

**BYLAWS** of the SKYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH (United Church of Christ) Los Gatos, California.

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

This church shall be known as the “Skyland Community Church (United Church of Christ) Los Gatos, California”.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the object of sharing in the worship of God and in making God’s will primary in the lives of persons, individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**ARTICLE III. GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church is vested in its active members who exercise the right of control in its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the State of California.

While this church is amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, it accepts the obligations of mutual council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share their common aims and work.

**ARTICLE IV. DOCTRINE**

This church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and it holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the word of God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience, and under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following United Church of Christ “Statement of Faith” shall not be a test, but is an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestowed upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races. You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants, in the service of other, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ’s baptism and eat as this table, and to join him in his passion and victory. You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

## **COVENANT**

We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all humankind, exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization that each person is part of one human family. Depending, as did our ancestors, upon the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

## **STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION AND OPENNESS**

All people are created in God's image and each child of God is unique and wonderful. We celebrate the universal truth proclaimed in Galatians 3:26,28 "In Christ Jesus we are all children of God through faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for all are one in Christ Jesus".

We, the congregation of Skyland Community Church declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.

With God's grace, we seek to be a congregation inclusive of all persons without regard to race, sex, age, mental or physical ability, marital status or sexual orientation. We welcome and encourage all to join with us to share in our community life, worship and sacraments including ordained leadership and ministry. We seek to honor the individual gifts all persons bring to us.

We realize that these conclusions may not be universally held, and we acknowledge that we "know only in part" (1 Corinthians 13:9). We respect those whose prayerful and considered understanding of scripture and tradition has lead them to other conclusions, and we welcome their presence, gifts and companionship on the journey of faith.

We pledge to work for full inclusion of all persons of faith, believing that "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:38-39).

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 QUALIFICATIONS:**

This church will welcome into its membership those who are committed to live the Christian life.

### **SECTION 2. RECEPTION:**

Persons who desire to become members shall make confession of their Christian faith, or shall bring letters of transfer from other churches, or shall make reaffirmation of their faith. Candidates for membership will meet with the Board of Deacons prior to membership Sunday. They shall publicly assent to a Covenant and receive the right hand of fellowship at one of the regular services of worship and be recorded on the membership list.

### **SECTION 3. DUTIES:**

Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the purpose of the church, to attend regularly the services of worship, to contribute to its support, and to share in its organized work.

#### **SECTION 4. INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

Members whose address have long been unknown, or who, for a period of two years (in spite of kindly reminders) have not communicated with the church may be transferred to the “inactive list”. From the date of such transfer such persons shall cease to be reported on the “active” membership role. If at any time they renew their interest in the church, they may be restored to the “active list” at their request. A member on the active or inactive list who desires a letter of transfer to another church is entitled to receive one by a request to the clerk.

### **ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

#### **SECTION 1 WORSHIP SERVICES:**

Public services of worship shall be held on Sunday and such other times as the church may determine, The Holy Communion shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

#### **SECTION 2. ANNUAL MEETINGS:**

The Annual Meeting shall be held in no later than the third Sunday in February of each year, at which time officers and Board members shall be elected, reports received from officers, committees and constituent organizations, and such other business transacted as the bylaws authorize.

#### **SECTION 3 . BUDGET MEETINGS:**

The Budget Meeting shall be held no later than the third Sunday in June of each year, at which time the Council shall present an annual budget to the members for approval, and such other business transacted as the bylaws authorize.

#### **SECTION 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS:**

Special business meetings may be called by the moderator, pastor, or by the clerk on request of five active church members. Notice must be given from the pulpit, or in the church bulletin on the Sunday preceding the meeting and clearly stating the purpose of the meeting.

### **ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS**

The officers of the church, the pastor, moderator, vice-moderator, clerk, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and auditor, shall be active members of the church with the following duties:

#### **SECTION 1. DUTIES OF THE PASTOR:**

The pastor (with the assistance of the Board of Deacons) shall have in charge the spiritual welfare of the church, including the direction and/or training of any minister and interns as may be in service of the church. He/She shall seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have under his/her care all services of public worship, and be an ex-officio advisory member of all boards and committees.

## SECTION 2. DUTIES OF THE MODERATOR:

The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church with voting privileges, and by virtue of the office, be chairperson of the church council. He/She shall be elected annually, may serve two consecutive terms and is then ineligible for election to this office for one year.

## SECTION 3. DUTIES OF THE VICE-MODERATOR:

In the absence of the moderator, the vice-moderator shall perform his/her duties. He/She shall be elected annually, may serve two consecutive terms and is then ineligible for election to the office for one year. The vice-moderator accepts the special responsibility for keeping in touch with Association, Conference, and Denominational matters of concern to the laity.

## SECTION 4. DUTIES OF THE CLERK:

The clerk shall keep a record of the business meetings of the church and of the council. He/She shall keep the roll of church members, recording all admissions, transfers (to other churches or to inactive status), baptisms, deaths, and marriages; shall issue letters of transfer, shall notify persons elected to office, give notice of meetings when such notice is required, and make full report to the church at the annual meeting. He/She shall be secretary of the council and shall be a voting member of the council. He/She shall be elected annually and may serve two consecutive terms and is then ineligible for election to this office for one year.

## SECTION 5. DUTIES OF THE TREASURER:

The treasurer shall receive and have the keeping of all money contributed to the church and its benevolence. He/She shall pay out money from the church treasury as directed by the board of Trustees. He/She shall keep a record of all receipts and disbursements, which records shall be open to the inspection of the Board of Trustees, and shall render monthly reports as the council and church require. He/She shall have the custody of insurance papers, deeds, and all legal documents of the church. He/She shall be elected annually and shall hold office until a successor is elected.

## SECTION 6. DUTIES OF THE ASSISTANT TREASURER:

The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer in his/her duties. In the absence of the treasurer, the assistant treasurer shall perform the treasurer's duties. He/She shall be elected annually and shall hold office until a successor is elected.

## SECTION 7. DUTIES OF THE AUDITOR:

The auditor shall audit the accounts of the church and all its organizations. He/She shall report to the church annually and to the council when required. For these purposes he/she shall have access to the books of the treasurer, the clerk, and officers of organizations of the church. He/She shall be elected annually and shall hold office until a successor is elected.

## **ARTICLE VIII. BOARDS**

### **SECTION 1. BOARD OF DEACONS:**

This board shall consist of nine lay, not in-care, members elected by the membership for a three year term. Each year three of the members, who have completed their terms, shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year. Duties:

- Cooperate with the pastor in ministering to the spiritual and individual needs of the church and community.
- Prepare the sacraments and assist with the communion and baptism.
- Provide ushers and liturgists as required.
- Make the annual survey of the membership rolls for any appropriate revisions.
- Provide a substitute minister in the absence of the regular pastor.
- Oversee the activities of all ministers and interns.

Candidates for this committee must be widely respected, active members of the church.

### **SECTION 2. BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**

This board shall consist of nine members elected by the membership for a three year term. Each year three of the members, who have completed their term shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year. The pastor and the church school superintendent shall be ex-officio members of this board.

Duties:

- Be responsible for the program of religious education including adult education, church school, the nursery, youth group, and library.
- Be responsible for the selection of a superintendent of the church school and shall recommend that person to the church council for approval.
- Assist the superintendent in recruiting church school teachers.

### **SECTION 3. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

This board shall consist of nine members elected by the membership for a three year term. Each year three of the members, who have completed their term shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year.

This board shall perform, under the care and direction of the church, and except as otherwise provided, care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its financial affairs, always subject to the laws of the state.

This board shall have no power to buy, mortgage, sell, lease or transfer church property without specific authority given by vote of the church.

Five members in attendance at a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

#### **SECTION 4. BOARD OF MISSIONS**

This board shall consist of six members elected by the membership for a two year term. Each year three of the members, who have completed their term shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year.

This board shall address issues of concern to the church and focus on ways members can help. The issues are problems affecting the local and the international community.

#### **SECTION 5. BOARD OF MUSIC AND ARTS:**

This board shall consist of six members elected by the membership for a two year term. Each year three of the members, who have completed their term shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year. The Choir Director, Organist, and Pianist will be ex-officio members of this board. Duties:

- Provide programs for the church community in the area of music and the arts.
- Select and encourage paid and volunteer staff persons.
- Recruit and encourage members for the church choir.
- Prepare budget requests each year to support its programs.

### **ARTICLE IX. COMMITTEES**

#### **SECTION 1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE:**

At least three months prior to the annual meeting the church council shall appoint a nominating committee to prepare nominations for all officers, boards, and committees not otherwise provided for. This committee shall prepare a ballot nominating one person for each office to be filled at the annual meeting, and such nominations shall be printed and available at the church not later than two Sundays previous to the annual meeting. The ballot thus prepared shall be the official ballot at the annual meeting, provided always that any voter may write upon his/her ballot the name of any eligible person, and that the right of a member to make a nomination from the floor shall always be recognized.

#### **SECTION 2. PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:**

This committee shall consist of four members elected by the membership for a two year term. Each year two of the members, who have completed their term shall retire. Incumbents may serve two consecutive terms and are then ineligible for election to this office for one year. Candidates for this committee must be active members of the church who are widely respected in the church and who have a relationship of trust with the pastor. They will:

- Meet at least twice a year to review the effectiveness of the ongoing relationship between the pastor and the congregation.
- Insure that proper attention is given to the welfare of the pastor.
- Make recommendation to the trustees regarding the pastor's annual salary and benefits.
- Mediate problems or issues between members of the congregation and the pastor.
- Give guidance to the pastor

A quorum for the committee shall consist of three members.

### **SECTION 3: MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

This committee shall consist of up to five members, appointed by the Deacons for a three-year term. The committee shall consist of at least one Deacon, one Trustee, and up to three other church members. It shall:

- Provide assistance, information, and counseling to all initiators of memorial funds,
- Make recommendations to the board of trustees with regards to the initiators' requests for use of the funds, and
- Maintain the memorial book

### **SECTION 4. ETC:**

Other committees may be appointed or elected as needed.

## **ARTICLE X. THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

The council shall consist of: the moderator as chairperson, the pastor ex-officio, the church officers, and the chairpersons of the church boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations or their designees. Chairpersons are lay members of the church, who are annually selected by and from the membership of the boards, committees, or auxiliary organizations they chair.

It shall be the function of the council to visualize the entire task of the church, to advise the pastor on the general direction of the church's activities, and to cooperate with the pastor in the formation of a well-rounded program. The council is authorized to act and/or authorize the church officers, boards and/or committees to act for the church in the transaction of routine business, always assuming that unless such action is taken with practical unanimity, it must have the confirmation of the church membership. The council is obligated to seek church member approval for every non-revocable agreement that places obligations on the church, which extend beyond a year.

The moderator shall be expected to prepare an agenda for each meeting, but any member may bring before the meeting matters not on the agenda. Meetings of the council, except when special executive sessions are announced, shall be open to any members of the church who wish to attend, but the vote shall be restricted to the council membership. A quorum requires a majority of council members.

The council will meet a minimum of 6 times annually, as called by the moderator. Reasonable notice of the meetings will be given to the congregation.

## **ARTICLE XI. ELECTIONS**

### **SECTION 1. PASTORAL VACANCY:**

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the church council shall appoint a pastoral search committee, which shall work with the Northern California Nevada Conference to secure a candidate. The election of a pastor shall be by vote of the church at a regular church meeting with a two-thirds majority of votes cast being necessary for choice. Notice of such meeting for the election shall be given from the pulpit and by direct mail to all active members at least one week previous to the day of the meeting. The term of office shall be indefinite and unless otherwise provided either pastor or church may dissolve the pastoral relationship by giving sixty

days notice. The pastor may continue his/her professional practice only as long as he/she maintains Ministerial Standing in the NCN Conference.

#### SECTION 2. ELECTED OFFICES:

All officers and members of boards and members of standing committees shall be nominated by the nominating committee and be elected by the church at the annual meeting. At such meeting, opportunity shall be given for nominations other than those presented by the nominating committee. Vacancies, which occur between annual meetings, shall be filled for the unexpired term, by the council.

Unless otherwise specified, non-church members may fill a minority of all board and committee positions.

#### SECTION 3. VOTING

All members of the church, present at a congregational meeting, shall be eligible to vote, on all motions presented to the meeting.

#### SECTION 4. QUORUM

A quorum for a congregational meeting shall consist of twenty-five members of the church.

### **ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended at the annual meeting of the church, or at any special business meeting, provided notice of each proposed amendment shall be given publicly on the Sunday preceding the business meeting. Such action shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. All amendments shall be listed, with their date of passage. If the amendment resulted in changes to existing articles, such changes will be incorporated into the articles, and a description of such changes shall be listed in the amendment.

#### AMENDMENT 1. REVERSION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

If at any time the church corporation that is identified in these bylaws becomes defunct, or ceases to exist, all of the real and personal property owned by the church is hereby granted to the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ.

#### AMENDMENT 2.

added statement of Affirmation and openness on 1/31/99

#### AMENDMENT 3

Replaced section 3, Article IX, on 6/13/04

#### AMENDMENT 4

Corrected various misspellings and inserting changes already passed.

Changed section 3, Article VI to section 4, and added a new section 3, to specify the annual budget meeting.

Added words in Article XI section 3, to clarify voting.

Added sentences to Article XII to specify amendment requirements.

Added duties for pastor in Article VII section 1.



Changed responsibilities of Deacons in Article VIII section 1.

Added Pastoral Relations pastor guidance responsibility in Article IX section 2.

Added the definition of chairperson, extended the authority of the council to authorize others to transact business, and defines when to go to the congregation in Article X.

Changed the definition of congregational meeting quorum in Article XI section 4. On 1/28/07.

#### AMENDMENT 5

Added active church member requirement to all Officers in Article VI, Deacons in Article VIII section 1, and Pastoral Relations in Article XI section 2.

Added non-members may fill a minority board and committee elected offices in Article XI section 2.

Changed the Annual meeting from in the month of January to no later than the third Sunday in February in Article VI section 2, and changed the Budget meeting from in the month of May to no later than the third Sunday in June. On 2/9/14.