

CONSTITUTION OF THE SUQUAMISH COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be Suquamish Community Congregational United Church of Christ, located in Suquamish, Washington.

ARTICLE II OBJECTIVE

The objective of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God; combining our resources in a ministry seeking wholeness, justice, and peace for all people, making God's Will known to and dominant in the lives of all people, individually and collectively, especially as that Will is set forth in the life teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

In the spirit of Jesus' message and life, the Suquamish Community Congregational United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Church. We welcome and accept all people into worship, participation in church life, full membership and leadership, and are affirming to members of groups that continue to suffer injustice for reasons that may include sexual orientation, race, gender, ethnic background, age, marital status, physical ability and developmental differences.

ARTICLE III GOVERNMENT AND FELLOWSHIP

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head. In matters of faith and practice we look for guidance to the Holy Scriptures, the traditions of the church, individual Christian experience, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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

We hold to the autonomy of the local church.

We are a participating member in the Pacific Northwest Conference, and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

We seek unity within the diversity of all churches which seek to promote the Kingdom of God on Earth.

We share the vision of Christians, "That They May All Be One" in Christ.

ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH

We recognize the Bible as the primary guide for our faith and conduct.

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as the agent of freedom for those who believe in Him, and the personification of the potential of the Christian life style.

We believe that God has been revealing and will continue to reveal the power of life in creation, healing and relationships of love throughout history.

We respect the power of the Holy Spirit, which works in each person differently, thus we will respect different perspectives and interpretations of Christianity within our fellowship, hoping to grow in understanding and reflect more perfectly the image of God in which we are created.

We believe that the Christian Church exists wherever people affirm their following of Christ and come together in love for God, their neighbor and themselves.

The following statement of faith is an expression of the spirit in which this church and others of the United Church of Christ interpret the word of God:

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother and to whose deeds we testify.

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table, to join Him in His passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial rejoicing, and eternal life in that Kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1

This Church will welcome into its membership any persons who affirm their discipleship to Jesus Christ, and who will join in covenant as active participants in the ministry of this part of His body, the church.

Members are expected to be faithful to the Christian lifestyle, to attend worship regularly, to give regular financial support to the budgeted mission and ministry of the church, to share time and talent in the church's organized work, to share in the fellowship and spiritual support of the Christian community, and to seek to bring others into the fellowship of Christ.

Members have the privilege of sharing the joys of the Christian community; of helping to decide the directions of the mission and ministry of the church through their vote and their voice; of serving as elected, appointed or volunteer leaders in the organized work of the church; and of taking part in planning the life and mission of the church.

SECTION 2

Members join the church through one of three possible actions after participating in a multiple-session orientation class:

- a. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ with baptism if not previously baptized
- b. Letter of transfer from another church
- c. Reaffirmation of faith when for good and acceptable reason, a letter of transfer is not available from another church

SECTION 3 - Membership Status

- a. **ACTIVE MEMBERS** - Those members who are participating in the life, mission and ministry of the church and share in the sacrament of Holy Communion.
- b. **NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS** - Members who have moved from this community but stay in communication with the church and desire to continue a membership relationship with the church. This status should be reestablished each year.
- c. **ASSOCIATE MEMBERS** - This status shall be extended to all who wish to be actively engaged in the work and worship of this congregation, who have previously publicly confessed faith in Jesus Christ, but do not wish their letters transferred. Associate members shall have all privileges of full

membership except vote on constitutional change and disposition of church property. Associate members will not be included in the figures reported to the U.C.C. Yearbook.

SECTION 4 - Termination of Membership upon Request

- a. Transfer to another church may be effected by a letter of transfer in which case the letter shall be authorized by the minister and issued by the clerk and shall specify the particular church to which it is granted.
- b. In case of those who may be unable to specify the particular church, which they wish to join, the minister may authorize a certificate of membership, whereupon the clerk shall issue the same and remove the names from the roll.
- c. A simple release from membership may be authorized by the Diaconate Board, here upon the clerk shall remove the names from the roll.
- d. Actions taken under a, b, and c shall be reported at the next annual meeting of the church.

SECTION 5 - Termination of Membership by Action of the Church

- a. If the absence or lack of participation of inactive members shall extend beyond three years, it shall be reported by the Diaconate Board at the next annual meeting, and by vote of the congregation, these persons may be removed from the membership lists entirely. Upon return, these persons may restore their membership by reaffirmation of faith. (Section 2,c).
- b. Cases of Offenses - Should a member become an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct, the church may terminate membership after due notice and hearing and congregational vote.

The Diaconate board, by the majority vote, shall have the authority to serve notice to the member in question and to the congregation and convene a hearing to investigate the situation.

Before such hearing or vote, the minister or chairperson of the Diaconate Board or both shall counsel with the member as follows:

1. Offer the guidance and support of the church.
2. Seek to determine whether or not the member is repentant and desirous of the church's aid.

If the member is not repentant or renounces the church, steps as outlined above may be taken to terminate the person's membership.

ARTICLE VI SERVICES AND MEETINGS

SECTION 1 - Worship Services

- a. Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the church.

b. The Sacraments - The sacraments of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated and the baptism of adults and the baptism or consecration of children shall be administered at such times as the minister or the Diaconate Board may appoint.

c. Other services for worship, inspiration and prayer may be held as determined by the Diaconate Board.

SECTION 2 - Business Meetings

a. Semi-Annual Meeting - The semi-annual meeting shall be held in January and June or at such time as may be designated by the church Board of Administration. The purpose of the meeting will be:

1. To receive the semi-annual reports of officers, boards, committees and other ministries of the church.
2. To elect officers.
3. To transact business.
4. To adopt the annual budget.
5. To set up plans for the new year.

b. Meetings of the church boards are open to all members of the congregation, with the exception of special personnel meetings of the Board of Trustees, which are strictly confidential.

c. Special Meetings - Special meetings of the church shall be called by the Board of Administration on request by the minister, or any ten (10) members of the church. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.

d. Meeting Rules and Regulations

NOTICES - Notice for the semi-annual and other congregational meetings shall be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

QUORUM - A quorum at the semi-annual meeting shall be twenty percent (20%) of the active members.

VOTING - Elections shall be by voice vote or showing of hands unless a ballot is called for. Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive and all members of the church are entitled to vote, except on corporate matters where legal age is required.

OFFICIAL YEAR - The fiscal year of the church and all annual reports shall coincide. All board members and church officers shall assume their duties at the time of their election and continue in office until their successors are elected.

REPORTS - All officers and boards shall report at the semi-annual meetings.

MEETING PROCEDURES - Robert's Rules of Order will govern parliamentary procedures during the semi-annual and other congregational meetings.

This is where the Article on Decision Making Bodies will be inserted

ARTICLE VII DECISION MAKING BODIES

There shall be three boards of five people to be elected by the membership of the church. Boards are those bodies comprised of elected church leaders with a defined area of responsibility in the life of the church. Specific duties are outlined in the following sections of this article. The structure of each board, how often they meet, and the style of meeting each board employs is to be determined by each board, subject to oversight by the Board of Administration. All members of the boards must be on the current active and associate membership rolls. Each board will have a designated person who will convene meetings and serve as contact-person for those outside their group. One member of the church will be elected by each board to serve as an officer of our non-profit organization. The officers elected by each board may be, but are not required to be, a member of the electing board. All boards are accountable to and must act in the best interest of the church congregation.

SECTION 1 - THE BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Administration is responsible for oversight, nominating, and mediation between committees and boards. The task of this Board is to visualize the entire task of the church and to advise the minister on the general direction of the church's activities. It shall act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the congregation on issues of policy and coordination of church mission and ministry. The task of this Board is to evaluate the effectiveness of our church life and leadership and to see that all elected church positions are filled. A quorum for meetings of this board is four.

The Board of Administration shall be responsible for convening the semi-annual congregational meetings and presenting a comprehensive program involving the chief objectives of the church for the coming year.

The Board of Administration is responsible for the oversight of committees and auxiliary organizations and will disband the committee when the task is complete, or if membership of the committee fell below the required two, or if the plan is not being followed.

Committee and auxiliary organization plans and programs will be reviewed by the church board responsible for the specific groups area of focus and accepted or denied approval.

SECTION 2 - THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons or Diaconate is responsible for worship, the spiritual life of the congregation and outreach to the world community. The task of this board is to enrich the spiritual life of our church through worship, counseling and visitation. A quorum for meetings of this board is four.

The Boards duties shall include preparing the worship area for worship and supervising the ushers. The Boards duties shall also include the Christian Education of children, youth, and adults and all church outreach programs.

The Board will review membership rolls and make recommendations on membership status and development of membership covenants. The Board is responsible for keeping all church records: membership; marriages; baptisms; and deaths; writing letters of transfer to other churches; and receiving same from other churches. The Board will provide for a liaison to the Washington North Idaho Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The Board will submit a plan of action for the upcoming time period (six months) at each semi-annual congregational meeting.

SECTION 3 - THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees are responsible for the business, plant, personnel and financial stewardship of the church. A quorum for meetings of this board is four.

The task of this board is to assure the stability of the church finances and property. Under direction of the congregation 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 prescribed by laws of the State of Washington and the Articles of Incorporation of this church.

The Board shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage or lease or transfer real property without specific authority by vote of the congregation.

The Board shall have authority to buy or sell personal property of the church and shall have jurisdiction over the use of the church property.

The Board will submit a plan of action for the upcoming time period (six months) at each semi-annual congregational meeting.

The Board shall select three current active members of the church (the selected members may be members of the Board) that shall be designated as the Personnel Council. This Personnel Council shall:

Recommend to the combined Board of Trustees and Board of Administration any personnel changes or additions.

Update job descriptions and institute periodic time sheets for the purpose of determining Church priorities in relation to the staff.

Insure that regular evaluations of staff are conducted in separate meetings with each. All meetings and minutes shall be confidential.

Determine employment policies, vacation time, attendance at conferences and continuing education for staff.

Present negotiated staff salaries and benefits to the Board of Trustees as a whole.

Insure all employment agreements are updated annually and signed by staff prior to the Semi-Annual Meeting in January, acted upon at the Semi-Annual Meeting in January and signed immediately following by the church officials. The Personnel Council shall act on behalf of the congregation membership on all matters dealing with church staff and shall be accountable to the Board of Trustees.

Staff shall be accountable to this council.

SECTION 4 - TASK FORCES, PROJECT TEAMS AND PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Task Forces, Project Teams and Program Committees are bodies comprised of appointed and volunteer members with the task of developing and implementing programs directed toward a specific group of focus.

Committees recruited and supervised by the boards to carry out board responsibilities (such as communion for Deconate) are required to have at least two members and can be instituted, discontinued, or redesigned by vote of the sponsoring Board.

Members desiring to undertake other projects will do so on an ad hoc basis, with committees being formed, consisting of at least two members and having submitted a plan of action for approval to the church board responsible for the specific groups area of focus. That Board is then responsible for oversight of their actions. Each committee will be disbanded when the task is done, or if membership of the committee falls below the required two, or if the plan is not being followed. Examples of teams who work together to develop and implement programs of ministry for the church within a given segment of church life are outreach, enrichment, caring ministries, evangelism and community concerns.

ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The church, as a 501(3c) non profit corporation in the State of Washington, is required each year to report to the state, the list of Officers, and Board of Directors of the corporation according to the articles of incorporation filed with the State of Washington. In addition, the state requires that the church list the registered agent, address of the registered agent, and physical address, and mailing address of the corporation.

The officers of this church shall be Administrative Executive, Recording Clerk, and Financial Officer. They shall be the authorized signatories of the church and shall act at the direction of the boards that elected them. If any officer cannot fulfill their duties it is the responsibility of the electing board for that officer to elect a replacement. All officers of the church shall be members of this church. The Board of Directors shall be the Board of Trustees as they are responsible for the business, plant, personnel and financial affairs of the church.a.
Administrative Executive

The Administrative Executive shall be elected by the Board of Administration and shall act at the direction of the board. The Administrative Executive may be a member of the Board of Administration though that is not required. The Administrative Executive is a signatory of the church. The Administrative Executive duties shall include convening the regular semi-annual meetings of the congregation and any special meetings as required.

b. Recording Clerk

The Recording Clerk shall be elected by the Board of Deacons and shall act at the direction of the board. The Recording Clerk may be a member of the Board of Deacons though that is not required. The Recording Clerk shall be the Registered Agent for the church and a signatory of the church. The Recording Clerk is responsible for keeping the church records: membership, marriages, baptisms, and deaths; communication with other churches: write letters of transfer and receive the same from other churches; and communication to the world community.

c. Financial Officer

The Financial Officer shall be elected by the Board of Trustees and shall act at the direction of the board. The Financial Officer may be a member of the Board of Trustees though that is not required. The Financial Officer is a signatory of the church. The Financial Officers chief responsibility is the financial affairs of the church. As such the Financial Officer is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the activities of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, both of whom, report to the Financial Officer and the Board of Trustees.

c.1. Treasurer - The Treasurer is to receive deposit receipts and appropriate itemizations of funds from the Financial Secretary; transfer funds between such depositories as the Trustees and Financial Officer shall order; and shall pay the bills of the church on order from the Trustees, keeping an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer shall give such bonds as the Trustees and Financial Officer may prescribe. The Treasurer shall be selected by the Board of Trustees and approved by the combined Board of Administration and Board of Trustees. The treasurer may preferably be a paid church employee. If not already a member of the Board of Trustees, the treasurer shall be a member ex-officio, without vote.

A financial audit shall be performed annually after closing of books prior to the first semi-annual meeting after the close of the fiscal year or as otherwise required. The audit will be performed by the Board of Trustees or by a committee appointed by the board.

c.2. FINANCIAL SECRETARY - The financial secretary shall receive and deposit all moneys and benevolences, take charge of all offerings and special collections, and keep an accurate account of all receipts of the same. The financial secretary shall be selected by the Board of Trustees and approved by the combined Board of Administration and Board of Trustees. If not already a member of the Board of Trustees, the financial secretary shall be a member ex-officio, without vote. The financial

secretary shall give such bonds as the Trustees and Financial Officer may prescribe.

ARTICLE IX CHURCH EMPLOYEES

a. **MINISTER** - The minister shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church, with the assistance of the Diaconate board. The minister shall be responsible for all services of public worship. It shall be the minister's duty to administer the sacraments, to teach, to visit the sick, the sorrowing and the stranger and to promote in all ways the spiritual interests of the church and those whom it serves. The minister shall be an ex-officio advisory member of all boards and committees and shall be a resource person for Christian Education of children, youth, and adults and all church outreach programs.

The minister is directly accountable to the Board of Trustees Personnel Council acting on behalf of the congregation. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Board of Administration shall elect a Pastoral Selection Committee composed of at least ten (10) members. An attempt shall be made to have every board and organization in the church represented on this committee. The committee should work in cooperation with the Conference Minister and others and make a canvas of available ministers. When one is settled upon, the minister will be introduced to the church at a duly called congregational meeting, and the election of this person proposed.

When a minister has been elected and has accepted the call, if it is agreeable to the minister and the church, the minister may ask for an ecclesiastical council for the purpose of being installed or recognized as the minister, in accordance with established usage. The minister shall become a member of the church and seek standing in the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC at the first opportunity.

While the term of the minister shall be indefinite, the church may at any time, by a majority vote at a congregational meeting called for the purpose, request the resignation of the minister, with the expectation that formal notice will be presented within thirty (30) days of the congregational vote. Termination, whether initiated by the church or the minister, requires sixty (60) day notice. In the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the minister, relations shall be suspended at once, pending further investigation.

b. **ADDITIONAL MINISTERIAL STAFF** - The church may call additional ministerial staff if they perceive it to benefit the mission of the church. Such position would work as part of the job description of the minister (section a.) Conditions for replacement and termination would be the same as in section a.

c. **OTHER STAFF** - Additional specialized staff may be hired by the church as deemed necessary to help serve effectively the people of the church community and the institution.

Such personnel are directly accountable to the Board of Trustees Personnel Council acting on behalf of the congregation. Consistent with current

employment policies, the Board of Trustees Personnel Council will provide contracts, job descriptions and grievance procedures. The minister of the church is to be head of staff, thus supervising the daily work of the additional personnel.

If additional personnel are deemed necessary, the Board of Trustees is to act as the calling committee or appoint a committee to survey candidates and make a recommendation to the combined Board of Administration and the Board of Trustees. The combined Board of Administration and the Board of Trustees has the power to hire or terminate specialized personnel. A thirty (30) day notice of termination is required unless otherwise noted on Employment Policy.

ARTICLE X DENOMINATION DELEGATE SELECTION GUIDELINES

When delegates are needed to represent our church at wider church events such as the Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting, the Board of Administration shall give consideration to a representative of the Diaconate Board other various boards and all segments of church life, i.e. outreach, enrichment, caring ministries, worship, youth, etc.

ARTICLE XI DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATION

In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, the net assets are to be distributed to the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be altered or amended by a two thirds vote at any regular or special meeting of the church membership, provided that a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment shall have been given from the pulpit or printed in the bulletin on the two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

Adopted, January 25, 1987 by vote of the annual congregational meeting.
Revised, October 16, 1994 by vote of the special congregational meeting.
Revised, January 21, 1998 by vote of the annual congregational meeting.
Revised, January 24, 1999 by vote of the annual congregational meeting.
Revised, January 26, 2003 by vote of the semi-annual congregational meeting.