader by the
 172 annual meeting of the congregation. The Denominational Relations Committee shall be
 173 responsible for representing the Tulare United Church at all denominational meetings beyond
 174 the local church, and communicating denominational concerns to the local church.

175 C. The Missions Committee – This committee shall be responsible for promoting and
 176 interpreting the United Methodist and United Church of Christ apportionments and askings, as
 177 they support mission beyond our locality, to the congregation. The committee will also be
 178 responsible for local, homeland and global mission projects, and setting goals for project
 179 support.

180 D. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee – This committee shall be chaired by the Lay
 181 Leader. The committee shall be responsible for working with the United Church of Christ and
 182 the United Methodist Conferences in securing pastoral leadership make annual
 183 recommendations for salary and other expenses for the Pastor (and other persons employed by
 184 the Tulare United Church); annually evaluate the membership rolls and make recommendations
 185 concerning the assignment of members to active, inactive, or constituent listings; and provide
 186 for pulpit supply during the absence of the Pastor. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall
 187 represent and interpret the parish to the Pastor, and represent and interpret the Pastor to the
 188 parish.

189 E. The Stewardship Committee – The committee shall be in charge of promoting and
 190 publicizing financial matters; determining the need and proposed methods for all-member
 191 stewardship programs; oversee giving and tithing programs and pledge drives; and report to the
 192 annual meeting.

193 F. The Worship Committee – This committee shall assist the Pastor in preparing for
 194 communion, special worship services, music, and in evangelism and the care of member. The
 195 Worship Committee shall also be responsible for the care of the chancel, including flowers,
 196 candles, and paraments, and securing organists and pianists, ushers, acolytes, and greeters.

197 G. The Nominating Committee – This committee shall be responsible for nominating for all
 198 positions elected by the congregations, recommendations for other positions upon request by
 199 the Tulare United Church Board. This committee shall strive to identify talent of those in
 200 fellowship with the Tulare United Church, especially youth members, and encourage
 201 participation in church programs and activities. Additional nominations shall be accepted from
 202 the floor from members of the congregation at any called meeting.

203 204 205 Article XI – Auxiliary Organizations

206 With the exception of the Sunday School, all auxiliary organizations shall effect their own
 207 organization and elect their own officers, making regulations in so far as these do not conflict
 208 with the constitution of the Tulare United Church. Every auxiliary organization shall give its
 209 annual report to the church at the annual meeting, listing officers, funds collected and disbursed,
 210 and aims achieved. Organizations may include persons who are not members of the church, but
 211 the President or Chairperson must be a church member. The creation of new auxiliary
 212 organizations shall be approved by the Tulare United Church Board.

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Article XII – Parliamentary Procedure

The Spirit of Christ shall be observed in all discussions and meetings of the Church, the Tulare United Church Board, and all other committees, boards and organizations. The latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall govern on questions of procedure not covered by these Bylaws.

Article XIII – Amendments to the Bylaws

A. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made at any duly called congregational meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting.

B. Public notice of the proposal to amend the Bylaws shall be posted in the hall of entrance to the church at least ten days prior to the meeting.

- Updated 1-26-14
- Updated 1-24-16 Article X Part A
- Updated 12-13-20 Article II Part A