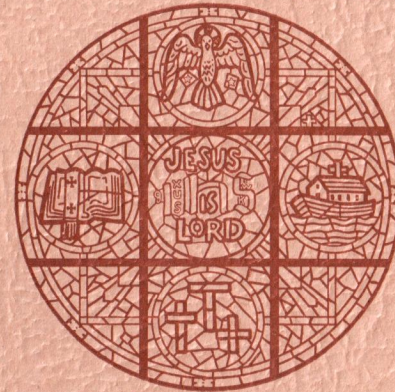


The Community Church



CONSTITUTION  
and BY-LAWS



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# The Community Church

## CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS

Morton, Illinois

1957  
TAZEWELL PUBLISHING COMPANY

*Written by*  
*Rev. Dr. William F. Hewitt*

## CONSTITUTION

This Constitution and By-Laws is a revision of that of October 1, 1950, which was a revision of that of April 14, 1925 (when the name "Community Church of Morton" was adopted), which was a revision of that of 1912 (when the name "Federated Church" was adopted). The history of the congregation dates back to 1832.

In as much as an organized community church necessitates a responsible membership, a representative council, an administrative leader, a pastor, clear and comprehensive objectives, and a plan of organization of the membership, for the extension of the Gospel, the growth of Christian personality, the promotion of Christian fellowship and mutual helpfulness, and supremely for the worship of God, we hereinunder set forth our FAITH and ORDER, with a prayer for divine grace and guidance building upon the wisdom of the past and our present apprehension of the will of God.

### OUR FAITH

In as much as our society seeks truth from the Holy Spirit in all the tributaries of the Christian Tradition, and seeks Christian fellowship with and admits to its fellowship all Christians of whatever tributary, we affirm THE REVELATION of God the Father in our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit to all believers joined together divinely as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in both worlds, the Body and Bride of Christ.

We affirm our fundamental PURPOSE ONENESS with all creeds which have sought to verbalize this revelation, especially the ecumenical (universal) creeds beginning with the Apostles' Creed. Because it contains the primordial expressions of this revelation, we place the

Bible above all other literature as God's supreme literary means of guiding his Church in faith, order, life, and work—that is, as the supreme vehicle of the Word of God. As Jesus Christ Himself and Alone is the Authority for His Church, we deny that any historical creed can do more than point to Him: all Christian creeds are directive rather than authoritative for us. In this we join ourselves to the spirit of the ecumenical bodies. We therefore propose to make liturgical but not definitive (i.e., test-of-fellowship) use of Christian creeds. Chief among the creeds we shall use in worship is the Apostles' Creed.

Since our society seeks to combine a depth of spiritual experience and fellowship with a breadth of sympathetic understanding for the particularities of the several tributaries of the Christian Tradition, this CHURCH, local in body and ecumenical (universal) in spirit, proffers membership to all sincere baptized Christians who can enter into the spirit of this our AFFIRMATION OF FAITH and who, witnessing their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, pledge their presence, service, and systematic financial support to our unified effort to worship God, serve Christ, and minister to the spiritual needs of our church, community, nation, and world.

### OUR ORDER

While we are and propose to remain a self-governing body, our recognition that the Spirit of Christ fosters neither competition nor isolation but cooperation causes us to seek out such larger Christian fellowships as will not interfere with our autonomy. Accordingly, we seek maximum cooperation with such larger fellowships.

Apropos of our principle of maximizing Christian fellowship, we allow those who join with us to maintain any

former denominational connection. When requested, we shall provide a member with two letters, upon the request of the church to which he wishes to attach himself—the letter on the basis of which the member was received into our church, and the letter from our church.

### I. Organization (See inside back cover.)

Following as closely as practicable the most ancient church-order, we govern ourselves representatively through a congregationally elected Council of Elders which recommends to the church its President.

In the absence of a professional Pastor the Council of Elders shall either elect one of its members as lay Pastor or, and preferably, constitute itself a Pulpit Committee to discover and employ, after ascertaining the church's will, a professional Pastor. It employs all staff.

To fulfil our functions as a CHRISTIAN SOCIETY we constitute SIX BOARDS:

1. THE WORSHIP BOARD shall help provide facilities for public, group, and private worship. Its **Greeting** Committee shall provide greeters for public worship. Through its **Ushering** Committee it shall provide for all the church's ushering needs. It shall be in charge of flowers and other decorations of worship areas through its **Decorations** Committee. Through its **Instrument** Committee it shall provide organ, piano, or other instrumental music for all worship occasions indicated by the Pastor. Its **Vocal** Committee, consisting of the officers and directors of all choirs under chairmanship of the president of the Senior Choir, shall provide for the singing and dramatic needs indicated by the Pastor; and shall recommend to the Council all choirleaders, whose position shall be by Council appointment. It shall assist as may be neces-



sary in the orders of worship, particularly Communion through its **Communion** Committee. Its **Spiritual Life** Committee shall take the initiative in forming and fostering prayer groups. Its **Nursery** Committee shall provide facilities whenever necessary on worship occasions.

2. THE STUDY BOARD shall concern itself with Christian education, creating and working through the **Sunday School Staff** (which the Study Board Director shall chairman, working with and through four age-level Divisional Chairmen (Child, Junior High, Senior High, and Adult), whom the Council shall appoint annually on recommendation of said Director), the **Summer Church School** Committee, the **Adult Education** Committee (whose chairman shall be the Divisional Chairman of Adults), the **Camps** Committee, and the **Audio-Visual** Committee. It shall appoint a Church **Librarian** and make provision for the Church Library in its budget.

3. THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD shall aim to develop the spirit of Christian brotherliness in the constituency and shall encourage fellowship with other groups. It shall foster **Interest-Level Fellowships** in the church, having special responsibility for all ages over high school (the Junior High and Senior High Fellowships being under the respective Divisional Chairmen of the Study Board). Its **Church Family Night** Committee shall manage all relevant matters (kitchen, music, program, clean-up), and provide for special dinners of the church. Its **Parish Visitation** Committee shall plan and carry out regular area fellowship-calling on members and friends of the church; follow up delinquents; and report relevant data to the Pastor. Its **Long-Reach** Committee shall keep in touch with youth away from home. Its general task will be to guide the social life of the church.

4. THE FINANCE AND PROPERTIES BOARD shall concern itself, under the advice and consent of the Council, with the funds and properties of the church. Its **Stewardship** Committee (consisting of a chairman chosen by the Council; the Board Director; the Treasurer; the Financial Secretary; the Assistant Treasurer; and whom-ever else the Council may designate), shall encourage informed and systematic giving and shall plan and execute the annual securing of pledges. When the membership votes a major building project, the Council shall set up a **Building Fund** Committee to raise the funds and a **Building** Committee to manage the construction. The **Properties** Committee shall secure Council appropriation for, and then execute, all needed repairs to the properties, using, where possible and practicable, **Work Crews** drawn from the constituency; and shall suggest to the Council helpful improvements on the properties, executing those which the Council approves. It shall provide and supervise a **Sexton**, again with the advice of the Council.

5. THE EXTENSION BOARD shall aim to extend the church's witness beyond the membership: (1) By its **Newcomers'** Committee, which shall contact all newcomers to Morton, and shall report relevant data to the chairman, who shall relay the information to the Pastor; and (2) By its **Visitation Evangelism** Committee, which shall aim to win to Christ specific persons, under the direction of the chairman and the Pastor. To extend participation in the labors of the Kingdom of God, its **Talent-Scout** Committee shall enlist every member and willing friend, conducting the September Talent-Scout Canvass, maintaining its files, and suggesting prospective workers requested by President, Directors, chairmen, or Pastor. To extend information, its **Public Relations** Committee

shall effect a continuing program and advise Pastor and Council on all church-publicity matters (church publications, general publications, and other appropriate media).

6. THE SERVICE BOARD shall, through its **Missions** Committee, study the world-wide and local mission of the Gospel; recommend specific mission projects to the Council; and promote knowledge of Christian missions among the constituency. Its **Benevolent** Committee shall minister to the bereaved and the ill, sending messages on behalf of the church and also encouraging personal visits. The Director shall coordinate the men's (**Men's Club, or Samaritans**) and women's (**Semper Fidelis**) work of the church. The Board shall provide either committees or individuals to care for the social-service, community-improvement, and political-action responsibilities of the church.

Each of the six Boards is hereby empowered to create whatever **OTHER COMMITTEES** seem essential to fulfilling its tasks, appointing respective committee chairmen.

*Nov.* The membership of each Board shall be the **DIRECTOR** and the **CHAIRMEN** of the committees under the Board. Before the ~~October~~ Meeting of the church, the Director of each Board shall recommend to the Council the chairmen of his committees, and the Council shall appoint chairmen for the committees of all the Boards. Each Board, after the Council has appointed chairmen for its committees, shall proceed to appoint the members of the various committees under it.

At least monthly each of the six **DIRECTORS** shall report to the Council the activities and plans of the respective Board, for mutual information, guidance, and coordination. Committee chairmen shall cooperate with their

respective **Directors** in getting committee reports to the **Directors** in preparation for Council meetings.

## II. Sacraments

We observe the two sacraments or ordinances—Baptism and Communion—common to Christians. We accept and may observe any form of either of these rites, including the "spiritual participation" of the Society of Friends. In the absence of a professional Pastor, the church may empower one of its members to administer either or both.

## BY-LAWS

The name of this church shall be **THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF MORTON, ILL.**

### SECTION I

The **officers** shall be as follows:

1. A **PASTOR**, either professional or lay, to be chosen and dismissed by the Council, which shall in each instance ascertain the church's will by mail vote sent to the entire church membership. An annual vote of confidence shall be obtained by mail vote of the members one week prior to the April Church Meeting. A majority of the voting membership shall constitute mandatory action. (This section applies also to all staff persons—for example, Co-Pastor.)

2. A **COUNCIL**, which shall be composed of:

(1) A **PRESIDENT**, to be chosen by majority vote at the April Church Meeting to serve for three years and not to succeed himself.

(2) A **CLERK**, to be chosen by plurality vote at April Church Meetings on even calendar years, to serve for two years and not to succeed himself.

(3) A TREASURER, to be chosen by plurality vote at April Church Meetings on odd calendar years, to serve for two years and not to succeed himself.

7700. (4) SIX DIRECTORS, one for each of the six Boards, to be elected, in each instance, to head a specific Board. Two shall be elected at each October Church Meeting and shall serve in that capacity for a period of three years; and none may succeed himself, though any may be re-elected to the Council after one year . . . In cases of vacancy the Council shall appoint Interim Directors to fill out the respective terms . . . The Council may redesignate the Directors, with their consent, in relation to specific Boards.

(5) The PASTOR AND OTHER STAFF PERSONS, ex officio and non-voting.

Membership in the church is prerequisite to membership on the Council.

7701. 3. A FINANCIAL SECRETARY, to be chosen by plurality vote at October Church Meetings, to serve for two years and not to succeed himself.

4. AN ASSISTANT TREASURER, whose term shall be concurrent with that of the Treasurer.

Election of all of the above officers (except the Pastor) shall be by secret ballot of members present, a majority being required.

5. DEPUTY DIRECTORS, each to be recommended by his Director and approved by the Council, and to serve the duration of the Director's term.

6. DEACONS, to be appointed at any time and in any number by the Council to fulfil specific tasks. While they may at the time be Council members, their deaconship does not constitute them members of the Council.

## SECTION II

The official duties shall be:

The professional or lay PASTOR, as a clergy member of the church, shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church, having been ordained either by another church or denomination, or, after his joining, by this church. He shall preach the Word and have in his care the stated services of public worship and the administration of the Sacraments. He shall attend but not preside over the meetings of the church and of the Council. At the time of his installation, he shall publicly declare his adherence to the spirit of this Constitution and By-Laws. (The last two sentences apply to all staff persons.)

Except as limited elsewhere in this Constitution and By-Laws by the stipulation of church membership vote, the COUNCIL shall have power to act and to coordinate the affairs of the church. It shall constitute the legal holding corporation (the trustees) of the Community Church of Morton, Illinois, and as such shall hold in trust the properties of the church and manage its financial affairs, always under the direction of the church membership. At the expiration of the President's term, the Council shall recommend to the church a President. In cases of other presidential vacancy, the Council shall appoint one of the Directors to act as Interim President until the next April Church Meeting, at which time the Council shall recommend a President and the church shall elect a President for a three-year term. The Council shall meet at least monthly. The Council may call a special meeting with any or all of the Boards and/or committees. The Council shall act as nominating committee, nominating more than one for an office when it seems desirable.

The PRESIDENT of the Council shall preside over all semiannual and special meetings of the church, as well as over all meetings of the Council. In his absence a two-thirds vote of the members present at a Church Meeting, or of Council members present at a Council meeting, shall elect a President Pro Tempore. The President shall vote on all secret ballots, but on open ballots only in case of a tie.

The CLERK shall record or have recorded, and shall file permanently, all meetings of the church and of the Council. He may not direct a Board but shall be a voting member of the Council. At the beginning of each Church Meeting or Council meeting he shall read the minutes of the preceding meeting; and they shall be, where necessary, shaped to consensus for permanent filing by the Clerk. He shall keep all further records the Pastor wishes him to keep, namely, all records not kept by the particular Pastor. He shall be responsible for seeing that records are kept of all meetings, baptisms, admissions, dismissals, weddings, and deaths. Where delegated by the Pastor, he shall issue letters of recommendation (transfer or fellowship) and of expulsion, the latter only when voted by a Church Meeting. He shall give legal notice of all meetings when necessary. In the absence of the President or vacancy of the presidency he shall call the Semiannual Church Meetings and the meetings of the Council.

The TREASURER may not direct a Board but shall be a voting member of the Council. It shall be his duty to coordinate the finances of the church and to make a monthly financial statement to the Council. With the assistance of the Director of the Finance and Properties Board, of the Financial Secretary, and of the Assistant Treasurer, he shall prepare, for general distribution at

each October Church Meeting, a financial report of the year past; and, with the advice and approval of the Council, a unified budget of the year to come. Nov.

The ELDERS (i.e., Council members), in addition to their administrative duties, shall assist the Pastor in the serving of Communion. In the event of his inability to be present, a Director shall appoint his Deputy or one of his committee chairmen to serve in his stead. The servers shall be under the direction of the President, as shall the Communion ushers in the case of altar Communion.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY shall assist the Treasurer in all designated matters of recording and corresponding, such as the keeping of the contribution records and the mailing of semiannual statements to contributors. The ASSISTANT TREASURER shall handle (preferably with a Council-designated second) all Sunday monies—picking up, counting, posting or envelope-filing, and depositing in the bank. These two officers shall not be members of the Council, but may be called before the Council to report. They shall be members of the Finance and Properties Board.

(NOTE on Section II: For further information on official duties, of the above and of all other church leaders, see "Job Descriptions of Community Church, Morton, Illinois.")

### SECTION III

The Council shall have no power to buy, transfer, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise encumber or dispose of any real property without a specific vote of the church membership authorizing such action. In connection with the Finance and Properties Board, the Council shall provide, under direction of the church, for raising money



for the support of the church's enterprises; shall have general charge of church finances; shall authorize the Treasurer as to the payment of monies under Council control; shall provide for the proper auditing of the Treasurer's accounts; and, through the Director of said Board at the ~~October~~ Church Meeting, shall make a summary statement of the past year and of the plans for the year to come.

#### SECTION IV

The Semiannual Church Meetings shall be held in the church in April and ~~October~~, specific dates to be determined by the Council. The church's fiscal year begins November 1.

#### SECTION V

All persons uniting with this church shall write their names upon the Membership Roll, after pastoral instruction and preferably in a public worship. All persons so enrolled shall contribute systematically according to their means. Upon removal from us and discovery of a new church home, they shall request their new pastor or church clerk to write to our church for a letter of recommendation (transfer or fellowship), the sending of which letter shall terminate financial obligation to our church.

#### SECTION VI

At each Semiannual Church Meeting a portion of the Constitution and/or By-Laws shall be publicly read and considered by way of refreshing the memory. Copies of the Constitution and By-Laws shall be provided all new members as they join, and the Clerk shall furnish extra copies at each Church Meeting for any who request them.

#### SECTION VII

The Clerk shall revise continuously a Mastercopy of the Constitution and By-Laws to accord with church decision; and shall make such Mastercopy public whenever requested, in part or in whole.

#### SECTION VIII

These By-Laws may be changed at any Semiannual Church Meeting by a two-thirds vote of members present, notice of same having been given by public announcement two weeks in advance. Public notice having been given two weeks in advance, the Constitution may be changed at any Semiannual Church Meeting by a ninety-percent vote of Church members present.

#### SECTION IX

Robert's Rules of Order as revised shall govern all proceedings except as otherwise provided herein. At all meetings a simple majority shall constitute a quorum.

#### SECTION X

AFFILIATIONS: Following our purpose of maximizing Christian fellowship, we seek formal relations with larger fellowships of Christians. Accordingly, we are members of the Peoria Area Council of Churches, the Midwest Council of Community Churches, and the Council of Community Churches; and we regularly support the Illinois Council of Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the International Missionary Council, and the World Council of Churches. However, at any Semiannual Church Meeting this church may withdraw from such connection(s) by a two-thirds vote of members present, public notice of same having been given two weeks in advance.

## SECTION XI

THE TIE shall be the church's regular publication, and the church Council shall be its publisher. (Certified by F. W. Reuling and W. E. Elliott, by order of the church Council, and ratified unanimously at the October 7, 1951, Church Meeting.)

## GUIDE TO SEMIANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

### THE APRIL MEETING

(day to be set at a March Council meeting, which must also arrange for the annual mail vote-of-confidence one week prior (p. 7)

Reading of minutes of most recent Church Meeting (p. 10), and report on the vote of confidence

Reading of portion of Constitution and By-Laws (p. 12)

Election of: President (p. 7, 9), Clerk (p. 7), Treasurer (p. 8), and Assistant Treasurer (p. 8)

### THE OCTOBER MEETING *Nov.*

(day to be set at a September Council meeting)

Reading of minutes of most recent Church Meeting (p. 10)

Reading of portion of Constitution and By-Laws (p. 12)

Report of the President (made from written reports of Directors, to whom chairmen previously submit written reports; or the President, after his report, may designate Directors to make their own reports)

Report of the Director of the Finance and Properties Board (p. 12), based on printed detailed report on the past year and presentation of the unified budget for the year to come (Treasurer's preparation (p. 10f)

Election of: two Directors (p. 8) and Financial Secretary (p. 8)

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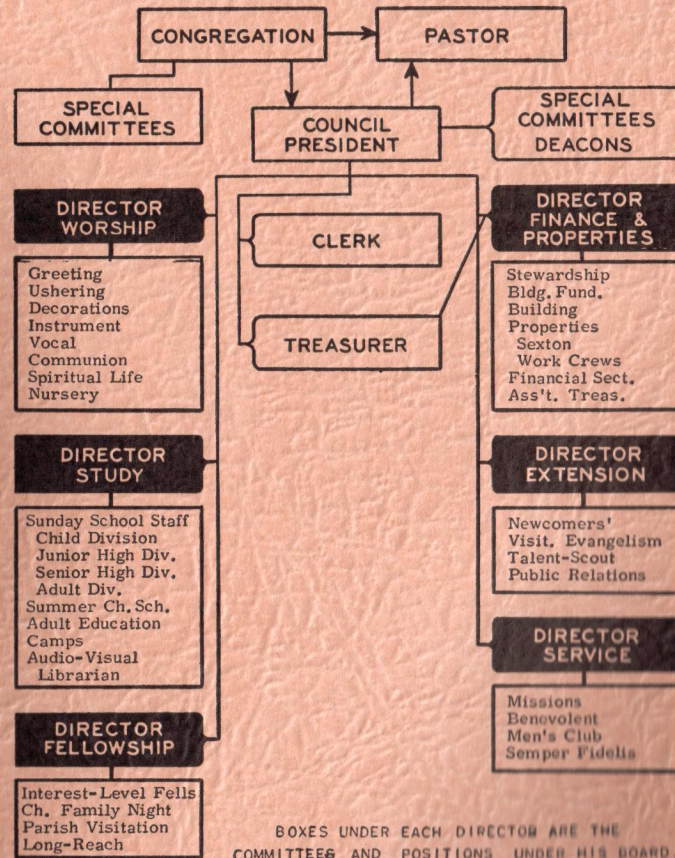
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