

Bylaws of Spirit of Peace

Dedication

The members of the Constitution Task Force wish to lovingly dedicate these Bylaws to the memory of Al Carp. Writing a new set of Bylaws takes big-picture vision, extreme attention to detail, and hard work. It takes stamina, diligence, and skill to gently guide diverse opinions to consensus. Al was the Chair of this task force from its inception, and he modeled all of these traits in abundance. He was insightful and persistent, even-tempered and kind. Though Covid took him from us far too early, he left his inimitable mark on our hearts and on this document. Thank you, Al. We are grateful.

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Name and Incorporation

The name of this religious organization is Spirit of Peace, in Minnetonka, Minnesota. (The “Church”)

The Church is an independent, interdenominational, congregationally governed church.

The Church shall be incorporated as a religious non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Minnesota for the purpose of holding property and doing such other things as corporations are authorized to do. It shall be governed and administered in accordance with these Bylaws.

Mission and Purpose

The Church shall be a community of faith united in the worship of God known in Jesus, the Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Church is to serve God through word and witness; to treat all human beings as sisters and brothers; and to foster responsible stewardship of all God’s creation. The Church commits itself to welcoming all persons, celebrating the diversity found in a congregation broadly inclusive of persons of different backgrounds and characteristics, including race, economic class, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status and physical and mental abilities.

Congregants are called to an individual and collective quality of life that leads to personal, spiritual, and social transformation, witnessing to God’s saving purposes for all creation. The Church pledges itself to worship, education, reflection, and action for peace and justice and the realization of the vision of God’s realm of peace where all are loved and blessed.

The Church shall provide regular worship services and shall organize itself in ministry teams, task forces, interest and educational groups, and social justice teams. It shall secure pastoral and other necessary staff; own, manage and dispose of property; and raise funds and appropriations for carrying out its goals.

The Church will relate to the various commitments and expressions of its purpose in a covenantal manner. To be in covenant means each participant recognizes that being part of the beloved community is an act of faith: a relationship with others in the congregation as well as a solemn promise to God. It requires each participant to be accountable and responsible, to negotiate and compromise and to listen, hear and carefully consider the advice, counsel, and requests of others.

This document constitutes an organization that does not, in its structure, strictly adhere to the provisions requested by any one denomination. We come from various faith backgrounds and our experiences and theology are influenced and enriched by our histories. Because of this, we honor the traditions of many denominations and consider our congregation to be *interdenominational*. Spirit of Peace actively seeks relationships with the broader church and Body of Christ, and we are open to formal and informal relationships within the full expression of the Christian Church.

Statement of Beliefs

We believe the umbrella of God’s love, as exemplified in Jesus the Christ, is big enough for everyone to be welcomed.

We believe that love, not doctrine, holds us together.

We believe we are called to welcome and affirm all marginalized peoples, including all in the LGBTQIA+ community.

We believe the deepest expression of our faith is found in the way we treat others.

We believe you don’t need to take the Bible literally to discover God’s profound truths and message.

We believe authentic spiritual growth nurtures our whole being — our hearts, our bodies, our minds and our choices.

We believe that we learn from one another’s diverse experiences and perspectives, and it’s okay if we don’t share the exact same beliefs.

We believe listening to others and respecting them is a deeply spiritual act, even when we disagree.

Not all claims to truth are the same, to be sure, but we believe every claim should be measured by love.

We believe the wisdom offered from other faith traditions can complement and enrich our spiritual journeys.

We believe church should be a place of peace that welcomes those who believe in God some of the time, or none of the time, or all of the time.

We believe that environmental justice guides us to a sustainable stewardship of creation.

We believe we are interwoven with all Creation through the Holy Spirit—the Benevolent Mystery—that moves within and among us, always.

Powers of the Congregation

The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

The powers of this congregation are vested in the Voting Friends/Members through congregational meetings called and conducted as provided in these Bylaws.

Only such authority as is delegated to the Coordinating Council or other organizational units in this congregation’s governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the congregation. The congregation is authorized to do the following, subject to provisions elsewhere in these Bylaws:

- call a Pastor or terminate the call of a Pastor;
- adopt amendments to the Bylaws;
- approve the annual budget;
- acquire real and personal property by gift, purchase, or other lawful means;
- hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
- sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
- elect its Coordinating Council, and require it to carry out its duties in accordance with these Bylaws.

Friends and Members of the Community

Friends of the community are those who appreciate the ministry of Spirit of Peace and wish to participate in the Church. Friends of the Church may participate in activities within the Church's ministry, including serving on teams and ministries. Friends are asked to support the programs, ministries, and spiritual life of the Church, in a spirit of Christian companionship, through a commitment of time, talent and financial resources.

Voting Friends/Members

Being a Voting Friend/Member carries all the privileges and responsibilities of participation in the Church. Voting Friends/Members may vote at the Annual Meeting and any other meeting of the Congregation. Persons may become Voting Friends/Members in the following way:

Expressed agreement with the Spirit of Peace "We Believe" statement or other approved affirmation of faith. Baptism may be provided and is encouraged. In the presence of the Congregation, candidates are asked to affirm the "We Believe" statements and then are affirmed to membership. New Voting Friends/Members are encouraged to attend an Orientation Class led by the Pastor with other Lay persons from the Church.

Voting Friends/Members will pledge themselves to:

- Regular participation in services of worship.
- Regularly support Spirit of Peace financially, as able.
- Live lives consistent with their affirmation of faith.
- Participate in the life of Spirit of Peace through service, community, and spiritual growth.

Voting Friends/Members are not precluded from also being members and participants in other congregations.

Removal from Membership and/or Relinquishment of Voting Rights

Any Voting Friend/Member may, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer or be removed from membership.

A Voting Friend/Member whose address is unknown or who for a period of two years has not attended the church's worship or shared in the Church's work and support, may be removed from the voting roster by vote of the Coordinating Council.

In the remainder of these Bylaws, Voting Friends/Members will be referred to as "Voters."

Congregational Meetings

The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held at a time specified by the Coordinating Council.

A special Congregational Meeting may be called by the Pastor, the Coordinating Council, or by the President of the Coordinating Council upon the written request of 25 percent of the voting members of the congregation. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted during that meeting.

Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive weeks and by mail or electronic means to all members at least ten days in advance of the date of the meeting.

15 percent of the voting members or 15 members whichever is larger shall constitute a quorum.

Voters must be present in person or electronically as authorized by the Coordinating Council.

All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voters present and voting, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or by Minnesota state law.

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

Officers

The officers of this congregation shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers shall be Voters of the Church.

The Coordinating Council shall elect the officers of the congregation from the elected membership of the Coordinating Council. If feasible, the Coordinating Council shall elect the previous Vice President as President. The officers shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. The President, Vice-President, and Treasurer shall be of legal age to enter into contracts in the state of Minnesota. Their terms shall begin immediately at the Coordinating Council meeting in which they are elected. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office, with the exception of the Treasurer, who may serve for up to four consecutive terms in that position.

Vacancies which occur in the midst of a term will be filled by appointment by the Coordinating Council. The appointed person will serve until the next Annual Meeting. They will then be eligible for election for up to two consecutive terms in that office.

Duties of Officers

The duties of each officer of the congregation shall include but not be limited to the following:

The President presides at all meetings of the Church and of the Coordinating Council. The President may represent the Church on appropriate occasions.

The Vice President acts in the absence of the President and performs such other duties as necessary.

The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all business meetings of the Church and Coordinating Council. The Secretary shall maintain a roster, in consultation with the staff member in charge of maintaining the membership roll, including contact information of all the members of the Church qualified to vote. The Secretary is responsible for providing notice of annual and special meetings of the Church as required in these Bylaws.

The Treasurer shall have oversight responsibility for all money and other property of the Church entrusted to its care and shall, when necessary, direct the disbursement of the same under the direction of the Coordinating Council. The Treasurer shall oversee the preparation and maintenance of a complete account of the finances of the Church on books which shall remain the property of the Church and which shall be open for inspection at any time by the Finance Committee or Coordinating Council members. The Treasurer shall present a current financial statement at each regular meeting of the Coordinating Council. The Treasurer may be bonded at the expense of the Church.

Coordinating Council

Members of the Coordinating Council

The Board of Directors of this non-profit corporation shall be known as the "Coordinating Council" which shall consist of the Pastor and six lay members, elected by the congregation. The six Coordinating Council lay members shall consist of: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two members serving at large. Four of its members shall constitute a quorum. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected to the Coordinating Council, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office.

Meetings of the Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council shall meet regularly (usually monthly) at least ten times per year. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the President, or by the President at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special

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meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present, and may be given electronically. When necessary, the Coordinating Council members may participate in meetings and vote by telephone conference, email or other electronic means.

Coordinating Council meetings are open to the members of the Congregation, except those meetings or portions of meetings which pertain to personnel issues.

Responsibilities of the Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, including its worship life.

The Coordinating Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

The Coordinating Council shall oversee all short-term and long-range financial planning, including creating and administering the budget, and monitoring, auditing and managing all church records.

The Coordinating Council shall see that the provisions of its Bylaws are carried out.

The Coordinating Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation including the Pastor. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect the congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of the Pastor(s).

The Coordinating Council shall prepare the agenda for congregational meetings and shall submit a comprehensive report of its actions to the congregation at every Annual Meeting.

The Coordinating Council may authorize necessary or emergency expenses beyond the budget if funds are available. If the expenditure exceeds \$5,000 it must receive the approval of the congregation.

Pledging of church property as collateral requires congregational approval. Documents to borrow money or pledge church property as collateral must be signed by the President and the Treasurer.

In addition to the Ministry Teams described in these Bylaws, the Coordinating Council may form other committees or task forces as the need arises.

Ministries, Teams, and Task Force Roles

The roles identified in this section are important for Spirit of Peace to sustain itself, and to thrive and grow. The Coordinating Council is responsible for ensuring all of the roles will be implemented, and will distribute the roles among the Spirit of Peace Ministries, Teams and Task Forces as it deems appropriate and practical. This allocation may shift and adjust as the congregation's demographics, resources and needs fluctuate.

The Pastor and President of this congregation shall be *ex officio* members of all ministry teams of the congregation. The ministry teams of this congregation and their duties shall be as follows:

Growing our Minds and Spirit

Plan and coordinate educational activities for all ages and opportunities to deepen our spiritual lives. For children and youth, these might include activities during our weekly services and summer camps. For adults, activities will include large and small group studies such as the Progressive Christianity Study Group, Aha Moments weekly bible study, book clubs organized around timely topics, intergenerational Confirmation classes, and speaker series.

Relationship Building

Organize and coordinate gatherings and opportunities for relationship-building both within Spirit of Peace and outside our walls to grow our community. Activities within Spirit of Peace include but are not limited to after-service coffee time, progressive dinners or potlucks, retreats and intergenerational movie nights. Activities to grow our community include initiating invitations to seek new friends, extending extravagant welcome to visitors, and offering occasional events (such as concerts, rummage sales, drive-thru donation drives) to increase our presence in our community.

Social Justice and Action

Advocate for wholeness and justice on local, national and global issues. This involves planning and coordinating hands-on activities such as 5th Saturday events/projects, community gardens, sandwich and meal preparation, and community collection drives for ICA and Resource West; it calls for research, vetting and then recommending worthy organizations to which Spirit of Peace can make financial contributions; and with other organizations such as ISAIAH, work in a broader context to help Spirit of Peace identify systemic justice issues the congregation will help address.

Worship and Music Support

Plan and oversee all aspects of Spirit of Peace's worship services including music, sanctuary decorations, children's needs in worship, set-up and supplies for communion, as well as scheduling volunteers as ushers, greeters, communion servers, etc. Work closely with the Pastor in planning and coordination of worship services.

Community Nurture and Support

Provide periodic support in times of community need. This includes helping setup and facilitate funeral and memorial services and receptions; caring for community members and friends by providing meals in times of sickness or grief; and actively maintaining a prayer list and call/notification chain.

Finance & Stewardship

Perform all church financial activities and associated recording and legal or internal reporting. Lead and oversee income and expense planning, yearly pledge campaigns and assist the Treasurer in creating the annual budget.

Personnel

Act as liaison between the Coordinating Council and all paid staff members of Spirit of Peace, except the Pastor. Working with the Pastor and other situation-appropriate members of the Coordinating Council or ministry groups, activities will include creating job descriptions; advertising for and interviewing candidates; making recommendations regarding salary, benefits and policies; and arranging for yearly reviews and periodic check-ins as needed.

Oversee maintenance of the Personnel Handbook.

Communication

Manage all communication within our church community including the website, Facebook page, Wednesday Updates and other publications as needed. Oversees publicity to expand awareness of our congregation to the wider community through advertising, flyers, social media, and local publications.

Records management

Oversee maintenance of the Records Management Policy. Ensure that records necessary for proper operation of the church are created and archived in accordance with the Records Management Policy.

Nominating

Identify and recruit candidates for open leadership and ministry positions. Offer assistance to the Coordinating Council in leadership development and support.

Call of the Pastor

In event of a vacancy for Pastor, the Coordinating Council shall determine the size of and appoint a Search Committee. The duties of the Pastor shall include, but are not limited to:

- Preach and teach the Word
- Conduct public worship, weddings and funerals or memorial services.
- Administer the sacraments of baptism and communion
- Provide pastoral care
- Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world
- Work with the Coordinating Council in the administration of this Church

The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a Letter of Call, including a Job Description. Pastors shall be called for an indefinite period, with the terms of call evaluated annually.

A two-thirds majority of voters at a duly called congregational meeting shall be required to call or terminate a Pastor. The rules of quorum shall apply.

When a Pastor seeks to terminate the call, the Coordinating Council may accept the resignation of the pastor without the congregation voting to dissolve the relationship. After acceptance by the Coordinating Council, the Pastor is to let the congregation know by letter of resignation.

Amendments and Changes to the Bylaws

Amendments may be proposed by at least four non-related voting members or by the Coordinating Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Coordinating Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Coordinating Council shall notify the congregation's Voters of the proposal together with the Coordinating Council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means.

An amendment to these Bylaws shall:

1. Be approved at a legally called Congregational Meeting according by a majority vote of Voters present and voting;

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2. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Voters present and voting; and
3. have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in these Bylaws.

Property

If this congregation ceases to exist, assets and title to undisposed property shall pass to a nonprofit organization as designated by the congregation at the next Annual Meeting or at a special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

Indemnification

Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Coordinating Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee or ministry team of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.