

Danville Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

BYLAWS

Article I - Name, Location and Affiliation

This church is the "Danville Congregational Church, United Church of Christ," 989 San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Danville, California 94526, incorporated 1955. This church is a member of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Article II - Mission Statement

Our mission is to be a Christian faith community that accepts all persons, supports them in seeking deeper meaning in their lives, and prepares them spiritually and intellectually to make a difference in the lives of their families, community, work, and world.

We are an Open and Affirming church. We are called to love our neighbors and to act as agents of reconciliation and wholeness.

We welcome and value all God's children. All people, of diverse race, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, family status, economic condition, and physical, mental and emotional circumstances are encouraged to participate in the worship, life work and service of this church.

We affirm that all are beloved by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We affirm the family in all its diverse forms and we affirm all loving and committed relationships. *(From the DCC Open and Affirming statement adopted June 13, 1999)*

Article III - Polity

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our church's sole head. We find direction in matters of belief and practice in the Holy Scriptures as interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through reason and faith.

The church is governed by its members, who control all affairs, subject in legal matters to articles of incorporation granted by the State of California.

The church is subject to no ecclesiastical authority, but gladly accepts the obligation of mutual council, community and cooperation within the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, pledging itself to share in its common aims and work.

Article IV - Doctrine

We recognize the Bible as the basic rule of faith and practice, and living by the teachings of Jesus Christ as the true test of fellowship. Each member has the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience. This covenant expresses the spirit in which we interpret the world and the will of God:

Covenant: We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and to walk in the ways of God, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the church to proclaim the gospel to all humankind, to exalt the worship of the one God and labor to advance knowledge, promote justice, further the reign of peace, and realize our common humanity. Depending, like the faithful before us, on the continuing guidance of our Creator to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God. We promise to sustain and cherish our spiritual home, to take part in its worship, seek its increase, and share its work in faith, hope and love.

Article V - Membership

1. **Qualifications:** We welcome into membership any who wish to take part in the church's worship, seek its increase and live a Christian life, sharing its work in faith, hope and love.
2. **Transfer and Reception:** Members may be received by letter of transfer from another church, by reaffirmation of faith, or by declaration of faith after baptism.
3. **Associate Membership:** A person who wishes to be associated with Danville Congregational Church but also to remain a member of another church may become an Associate Member. Associate members shall have all the rights and privileges of members, including a vote, but may not become officers of the corporation.
4. **Termination:** Letters of transfer are issued on request. Members who for two years or more have not communicated with the church or contributed to its support may, on recommendation of the Diaconate confirmed by vote of Council, be transferred to an inactive list, ceasing to be reported on the active membership roll. Inactive members may be granted letters of transfer, and if at any time they renew their interest in the church they may be restored to active membership.

Article VI - Services and Education

1. Sunday morning worship shall be held weekly unless temporarily suspended by vote of the church membership.
2. The Lord's Supper and Baptism shall be administered at times set by the Worship Commission in consultation with the Minister(s).
3. Other services may be scheduled as determined by the Worship Commission on consultation with the Minister(s) and the Council.
4. The church shall provide programs of Christian education for all persons, funded through the church budget. The church may conduct a church school.

Article VII - Ministers

1. **Duties:** Minister(s) shall work to promote the spiritual growth and welfare of the church, enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, plan and conduct regular services of worship, and perform other religious duties as required. Minister(s) shall administer church activities in cooperation with the Moderator, Council and the various commissions and committees of the church. Minister(s) shall recommend to Council support staff hirings or appointments to help perform the tasks of ministry. Minister(s) shall be responsible for the assignment and performance of duties by the support staff. Minister(s) shall be ex-officio members of all commissions and committees. Sharing of duties among ministers is determined by the terms of call with the guidance of the Council. The Senior Minister shall be understood as head of staff.
2. **Termination:** A ministry may be terminated at any time by a two-thirds vote of active members present at a meeting constituted for that purpose. Termination shall be effective 60 days from such a vote. A minister shall give 60 days' notice to terminate a ministry. If a minister loses ministerial standing, the ministry shall be terminated at once.
3. **Interim:** If a position of minister becomes vacant, and the Council chooses to hire an interim minister for that position, then that interim minister may advise the Council and commissions, but shall have no vote. An interim minister may not be considered as a candidate for the permanent position.
4. **Replacement:** When a position of minister becomes vacant, the Council shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastoral search committee of eight (8) members, as fully representative of the entire congregation as possible, and shall solicit nominations from the congregation. In addition, the Council may nominate alternates who will participate fully in the deliberations of the committee but only have a vote if one or more of the elected members is no longer able to participate. The pastoral search committee shall seek the advice of the Northern California Nevada Conference, UCC, in finding qualified candidates, from among whom it will nominate one candidate to the congregation. The committee shall be authorized to negotiate starting compensation and maintenance with the candidate, bearing in mind the current guidelines of the Northern California Nevada Conference, and subject to final approval by Council.
5. **Election:** Minister(s) shall be called by a two-thirds vote of active church members present at a meeting constituted for that purpose. The call to ministry shall be for an indefinite term.
6. **Terms of call:** A minister's terms of call shall be negotiated by the pastoral search committee and approved by the Council. The terms of call shall be reviewed by the Council and renewed annually.
7. **Church membership:** When a minister has been elected and accepted the call, he or she shall at the first opportunity become a member of the church and of the Bay Association of the United Church of Christ.

Article VIII - Officers

The officers of the church shall be:

1. Moderator
2. Vice Moderator
3. Clerk
4. Treasurer
5. Financial Secretary
6. Commissioners for:
 - a. Buildings and Grounds Commission
 - b. Children's Ministries
 - c. Church Family Commission
 - d. Faith Journeys Commission
 - e. Membership Commission
 - f. Outreach Commission
 - g. Stewardship Commission
 - h. Worship Commission
 - i. Youth Ministries

The Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall be considered officers of the corporation.

1. Moderator: Presides over the Council, the Annual Meeting and all special meetings of the church. Coordinates the work of all commissions and committees, and is an ex-officio member of all of them. The Moderator is elected to a one-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Moderator without an interval of one year.
2. Vice Moderator: Performs the duties of Moderator in his/her absence, helps the Moderator coordinate work of all commissions and committees, and is an ex-officio member of all of them. The Vice Moderator is nominated for Moderator when that position becomes vacant, unless he or she cannot serve or declines the nomination. The Vice Moderator is elected to a one-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Vice Moderator without an interval of one year.
3. Clerk: Records proceedings of all business meetings of the church and the meetings of the Council. Oversees the making and keeping of a register of all church members with dates of their reception and removal; records baptisms, marriages and deaths; gives a statistical report on membership status, weddings, baptisms and deaths at the Annual Meeting. May be assisted by administrative staff or volunteer. The Clerk is elected to a two-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Clerk without an interval of one year.
4. Treasurer: Has custody of all documents related to church property. Pays bills of the church on order from the commissions responsible for incurring the bills, as authorized in the annual budget. Keeps an account of all receipts and disbursements, preparing monthly reports for the Council and Stewardship Commission. May be assisted by a bookkeeper in performing his/her duties. Secures at church expense such bonds as the Finance Committee prescribes. The Treasurer is elected to a two-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Treasurer without an interval of one year.
5. Financial Secretary: Under direction of the Stewardship Commission, receives and keeps records of all payments made to the church. Each week he/she places receipts in a depository specified by the Commission and furnishes the Treasurer and the Minister(s) a statement of the totals deposited and their general sources. In the absence of the Financial Secretary, he/she designates a person to count and list receipts. Monthly the Financial Secretary furnishes the Treasurer, Minister(s), Moderator, and Stewardship

Commissioner a report on the status of pledge receipts; quarterly he/she provides pledgers statements of their accounts. Pledge records may be made available only to a Minister or the Moderator. Memorial receipts are reported to the Minister(s) and the Diaconate. The Financial Secretary is elected to a two-year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Financial Secretary without an interval of one year.

- a. In the case of a two person or "joint position" for Financial Secretary, both persons shall be empowered to function as financial agents of the church. For legal matters of polity, one person shall be designated as the "officer of the corporation."
6. Commissioners: The commissioners, listed at the start of this article, coordinate commission activities, preside over commission meetings, coordinate preparation of commission budgets and ensure that all expenditures are in accordance with the church budget. Commissioners are ex-officio members of any committees of their commissions. At the start of each church year they will report to Council the organization of their commissions; regularly thereafter they report activities planned and progress made. Commissioners are elected for one-year terms and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as commissioners of the same commission without an interval of one year.
 7. Youth Representative: Represents the interest and concerns of the youth. He or she shall have all the rights of a commissioner but shall not be expected to lead a commission or committee.
 8. Preschool Representative elected by the Preschool Board of Directors to serve on Council. The Preschool Representative shall not serve more than two consecutive one year terms without an interval of one year.
 9. Membership in church: All officers shall be members of the church.
 10. Election: All officers shall be elected at a congregational meeting called for that purpose approximately two months before the Annual Meeting.
 11. Installation: All officers shall be installed at the Annual Meeting.

Article IX - Council

1. **Makeup:** The Council shall consist of all elected officers (officers of the corporation, and the commissioners), Youth Representative, the Preschool Representative, and all ministers as ex-officio members.
2. **Final authority:** Final authority is vested in the membership as a whole. Responsibility to formulate and carry out church programs, however, is delegated to the Council and commissions, as defined in this article and Article X. The Council and each commission shall create such subordinate committees as are needed, to exist for one church year, although committee members may be re-appointed for subsequent terms.
3. **Meetings:** Council shall meet monthly, except that one meeting during the year may be omitted (usually in the summer). Special meetings may be called by a Minister, Moderator, or any three Council members. A quorum of the Council shall consist of a majority of members then in office.
4. **Voting:** There shall be one vote per office. In case of a shared office, those sharing the office must decide ahead of time who will cast the vote or whether a fractional vote will be used. If an officer sends a substitute who is a church member to a Council meeting, that substitute shall have the vote. Each ex-officio member shall have a vote.
5. **Duties:** Council shall
 - a. act for the church in all matters between meetings of the congregation unless otherwise directed by majority vote of the church membership present at any officially called business meeting of the congregation;
 - b. recommend to the church any changes in policy or administration that seem wise;
 - c. appoint standing committees of the Council listed in Article XI;
 - d. coordinate the work of all commissions and committees;
 - e. give prior approval to all proposed expenditures exceeding or not provided for in the current annual budget;
 - f. appoint successors to unexpired terms of any officers or members of Council committees or committees of the congregation who are unable to serve, considering the recommendations of the respective commissions, committees or nominating committees (an officer or member who misses three consecutive meetings without cause may be deemed to be unable to serve);
 - g. when a position of minister becomes vacant, call a congregational meeting to elect a pastoral search committee as provided in Article VII, paragraph 4;
 - h. may hire and shall supervise all interim personnel during the search for new ministers;
 - i. appoint the church's quota of delegates to the Northern California Nevada Conference of the UCC, the Bay Association of the UCC, the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa, and other ecumenical and interfaith agencies;
 - j. fix the time for the Annual Meeting and make the necessary arrangements;

- k. annually appoint a Diaconate making use of the recommendations of the current Diaconate;
- l. nominate, for election by the congregation at the Annual Meeting, five persons to serve as a Nominating Committee during the following year; at least one of these persons should be serving on the current nominating committee;
- m. call a special meeting of the congregation to elect officers;
- n. have responsibility for reviewing, adhering to, and seeing that others adhere to, the bylaws.

Article X - Commissions

1. General: Commissions shall consist of the elected Commissioner and others who choose to serve. Membership shall continue for one year or until a successor commission is formed. Each commission shall organize itself as it best sees fit, but shall meet normally at the time determined by Council for all commission meetings. Each commission shall make timely budget requests for funds needed to do its work, and shall limit its spending to the amount allocated in the annual budget. All meetings shall be open to members and friends of the church.
2. Buildings and Grounds Commission shall be responsible for planning and carrying out the care, maintenance and improvement of the church's buildings, fixtures, equipment and grounds. This includes organizing volunteers and directing the custodial staff.
3. Children's Ministries Commission shall plan and carry out educational programs for children ages infant through 5th grade which will encourage spiritual growth in areas of theology, Bible knowledge and social awareness. This work may include church school, classes, events and retreats for families, children's music, and library and educational resources. The commission shall provide the leadership training and staffing needed for current education programs. It shall provide a clean and safe nursery room, with necessary attendants, during worship services.
4. Church Family Commission shall serve the needs of the church's members and friends by providing opportunities for fellowship and social events and by helping in crises in cooperation with the Diaconate. Church Family manages supplies, equipment, storage and policies for use for church kitchen facilities.
5. Faith Journeys Commission shall plan and carry out programs and events related to spiritual nurture and faith development for adults. This may include Sunday morning study programs, Bible studies, classes, study groups, other small groups, speakers, concerts, retreats, and a library.
6. Membership Commission, in cooperation with other commissions as appropriate, shall develop and carry out programs to attract, invite, orient and assimilate persons into the life of the congregation. It shall publicize church programs to the community through such activities as the church website. It shall encourage and work cooperatively with the other commissions to develop and carry out actions, programs and facilities which bring new members to, and increase participation by, our congregation.
7. Outreach Commission shall plan and carry out efforts to bring our church and its ministries to the community and the world through word and deed. This includes reaching out to the greater community, educating the congregation on social issues and opportunities for action, promoting benevolences, and encouraging close relationship with the "Greater Church" throughout the Bay Association, the Northern California Nevada Conference and ecumenical and interfaith groups and activities.
8. Stewardship Commission shall design and conduct the church's stewardship campaign , promoting financial stewardship as well as participation in all areas of church life. The Commission will work with other Committees and Commissions in setting goals and monitoring results of pledge campaigns, and overseeing the timing of all other fundraising activities conducted by the church. The Commission shall appoint a representative to the Finance Committee.

9. Worship Commission, along with the Minister(s), shall be responsible for all worship and music. Specifically, it shall
 - a. set policy for time, place, manner and appropriateness of all services or worship, celebration of the sacraments, marriage, funeral and memorial services and other services of the church;
 - b. provide leadership, with the Minister(s), for worship; when a minister cannot be present, the Commission shall provide for the leadership of worship;
 - c. hire and supervise, with the Minister(s), musical staff required for worship.

10. Youth Ministries Commission shall plan and carry out educational programs for youth, 6th through 12th grades, which will encourage spiritual growth in areas of theology, Bible knowledge and social awareness. This work may include Youth Group meetings, classes, events, retreats and mission trips for youth and their advisors, and library and educational resources. The commission shall provide the leadership training and staffing needed for current education programs. It shall provide age and program appropriate facilities in which to hold youth activities.

Article XI - Committees of the Council

1. General: Standing committees established in this Article shall be named by the Moderator, confirmed by the Council, and serve for one year unless specified otherwise in the following paragraphs. Each committee shall organize itself as it best sees fit, and shall meet at times determined by the Council and by the committee. The Council and each commission shall also create such subordinate *ad hoc* committees as are needed, to exist for one church year, although committee members may be re-appointed for subsequent terms.
2. The Finance Committee shall establish, analyze, and report on key DCC financial targets such as cash flow, operating budgets, capital investments and balance sheets, oversee audits and implement audit recommendations, initiate the annual budgeting process, provide financial oversight and recommendations to the Dayspring Preschool, and advise the Council and Endowment Committee as well as undertaking other tasks that may be delegated to it. The committee shall consist of three persons elected for three years terms plus the DCC Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Moderator and or Vice Moderator, the Senior Pastor, and representatives of Stewardship Commission and Dayspring Preschool Board named by their respective committees. Elected members, nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Congregation for three year terms, may serve no more than 6 continuous years on the Finance Committee without at least a one year pause. The Finance Committee shall elect its own chairperson and secretary.
3. The Circle Committee shall establish the number of Circles, appoint church members and friends of the church to each Circle and establish the tasks and responsibilities of the Circles within the life of the church. These may include, but are not limited to, Sunday Tasks, the stewardship campaign, social activities, outreach opportunities, and care and nurturing of people in crisis. There shall be a minimum of four members of the committee, appointed by the Moderator and confirmed by Council. At least one member shall be serving on Council in an elected position. At least one member shall be serving on the Membership Commission. Each committee member shall serve a three-year term. The committee shall report to Council at least twice a year.
4. The In Care Committee shall support and nurture church members who are considering a call to ordained ministry, and who may seek to be In Care of the church and of the Bay Association. The committee shall meet with such persons to assist them in their discernment process. Once a person makes formal application for In Care status, the committee shall interview the candidate and make a recommendation to the Council. The committee shall meet on a regular basis with persons who are In Care to provide nurture, support, and counsel. The committee shall be appointed by the Council in consultation with the Ministers and Diaconate. Two members shall be members of the Diaconate, who shall serve for two-year terms. The three at-large members will serve for three-year terms. The committee shall report to the Council least annually.
5. The Human Resources Committee shall be responsible for preparing job descriptions, dealing with job satisfaction, recommending personnel policies, and arranging for the evaluation of all non-ordained staff not explicitly assigned to a commission. There shall be three to six members, appointed by Council for up to a three-year term. Ordinarily the immediate past Moderator, if willing to serve, would be one of the appointees. The committee shall report to Council as the need arises, but at least annually.

6. The Planning and Evaluation Committee shall guide the congregation in long-range planning. The committee shall ensure that the church periodically adopts a long-range plan. The committee shall guide the congregation in implementing, evaluating, and adapting the plan to meet changing circumstances. It shall report to the Council at least twice a year, and shall propose modifications to the plan at least annually. The committee shall consist of six members appointed by the Moderator and confirmed by Council, serving three-year terms, two appointed each year.
7. The Tenant Relations Committee oversees the liaison between the congregation and outside groups using the church's facilities. The committee will negotiate rental agreements with long-term renters, establish rates for occasional and/or one-time users of the facilities, and work with church staff to resolve scheduling and other conflicts. The committee shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall also serve on the Buildings and Grounds Commission.

Article XII - Committees of the Congregation

1. Separate Pastoral Relations Committees shall be named to advise and evaluate each ordained minister. Each committee shall have four (4) to six (6) members who ordinarily serve a three-year term. Two (2) members shall be appointed each year by the Moderator, approved by the Minister, and confirmed by the Council. If a vacancy occurs, the same process shall be used to fill the remaining term. Members shall serve each year from June 1 to May 31, or until a replacement is appointed. Committee members may serve no more than six years without one year off, unless appointed to fill a vacancy with less than two years remaining. A committee shall disband after any resignation and be reformed with a new hire with two members appointed for one year, two for two years, and two for three years.

A Pastoral Relations Committee shall publicize meetings and solicit congregational comment. The Moderator and Vice Moderator(s) of the church shall not be an appointed member of a Pastoral Relations Committee. Because of the need for confidentiality, committee meetings shall not be open to members of the church not appointed to the particular committee. The Moderator and/or Vice Moderator may be invited by a committee to attend a meeting to take part in the review of the congregation's performance. If there are several committees, they shall have a joint meeting at least once a year. Minutes of a committee shall be for committee use only. A committee may report to the Council or congregation solely at its own discretion.

2. A Diaconate shall be appointed to aid and advise the Minister(s) and the Council, to stand with and listen to persons in the congregation, and to provide special ministries of reconciliation, comfort and inspiration. The Diaconate shall consist of nine persons plus those whom the congregation has elected deacon for life. Except for life members, members shall serve one year and continue to serve until a successor deacon is appointed and installed. A person may not serve more than three consecutive years; a person may be appointed again after an interval of one year.
3. An Endowment Committee is established by congregational approval of an endowment fund on March 21, 2004. The purpose, governance and operational procedures are defined in the document entitled, "ENDOWMENT FUND for the DANVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH."
4. The Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Council candidates for elected positions vacated during the year and nominate for election by the congregation officers for the following year, including members of the Preschool Board of Directors with terms as established in the Dayspring Preschool Bylaws and at large members of the Finance Committee. The Committee shall seek to present candidates representing all demographics of the membership, regardless of size.
5. The Dayspring Preschool shall have a Board of Directors and be governed by a document entitled Dayspring Preschool Bylaws.

Article XIII - Business Meetings

1. Business Meetings

- a. An Annual Meeting of the church membership shall be held in June of each year to receive reports of ministers, officers, commissions, committees and organizations; to install officers; to adopt the annual budget; to set goals for the year; to elect the Nominating Committee.
- b. A meeting to elect officers shall be held approximately two months before the Annual Meeting.
- c. Other meetings of the church membership may be called by the Minister(s), the Moderator, Council, any of the commissions, or by the request of three percent (3%) of the active membership. The call shall be issued by the Clerk.

2. Rules and Regulations

- a. Notices of the Annual Meeting and other meetings of the congregation shall be given at Sunday morning worship for two consecutive Sundays before such meetings, and by written and/or electronic notice to all members ten days before such meetings. The notices shall tell the nature of the business to be carried out.
- b. A quorum shall consist of fifteen per cent (15%) of the active church membership. Unless otherwise stated in these bylaws, a majority vote is decisive.
- c. The fiscal year of the church shall be from June 1 to May 31.
- d. Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, Roberts Rules of Order Revised shall govern all deliberations of this church.

Article XIV - Finances

The church shall seek to fund its programs by contributions from individuals and organizations and through investment income and rental. Designations of money for current expenses, benevolences and specific items shall be in an annual budget approved by vote of the congregation at its Annual Meeting. Use of income from the endowment is governed by the documents establishing the Endowment Committee. The church shall cooperate with churches of the Bay Association and the Northern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ, in current apportionment and per capita plans.

Subject to the prior authorization of the Congregation by vote at any Annual or other meeting of the congregation, the Church Council may incur debt and liabilities, issue bonds and/or promissory notes, sell, lease, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of real property of the Congregation, or any interest in such property, and may buy, rent, or otherwise acquire real property or any interest therein for church purposes. Disposal of the entirety of assets of the Congregation, which could be considered dissolution, is governed by Article XV.

Article XV - Dissolution

The property of this church is irrevocably dedicated to religious and/or charitable purposes. On dissolution, all of its assets shall be distributed to the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, provided that said conference shall at the time be duly qualified as a non-profit religious organization. If the Northern California Nevada Conference is not qualified, then the property shall go to a fund or foundation, determined by the membership of the church at the time of dissolution, whose property is dedicated to exempt purposes as specified in Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The assets of this church include all real and personal property and any interest in real or personal property including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after dissolution.

Article XVI - Amendments

These bylaws may be amended, by a two-thirds vote, at the Annual Meeting or at any special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Revised 6/91, Amended 6/95; Revised 6/98; Revised 6/06; Revised 5/08; Revised 2/09; Revised 9/09; revised 01/10; revised 6/12; revised 10/15; revised 10/16