

**EDINA MORNINGSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
CONSTITUTION**

**(As restated and adopted, effective May 20, 2018)**

We, the Congregation of Edina Morningside Community Church United Church of Christ, acknowledge Jesus Christ as the head of our Church, and find in the Holy Scriptures (interpreted by the Divine Spirit through human conscience, faith and reason) our guide in spiritual discipline, fellowship and outreach. We accept the 1959 United Church of Christ Statement of Faith (Appendix A) as more fully expressing this relationship. We embrace our purpose as Edina Morningside Church through sharing the joy of Christ's love by welcoming and serving.

This document is the successor to all previous Constitutions and amendments, effective May 20, 2018. Henceforth the affairs of this Church will be governed by this Constitution, and any By-laws adopted hereunder, except as changed by amendment as provided in these Articles. Appendix B contains the history of the Constitutions of this Church.

**ARTICLE I – FORM**

The name of this church is Edina Morningside Community Church United Church of Christ ("Edina Morningside Church" or "Church").

Edina Morningside Church is a congregational church and its government is vested in its Members, hereinafter referred to as the Congregation, who shall exercise the right of control in all its affairs. The internal governance of this Church shall be vested in its elected officers and other leaders as designated in this Constitution and By-laws, subject to Congregational oversight and *Minnesota Statute section 317A or its successor*. All leaders holding elected positions shall be current Members of Edina Morningside Church as defined in this Constitution.

This Church accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, friendship and cooperation involved in the fellowship of the United Church of Christ, and pledges to share the denomination's mission. Our relationships with the United Church of Christ and its sub-divisional entities are delegated to the Minister(s) and such other participants in our common life as are approved by the Minister(s) or Vision Council.

Edina Morningside Church also recognizes the wider community of people who serve God, and works toward greater friendship and understanding with all such people, of every faith tradition.

Our relationships with government entities and other organizations fall under the guidance of the Vision Council unless otherwise delegated.

## **ARTICLE II – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

The Members of this Church shall be those persons who have acknowledged their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord by affirmation of faith, and who have publicly accepted the polity and governance of this Church.

To the best of their ability, Members are expected to attend worship services regularly; to contribute generously for the financial support of the Church and its ministries; to share in its organized life and work; to seek diligently their own spiritual well-being and that of this Church; and to assist in sharing the good news of Christ's love.

## **ARTICLE III – GOVERNANCE AND MINISTRY**

### **Section 1. Vision Council**

It shall be the responsibility of the Vision Council to guide the overall mission of the Church, evaluate opportunities, work with the Minister(s) on the general direction of Church activities, and coordinate ministries. The Vision Council also holds title to and exercises decision-making authority on the property and finances of the Church on behalf of the Congregation. The Vision Council shall have no power to buy, lease, mortgage, sell or transfer the title of any real property without specific authority conveyed by a vote of the Church membership.

Responsibility for the Church's day-to-day operations is delegated to the staff and appropriate ministry teams.

The Vision Council shall make no unbudgeted expenditure that totals more than five percent (5%) of the adopted annual operating budget without further approval by the membership of this Church.

Membership of the Vision Council shall consist of at least eight (8) elected voting members, including the Moderator, Associate Moderator, Clerk, a member of Trustees, and such other representatives as designated in the By-laws. Only those designated in this Constitution or the By-laws may be voting members of the Vision Council. A Minister is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Vision Council. Members may serve a maximum of four (4) consecutive years on the Vision Council (regardless of role), after which such person may not serve on the Vision Council for a minimum of one (1) year.

The Vision Council shall meet monthly, or at the call of the Moderator. A quorum for Vision Council to conduct business will be three-fourths of the members of the Vision Council. All votes of the Vision Council will require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to pass. In the case of six (6) members present and voting, five (5) votes shall be required for a measure to pass. In addition, the Vision Council may decide matters by electronic vote, provided that all members are given the opportunity to participate, at least six (6) members cast a vote, and no member objects to the decision being made by electronic means.

## **Section 2. Elected Officers**

**2.1. Moderator:** The Moderator shall be elected annually by the Congregation for a term of one (1) year. The Moderator shall call and chair the Vision Council, and shall call and preside at the Annual Meeting of this Church, and at all other Congregational meetings convened in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the By-laws. The Moderator shall work with the elected leaders, Congregation and Minister(s) to establish and pursue the vision, mission and ministries of the Church.

The Moderator shall be, ex-officio, a member of all ministry teams and boards, having a voice but no vote in their deliberations. Such ex-officio membership shall not, however, impose upon them the obligation of regular attendance at all meetings of the teams or boards. They shall receive notices of all such meetings and copies of the minutes.

**2.2. Associate Moderator:** The Associate Moderator shall be elected annually by the Congregation for a term of one (1) year. The Associate Moderator shall assist the Moderator in their duties as requested by the Moderator, and shall stand in for the Moderator at meetings of the Vision Council or Congregational meetings until no longer necessary.

The Associate Moderator shall be, ex-officio, a member of all ministry teams and boards, having a voice but no vote in their deliberations. Such ex-officio membership shall not, however, impose upon them the obligation of regular attendance at all meetings of the teams or boards. They shall receive notices of all such meetings and copies of the minutes.

If the Moderator is unable to serve the remainder of their term, the Associate Moderator shall adopt the duties of the Moderator for the remainder of the Moderator's one (1) year term. If the Associate Moderator is unable to serve the remainder of their term, including because they have assumed the duties of the Moderator, the Vision Council shall appoint a Congregation Member to fill the position until the end of the term.

**2.3. Clerk:** The Clerk shall be elected annually by the Congregation for a term of one (1) year. The Clerk shall be responsible for taking and maintaining minutes at all Vision Council meetings, confirming a quorum and taking minutes at Congregational meetings. The Clerk will also work with Church staff to create, maintain, and preserve official church records, including minutes of all Vision Council and Congregational meetings. In the absence of the Clerk at any meeting, the Moderator may appoint an Acting Clerk for purposes of taking minutes and/or confirming a quorum. If the Clerk is unable to serve the remainder of their term, the Vision Council shall appoint a Congregation Member to fill the position until the end of the term.

**2.4. Trustees:** A Trustees team of at least seven (7) members shall be elected by the Congregation. Team members shall serve terms of three (3) years each, staggered so that a substantially equal portion of the team is elected annually. Trustees will annually select from its own membership a Chair, a member to serve on the Vision Council (who may also be the Chair) and any other positions deemed necessary by the team. The Chair and the member serving on

the Vision Council must be one of the seven (7) elected members of the team. It will meet monthly, or at the call of its Chair.

The Trustees are responsible for the detailed management of the Church's finances and property. After consultation with the Vision Council, Trustees shall present an annual operating budget to the Congregation for approval. The Trustees shall make no unbudgeted expenditure that totals more than five percent (5%) of the adopted annual budget without further approval by the membership of this Church.

The Trustees will select a Treasurer from among the Membership of the Church, who will report to the Trustees. The Treasurer will (a) receive and be accountable for all monies received from all sources; (b) deposit funds received in such accounts as the Trustees direct; (c) pay the bills of the Church in accordance with policies established by Trustees; (d) keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements; and (e) report the condition of the treasury and its relationship to the budget at least monthly to the Trustees. The Treasurer will give such security bond as Trustees require.

A qualified volunteer or hired bookkeeper (if provided in the budget) may perform some of the duties appointed to the Treasurer. Those designated will work under the supervision of the Treasurer.

### **Section 3. Minister(s)**

The Minister(s) will be called to the service of this Church according to procedures suggested by the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, and the Church and Ministry Committee of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Minister(s) will hold their position for an indefinite term.

The Minister(s) serves as the spiritual leader of this Church. They will develop, with the Vision Council, an outline of duties, expectations and goals, and areas of emphasis. The Minister(s) collaborates with the Moderator, Vision Council, and the rest of the congregation to live fully into the Church's mission and vision.

The senior Minister has supervisory authority over other church personnel, including the ability to dismiss them with the consent of the Moderator or Vision Council.

### **Section 4. General and Special Meetings**

**4.1. Annual Meetings:** The Annual Meeting of this Church will be held in the spring and set by the Vision Council. At this meeting the membership will: (a) receive reports of the past year's activities and events; (b) elect officers and members of the several teams; (c) set goals for the future church year and (d) transact such other business as may come before the meeting. The election of Members to all elected positions will be by confidential ballot.

The Annual Operating Budget will be approved by Congregational vote at an Annual Budget Meeting called for that purpose prior to the end of the first month of the fiscal year. This vote will be by confidential ballot.

**4.2. Special Meetings:** Business of this Church may be conducted at any special meeting called by the Clerk, the Moderator or on written request of ten (10) Members of this Church, provided notice of such meeting is given in three (3) successive worship services or is published for three (3) successive weeks in this Church's communications sent to every member.

**4.3. Quorum:** Thirty (30) members of this Church will constitute a quorum for the conduct of business at any Congregational Meeting. A simple majority vote will decide issues or questions, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.

## **Section 5. Amendments**

**5.1. Constitution:** This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any Annual Meeting, or at a Special Meeting called for the purpose, provided, however, that: (a) the time and place of the meeting and the proposed amendment, showing both old and new language, is distributed in multiple written, electronic and/or other formats, on three (3) successive weeks, (b) in the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) week, an informational meeting is held to explain changes and solicit questions from the congregation, and (c) in the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) week, the Meeting is held and the congregation votes on the proposed changes.

**5.2. By-laws:** The By-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Vision Council, or by a majority vote of the Members present and voting at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting called for the purpose. If the Vision Council amends the By-laws, notice of the amendment will be given promptly to all Members of the Congregation and the amendment will be effective 30 days after notice is given. If objections to the amendment are submitted in writing or via electronic means to the Church office and the Moderator by at least ten (10) Members of the Congregation within 21 days of such notice, the amendment will not become effective and a Special Meeting will be called for the purpose of having the Congregation vote on the amendment.

**5.3. Policies:** Policies may be adopted by, and amended by, a majority vote of the Members present and voting at the Vision Council or at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting called for the purpose. Policies are subordinate to any provisions of the Constitution or By-laws.

## **Appendix A**

### **1959 United Church of Christ Statement of Faith**

#### **United Church of Christ Statement of Faith—original version**

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

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

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.

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

He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, 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.

He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him.

Amen.

#### **United Church of Christ Statement of Faith—adapted by Robert V. Moss**

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 and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

Amen.

## What We Believe

**We believe in the triune God:** Creator, resurrected Christ, the sole Head of the church, and the Holy Spirit, who guides and brings about the creative and redemptive work of God in the world.

**We believe that each person is unique and valuable.** It is the will of God that every person belong to a family of faith where they have a strong sense of being valued and loved.

**We believe that each person is on a spiritual journey** and that each of us is at a different stage of that journey.

**We believe that the persistent search for God produces an authentic relationship with God,** engendering love, strengthening faith, dissolving guilt, and giving life purpose and direction.

**We believe that all of the baptized 'belong body and soul to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.'** No matter who – no matter what – no matter where we are on life's journey – notwithstanding race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, class or creed – we all belong to God and to one worldwide community of faith. All persons baptized – past, present and future – are connected to each other and to God through the sacrament of baptism. We baptize during worship when the community is present because baptism includes the community's promise of 'love, support and care' for the baptized – and we promise that we won't take it back – no matter where your journey leads you.

**We believe that all people of faith are invited to join Christ at Christ's table for the sacrament of Communion.** Just as many grains of wheat are gathered to make one loaf of bread and many grapes are gathered to make one cup of wine, we, the many people of God, are made one in the body of Christ, the church. The breaking of bread and the pouring of wine reminds us of the costliness of Christ's sacrifice and the discipleship to which we are all called. In the breaking of bread, we remember and celebrate Christ's presence among us along with a 'cloud of witnesses' – our ancestors, family and friends who have gone before us. It is a great mystery; we claim it by faith.

**We believe the UCC is called to be a united and uniting church.** "That they may all be one." (John 17:21) "In essentials–unity, in nonessentials–diversity, in all things–charity," These UCC mottos survive because they touch core values deep within us. The UCC has no rigid formulation of doctrine or attachment to creeds or structures. Its overarching creed is love. UCC pastors and teachers are known for their commitment to excellence in theological preparation, interpretation

of the scripture and justice advocacy. Even so, love and unity in the midst of our diversity are our greatest assets.

**We believe that God calls us to be servants in the service of others** and to be good stewards of the earth's resources. 'To believe is to care; to care is to do.'

**We believe that the UCC is called to be a prophetic church.** As in the tradition of the prophets and apostles, God calls the church to speak truth to power, liberate the oppressed, care for the poor and comfort the afflicted.

**We believe in the power of peace,** and work for nonviolent solutions to local, national, and international problems.

**We are a people of possibility.** In the UCC, members, congregations and structures have the breathing room to explore and to hear ... for after all, God is still speaking, ...



## **Appendix B**

The Constitution adopted and restated as of May 20, 2018 is the successor to that Constitution adopted by EDINA UNION CHURCH upon its organization on July 8, 1902; that adopted by MORNINGSIDE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH upon its organization on April 10, 1911; and that adopted by the newly merged EDINA MORNINGSIDE COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH on May 25, 1934; together with all amendments and other changes appended to these prior documents. A restated Constitution, superseding the 1934 Constitution as amended, was adopted effective April 23, 1981. A subsequent restated Constitution, superseding the 1981 Constitution as amended, was adopted May 12, 1996. The 1996 Constitution was amended three times, on January 23, 2005, April 30, 2006 and April 19, 2015.

The 1996 Constitution stated, in Article III, Section 3.1, that Edina Morningside Church was organized under MN Statute 317. However, the Church was originally organized under MN Statute 315, and no subsequent election or filing under MN Statute 317 was made. Therefore, the Church continued to be organized under MN Statute 315. An election to become organized under MN Statute 317A was made by the Congregation on May 20, 2018.