

BY-LAWS OF THE
SKYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH
(Congregational)
Los Gatos, California

ARTICLE I. NAME

This church shall be known as the SKYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH (Congregational), 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 his will dominant in the lives of men, individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, and death of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III. GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in its members who are in good standing and who exercise the right of control in all 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 Congregational-Christian churches 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 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 own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith, therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

FAITH. We believe in God, the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love; and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.

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 mankind, 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 of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, 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.

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. They shall be recommended by the Board of Deacons and elected by the church. They shall publicly assent to the Covenant and receive the right hand of fellowship at one of the regular services of worship.

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. TERMINATION: A member in good standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to another church is entitled to receive one on vote by the Board of Deacons. Members whose addresses have long been unknown, or who, for a period of two years, in spite of skidly reminders, have not communicated with the church, or contributed to its support, may, by vote of the church be transferred to the "inactive list." From the date of such transfer such persons shall cease to be reported on the active membership roll. If at any time they renew their interest in the church, they may be restored to the active list by vote of the church. Persons of the inactive list may, upon reinstatement by the church, be granted letters of dismissal to other churches if they so request. Should a member become an offense to the church and continually disregard his covenant duties, the council may, after due notice to the member and a hearing, terminate his membership by a two-thirds vote of the council members present at the next official meeting of the council, which shall be closed for the purpose.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Public services of worship shall be held on Sunday and at such other times as the church may determine. The Holy Communion shall be celebrated on the first Sunday in each quarter.

SECTION 2. The Annual Meeting shall be held in the second week of January of each year, at which time officers and Board members shall be elected, reports received from officers, committees and constituent organizations, the budget adopted, and such other business transacted as these By-Laws authorize.

SECTION 3. Special business meetings may be called by the moderator, pastor, or by the clerk on request of five church members, notice being given from the pulpit, or in the church bulletin, on the Sunday preceding the meeting and clearly stating the object of the meeting.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be a Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Pastor, Clerk, Treasurer, and Auditor.

SECTION 1. DUTIES OF THE MODERATOR. The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church except those for election of members. By virtue of his office, he shall be chairman of the church council. In the absence of the moderator the vice-moderator shall preside. He shall be elected annually and may serve two terms consecutively before being ineligible for one year. He shall be a member, ex-officio, of the Board of Trustees, with power to vote.

SECTION 2. DUTIES OF THE PASTOR. The pastor shall have in charge the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons. He shall seek to enlist men as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have under his care all services of public worship, and administer boards and committees. He shall be ex-officio, an advisory member of all boards and committees, and shall preside at election of members. The election of a pastor, when a vacancy occurs, shall be by vote of the church at a regular meeting. His nomination shall be made by the council. Notice for such meeting for the election shall be given from the pulpit and by direct mail to all members at least one week previous to the day of 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.

SECTION 3. DUTIES OF THE CLERK. The clerk shall keep a record of the business meetings of the church and of the council. He shall keep the roll of church members, recording all admissions, dismissals, baptisms, deaths, and marriages; shall issue letters of transfer voted by the church, 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 shall be secretary of the council and shall be a voting member of the council. His term of office shall be for one year and until his successor is chosen.

SECTION 4. DUTIES OF THE TREASURER. The treasurer shall receive and have the keeping of all money contributed to the church and its benevolences. He shall pay out money from the church treasury as directed by the Board of Trustees. He shall keep a record of all receipts and disbursements, which records shall be open to the inspection of the Board of Trustees. He shall render monthly reports to the council, and annual reports to the church, and provide for special reports as the council and church may require. He shall have the custody of insurance papers, deeds, and all legal documents of the church. He shall be elected for one year and shall hold office until his successor shall be elected.

SECTION 5. DUTIES OF THE AUDITOR. The auditor shall audit the accounts of the church and all its organizations. He shall report to the church annually and to the council when required. For these purposes he shall have access to the books of the treasurer, the clerk, and officers of organizations of the church.

SECTION 6. DUTIES OF THE ASSISTANT MODERATOR. In the absence of the moderator, the assistant moderator shall perform his duties.

ARTICLE VIII. BOARDS

SECTION 1. BOARD OF DEACONS. The Board of Deacons shall consist of three deacons and three deaconesses, one of each being elected each year for three year terms.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to cooperate with the pastor in ministering to the spiritual interests of the church and community. It shall assist in the preparation and administration of the ordinances, in caring for the poor, the sick, the indifferent, and the stranger. They shall receive applications by letter or otherwise for admission to church membership, and shall examine all applicants for membership on confession of faith, with respect to their fitness therefor. They shall give attention to discipline as provided for in these By-Laws. They shall make an annual survey of the church rolls regarding revisions and make recommendations to the church at its annual meeting. They shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in case of a vacancy and in the absence of the pastor.

SECTION 2. BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. This Board shall consist of the pastor and two members, one of whom shall be elected at annual meeting, each to serve two years. The Board shall have responsibility for the program of religious education. It shall be responsible for the selection of teachers and superintendents of the church school as occasion may require. It shall recommend to the council, for election by them, a church school superintendent and secretary-treasurer. It shall foster and direct the young people's activities of the church.

SECTION 3. THE CHURCH COUNCIL. The Council shall consist of the moderator of the church, as its chairman, the pastor ex-officio, the church officers, and the members of the church boards and the chairmen of committees and auxiliary organizations.

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 him in the formation of a well rounded program. The council is authorized 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. The council shall submit to the annual meeting a comprehensive program covering the chief objectives of the church for the coming year. All officers, boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations shall present their plans and programs to the church council for their information.

The pastor 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 majority shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 4. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. The Board of Trustees shall consist of four members, elected for a term of two years (or until their successors are duly chosen) in such manner that the terms of two shall expire each year. At least three-fourths of the elected members of the board shall be members of the church. The moderator shall also be a member of the board (ex-officio) with power to vote. Under the care and direction of the church, and except as otherwise provided, the board of trustees shall have the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its financial affairs, always subject to the regulations of the laws of the State. The board shall have no power to buy, mortgage, sell, lease or transfer church property without specific authority given by vote of the church. Three members in attendance at a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

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 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.

Other committees may be appointed or elected as needed.

ARTICLE X. ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. The minister shall be elected on nomination of the council or special pastoral committee, by a vote of the church, a two-thirds majority of all the votes cast being necessary for choice.

SECTION 2. All other officers, board members, and standing committee chairmen 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 committee. Vacancies which occur between annual meetings shall be filled for the unexpired terms by the council.

SECTION 3. Any member in good standing shall be eligible to vote.

SECTION 4. A quorum shall consist of ten members.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at the annual meeting of the church, or at any special business meeting, provided notice of such 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.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY
THE SKYLAND COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING
JANUARY 15, 1956

WE, the members of Skyland Congregational Christian Church, do firmly believe that the religious and organizational freedom, which we now enjoy and which was patterned from the first century Christian churches, and first embodied in the "Covenants of the Pilgrim Fathers", is an expression of the highest development in the organization of the Christian church, and that this priceless heritage should not in anywise be abrogated.

THEREFORE, we affirm:

1. It is our conviction that it is the will of God that the Body of Christ should be one voluntary fellowship, the Universal Church, united in service to Christ.
2. It is our desire that our churches should unite our Associations, Conferences and the General Council with such other fellowships or communions as do recognize the basic democratic concepts of the Church which reserve to the local congregation the following rights and responsibilities:
 - a. Selecting and calling its own pastor.
 - b. Owning and controlling its own property.
 - c. Writing its own covenant and/or statement of faith.
 - d. Deciding its own basis of membership.
 - e. Determining its own interpretation and observance of the sacraments and ordinances.
 - f. Organizing other free churches on a basis of these congregational principles.
3. It is our recommendation that local churches, associations, and conferences should protect these rights by specifically stating them in their by-laws, constitution or articles of incorporation.
4. It is our conviction that so long as local churches in this Conference and in others maintain these freedoms in their laws and usage, we shall keep both our fellowship and our freedom.

We favor participation in the union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church to become the United Church of Christ, with the understanding

1. that the rights enumerated in the foregoing resolution will be maintained, and
2. that any church, association, or conference may withdraw from this United Church, with its property, at any time after the union shall have been consummated, and
3. that, in any event, the constitution of the proposed new "United Church of Christ" be ratified by both church organizations, prior to final action, and
4. that we recommend that, if a union cannot be consummated upon the principles above outlined, a new plan based upon a "covenant" between the two churches rather than an organic merger be implemented.