

CONSTITUTION  
of  
**OPEN TABLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
(a trade name of First Congregational United Church of Christ)

Ottawa, Illinois

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this church shall be Open Table United Church of Christ, located in Ottawa, Illinois. This church functions as the active trade name of the First Congregational United Church of Christ of Ottawa, Illinois and ***will be referred to as OPEN TABLE in this constitution and by-laws.***

**ARTICLE II - MISSION & VISION**

Open Table is a faith community where all are welcome. We celebrate diversity, nourish and serve others, work for justice, and grow together in faith through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the voice of the still-speaking God.

**ARTICLE III - GOVERNANCE**

1. ***Open Table*** shall be a part of the United Church of Christ, and it shall sustain that relationship as described in those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ relating to local churches. ***Open Table*** shall hold standing in the Prairie Association, and shall be a member of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ and through it of any organizations to which it belongs.
2. The governance of ***Open Table*** is vested in its members, hereinafter called "the congregation," who in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws exercise the right of control in all its affairs. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, cooperation and fellowship with other churches of the United Church of Christ. It will also develop and maintain relationships with other ecumenical and interfaith bodies that seek to share the love of a gracious God.
3. In keeping with our calling to be an open table and to reach out to those who have felt unheard and undervalued, we will strive for consensus in all our decisions, encouraging the expression of personal truth and diversity, and hearing and affirming each voice.

**ARTICLE IV - FAITH**

Open Table holds that Christian faith springs from the authority of one God manifested in the life of Jesus Christ. We celebrate two sacraments: Baptism and Holy

Communion. We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right of private judgement. We join with the fellowship of the United Church of Christ in its statement of faith, which is set forth not a test for membership in Open Table, but as a testimony of belief set forth by the United Church of Christ.

#### ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Open Table shall be open to any person who affirms their faith through baptism, reaffirms their baptismal covenant, or who presents a letter of transfer. We welcome all persons to participate in the life of the church. Those persons who are not members we consider to be "Friends of the Church," as defined in the bylaws.

#### ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

Officers shall be a Moderator, a Moderator-Elect, a Clerk, and a Treasurer, and such other officers as the congregation may deem necessary. The duties of the officers, their method of election, and their terms of office shall be as specified in the bylaws.

#### ARTICLE VII - PASTOR

The congregation of OpenTable shall call and elect one or more pastors to serve the as teachers and spiritual leaders of the church.

#### Article VIII - CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The responsibility of administering the government of OpenTable and carrying out its programs shall be vested in the Leadership Table. The Leadership Table shall consist of the officers of the church, including one at-large member whose focus is determined by the previous year's Leadership Table and the Pastor(s), who shall all be members of the church. All members of the Leadership Table shall have voice and vote, with the exception of the Pastor(s), who will have voice without vote. Leadership Table shall designate facilitators for the standing ministry teams. The Leadership Table shall also be responsible for appointing additional teams and committees as may be needed from time to time. Only church members shall be eligible for election to the Leadership Table. The method of their elections, terms of office, and responsibilities shall be as specified in the bylaws.

#### ARTICLE IX - CHURCH PROPERTY

Acting through its Leadership Table, as provided in the bylaws, and in accordance with Statutes of the State of Illinois, the church may hold, buy, sell, transfer and manage real and personal property. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all real and personal property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after dissolution or reaffiliation, shall be transferred to the

Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ or its legal successor and/or the city of Ottawa as deemed appropriate by the voting membership at closing.

#### ARTICLE X - MEETINGS

1. Stated Meetings: There shall be two congregational meetings each year. The Annual Meeting of the congregation shall be for the presentation of annual reports by the officers of the church and the Ministry Team Facilitators, the adoption of annual budgets, the election of officers, and the transaction of such other business as may be brought before the congregation, and shall be held on Pentecost Sunday, unless otherwise designated by the Leadership Table. The one additional stated meeting shall occur in or around January and be for the purpose of information, self-assessment, and fellowship.
2. Other Meetings: Special meetings of the congregation shall be called in accordance with the Bylaws.
3. Quorum: A quorum of the membership, as specified in the bylaws, shall be required to transact business at regular and special meetings of the congregation.

#### ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the consensus of the members of the congregation at any stated or special meeting of the congregation, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been stated in the required notice of the meeting as provided by the bylaws. There must be a minimum of two readings of the proposed amendment at consecutive congregational meetings to allow time for reflection on such changes. If consensus cannot be achieved within three consecutive meetings of the members of the congregation, the proposed amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members at the end of the third consensus-building meeting.

Approved at the 1st Annual Meeting of Open Table United Church of Christ, Ottawa,  
Illinois

June 4, 2017

## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 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 world 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 our righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In 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 bestow 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 others,  
To proclaim the gospel to all the world  
And resist the power of evil,  
To share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
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 presences in trial and rejoicing,  
And eternal life in the realm which has no end.  
Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen