

2024
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ANGOLA, NEW YORK

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the church shall be FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Angola, New York.

ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of this church shall be to bring together followers of Jesus Christ; to live and preach His gospel, to celebrate the sacraments and to be a beacon and model of faith for all.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith and conscience, its guidance in manners of faith and discipline.

The governance of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however to the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York.

While this church is amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, it accepts the obligations of mutual council, comity and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share their common aims and works.

As voted on by the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting held on October 18, 2015; the Congregation accepted the designation of being open and affirming. Said vote passed unanimously.

ARTICLE IV. DOCTRINE

The church recognizes the Holy Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship and discipleship. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith (or principles), therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

Statement of Faith

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God 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 your righteous will.
Declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the name 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 himself.

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 his 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 powers 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 presence in trial and rejoicing,
And eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

Our Church Covenant

We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forbears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall be comprised of (a) those persons whose names are currently listed on the membership rolls of this church, and (b) those names which may be added to these rolls in the future, following their reception as covered below:

A member of this church is one who after acceptance by the Board of Trustees, participates regularly and covenantally in the life, ministry, and mission of the church, regularly contributes to the support of the church, and is active in the life of the church, as best they are able. A person may be designated in the church records as one of the four types of members, or as a friend of the church.

1. **VOTING MEMBER** A voting member shall have committed themselves to fulfill the criteria of membership as well as being 16 years of age or older. Voting members have the right to vote in all matters brought to a Congregational Meeting.
2. **NON-VOTING MEMBER** A non-voting member is a member who meets the criteria stated above but is under the age of 16 years old.
3. **ASSOCIATE MEMBER** An associate member is a person who is also a member of another congregation who pledge to fulfill the criteria of membership of this church and has been approved for membership by the Pastor and the Board of Trustees. An associate member shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of a voting member.
4. **INACTIVE, NON-VOTING MEMBER** is a person who is no longer active in the life of the church and may be removed from the rolls by their request or the action of the church. After being an inactive, non-voting member for one year they may be removed from membership by the action of the Board of Trustees and approved at a congregational meeting.
5. **FRIEND OF THE CHURCH** a friend of the Church is an individual who may or may not be a member of another Church and who does not meet the other membership requirements of First Congregational United Church of Christ as defined within this document but contributes to the support of the church and/or has an expressed interest in this Church, but has no voting privileges in the church.

RECEPTION INTO THE CHURCH

Proposed candidates for membership in the church shall be approved by mutual action of the Pastor and the Board of Trustees. Request for membership may be made (a) on presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches, or (b) if letters are not available, by reaffirmation of faith, or (c) on confession of faith and baptism, if not previously baptized, or (d) by request to be an Associate Member or (e) completion of an approved confirmation class of this church.. Reception shall follow attendance at the Confirmation Class, the Pastor's Class, or the Pastor's alternate choice of preparation. The names of the candidates who are to be received shall be publicized prior to the date of their reception. Formal reception shall take place at a communion service, a regular church service, or at a time otherwise approved by the Church, by public assent to the Covenant. Any who are unable to attend in public may be received by the Trustees acting on behalf of the Church. In case of emergency conditions, membership may be granted by the Pastor, pending approval of the Board of Trustees

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usage of the United Church of Christ, and especially as follows:

Any member, who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to another church, shall upon request be entitled to receive it by vote of the Board of Trustees. The right to vote shall be terminated after their request for dismissal or recommendation has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

(a) If a member desires to join a religious body with which this church is not in fellowship, or which would not receive this letter, the church may, at his request, give him a certificate of his standing, and his membership shall terminate upon receipt of notice that he has been received into the body to which the letter was given.

(b) If, because of changes of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member in regular standing requests in writing to be released from his/her covenant obligations, the Pastor and or the Pastor and the Church & Ministry Committee shall patiently endeavor to secure continuance in its fellowship; failing in such effort, the Pastor or a member of the Board of Trustees may accept the request and forward this request with recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval to terminate this membership.

(c) Members whose addresses have long been unknown or who for a period of one (1) year, in spite of kindly approaches, have not fulfilled the criteria of membership, shall be put on the inactive list by a vote of the Board of Trustees. After the date of approval to put them on the inactive list they will cease being reported on the membership roles and voting privileges will temporarily be suspended. If after one year of being put on the inactive list, they have not fulfilled the criteria of Membership and/or are unwilling to renew their covenantal relationship with the church their membership will be terminated by a vote at a Congregational Meeting.

(d) Should a member become an offense to the church and to its name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of their covenant vows, the church on recommendation of the Board of Trustees may censure him/her, suspend him/her or terminate his/her membership by a two-thirds vote at a duly called meeting; but only after due notice has been given him, a hearing before the Board of Trustees (or at a Congregational Meeting) has been offered him/her, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring him/her to amendment in accordance with the Law of Christ (Matt. 18:15-17).

RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offence, may be restored by vote of the church at a duly called Congregational meeting; upon evidence of his/her reformation, or if for any other case, upon satisfactory explanation.

ARTICLE VI. SERVICES AND MEETINGS

The service and meetings of the church shall be as follows:

1. **Worship**

- (a) Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when (temporarily) suspended by vote of the church.
- (b) The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such times as the church may determine.
- (c) The baptism of adults and the baptism or consecration of children shall be administered at such times as the Pastor/ Assistant Pastor or in his/her absence, a person that the Board of Trustees may appoint or approve.
- (d) Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the Board of Trustees.
- (e) Services may be cancelled due to severe inclement weather by agreement between the Music Director, Pastor and Chairman, Board of Trustee's.

2. **Business Meetings**

(a) Scheduled Business Meetings: There shall be three business meetings of the church, regularly scheduled each year, the third week of January, the third week of May, and the third week of October. The January meeting shall be designated as the ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

(b) Special Meetings: Special meetings for business may be called by the Pastor or the Trustees, or upon the written request of twenty-five (25) voting members. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.

(c) Regular Services as Business Meetings: The regular Sunday or midweek worship of the church shall be competent, in case of necessity, for the transaction of business, with the exception of corporate action requiring legal notice, and business specifically referred to other meetings.

(d) The May Meeting: This meeting shall be held primarily to consider proposals and projected activities of the Church, to hear the financial report for the period ending April 30th, to hear the progress reports of the various boards, organizations, and church committees, and to consider such other business as may come before the meeting.

(e) The October Meeting: This meeting shall be devoted to the general business affairs of the church. At this meeting, the church shall receive and consider the proposed budget for the forthcoming year as presented by the Finance Committee. It shall hear the financial report for the period ending September 30th, hear the progress reports of the various boards, organizations, and church committees, and consider such other business as may come before the meeting.

(f) The January Meeting: This shall be the ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING as stipulated by the General Corporation Law and the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York for the transaction of business thereby stipulated. It shall be the meeting for the adoption of the budget for the forthcoming year, review of committee reports for the prior year, approve any amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws and for the election of the officers of the church who shall assume their offices at the close of the meeting. At this meeting we shall elect the following; moderator, vice-moderator, Financial Secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer, clerk, and honorary officers (i.e., deacons and deaconesses).

(g) Rules and Regulations:

3. **Notices:** Notices for the annual and other corporate meetings shall be given in accordance with the requirements of the state law as follows:

Notice of such meetings to be read by the Pastor of the church or any of the Trustees at a regular meeting of the church for public worship, on two successive Sundays immediately preceding such meeting.

4. **Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of fifteen (15) voting members.

5. **Voting:** All voting members in good standing may vote at Congregational and Annual meetings, except members under legal age of sixteen (16) may not vote on corporate matters as governed by the NYS Religious Corporations Law.

6. **Official Year:** The official year of the church shall begin on the first day of January each year. Church officers, board, and committee members not otherwise stipulated, shall assume their respective duties at the close of the meeting when elected. Before the February Trustees meeting the trustees will meet to elect officers and appoint and/or approve committee liaisons, who will in turn take charge to organize the committees they represent by the end of February. Once organized the trustee liaison will be the intermediary with the committee and not chair the committee.

7. **Reports:** Each church officer, board chairman, standing committee chairman and organization head shall prepare a written report for submission at each of the scheduled business meeting, and shall prepare a comprehensive written report for submission at the end of each official year.

8. **Vacancies:** Any vacancy in a church office, Board of Trustees, or standing committee may be filled by appointment made by or approved by the Board of Trustees. These appointments shall be approved at the next congregational meeting. Election for vacated terms shall take place at the next congregational meeting following the vacancy.

9. **Handling of Monies:** All receipts from contributions, memorials, donations, and balances of proceeds from special functions shall be deposited in the appropriate account and expenditures made by the Treasurer at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be the following:

1. **Pastor:** The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by at least a two-thirds vote of the church. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate after seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a Pulpit Committee. With the cooperation of the conference minister and others, the Pulpit Committee shall make a canvass of available ministers, settle upon one who in their judgment should be called to the pastorate, introduce him to the church, and at a duly called meeting, propose his election.

The Pastor shall become a member of the church and of the Association, which the church is a member at his/her first opportunity.

The Pastor shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Trustees and Standing Committees. The Pastor shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, have under his/her care all services of public worship and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the Board and various committees. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the board and all committees. He/She is also head of staff to all paid and or volunteer positions in the Church.

When the Pastor has been elected and has accepted the call, if so agreeable to him/her, the Association to which the church belongs, or the churches of the vicinity, shall be invited to sit as an Ecclesiastical Council for the purpose of installing or recognizing the Pastor in accordance with established practice.

While the term of the Pastor shall be indefinite, the church may at any time after exhausting all possibility of reconciliation using the Ministry Committee, by a majority vote at a meeting called for the purpose, request the Pastor's resignation with the expectation that it will be presented ASAP and be effective 60 days from submission of said letter or date of meeting calling for the resignation. Likewise, the Pastor shall give sixty (60) days notice in case he/she wishes to leave of his/her own volition; but in the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, relations shall cease at once. If for any reason the Pastor is unable to perform their duties for four weeks, his or her position will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees. After said review, appropriate action shall be recommended to the congregation and voted upon at a Congregational Meeting.

2. **Associate or Assistant Pastor:** The Assistant Pastor will aid the Pastor in the carrying out of his leadership and pastoral duties. He/She will seek to use their personal gifts and technical skills for the benefit of a healthy church contributing to the Pastor's effectiveness and efficiency. This individual will be primarily accountable to the Pastor, Member in Discernment Committee and Worship Committee for oversight.
3. **Director of Religious Education:** The Director of Religious Education who may be Associate or Assistant Pastor, chosen on the Pastor's recommendation to the congregation, shall initiate and supervise plans for the religious education work of the church, including the Sunday sessions and related activities, under the guidance of the Pastor and the Christian Education Committee.
4. **Moderator:** The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall preside at all congregational meetings. The Moderator shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. The term of office shall be one year.

5. **Vice-Moderator:** The vice-moderator shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The vice moderator shall fill in as moderator in the absence of the regular moderator and shall perform the same duties as normally performed by the Moderator. The moderator and vice moderator shall have one vote to share. The term of office shall be one year.
6. **Clerk:** The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all congregational meetings. The clerk shall take care of all correspondence as far as this is not otherwise provided for and perform such other duties as are prescribed by NYS Religious Corporation Law or as usually pertain to the office of the clerk or secretary of an organization. The term of office shall be one year.
7. **Financial Secretary:** A Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting. The Financial Secretary's responsibilities include:
 1. Receive from Finance Committee a weekly accounting of the offerings, including:
 - a. Total receipts
 - b. Envelope number and amount enclosed;
 - c. Checks (not in envelopes) name of giver and amount;
 - d. Loose monies.
 2. Keep accurate record on each subscriber's contributions.
 3. Furnish each member or friend of the church with a semi-annual statement of account.

The term of office shall be one year.

8. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting; the treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. The term of office shall be one year. The Treasurer's responsibilities include:
 - a. Maintain separate accounts as approved by the Board of Trustees;
 - b. Make disbursements from accounts as approved by the Board of Trustees;
 - c. Receive deposit slips from all monies deposited.
 - d. Maintain accurate records of receipts and disbursements associated with each account;
 - e. Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer shall have the custody of all papers relating to the property of the church;
 - f. Give such bonds as the Board of Trustees prescribe;
 - g. With the approval of the Board of Trustees, invest funds as are legal in the State of New York to pay income to the Church in regular installments.

The term of office shall be one year.

9. **Assistant Treasurer:** The Assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. The Assistant Treasurer shall fill in as Treasurer in the absence of the regular Treasurer and shall perform the same duties as normally performed by the Treasurer. The term of office shall be one year.
10. **Other Officers:** Other officers may be elected as needed.
11. **Honorary Officers:** Deacons and Deaconesses shall be selected by the Church Life Committee for outstanding service to the Church and Community. Those nominated shall be elected at a Congregational Meeting and recognized at a special church service. Deacons and Deaconesses shall be ex-officio members of all the church's boards and committees with exception to the Board of Trustees.

Article VIII BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall be the executive body of the church. It shall be responsible for the care and custody of church property, authorize expenditures by the church, implement policies and decisions made by the church at congregational meetings, and coordinate the work of the standing committees and organizations of the church. From special offerings on Communion Sundays, it shall maintain a Discretionary Fund to help the poor and needy in the community.

Under the direction of the church and except as otherwise provided, the Board of Trustees shall have the care and custody of church property and have charge of its financial affairs, always subject to regulations prescribed by the laws of the State. The Board shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without specific authority given by vote of the church at a congregational meeting.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of seven members. Members to be elected annually, to replace the number of outgoing members of the exiting class, for a term of three years. No Trustee may serve more than two terms consecutively; all Trustees must be members of the church. The following shall be ex-officio members of the Board with vote: The Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Moderator and Treasurer.

Trustees' duties shall include attending regular monthly and specially called meetings of the Board of Trustees. If they are not able to attend, they must ask to be excused from the meeting. Trustees will honor their duties as a committee liaison by attending the committee meeting and reporting back to the Board of Trustees. Trustees should be active in the life of the church and attend worship regularly. If after missing three (3) meetings in an official year without being excused for a legitimate reason, they shall be approached regarding their attendance. If after being approached they miss two (2) more meetings without being excused, they will be asked to resign their position as trustee.

At its first meeting prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting, the Board of Trustees shall organize by electing from its membership a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. Each Trustee shall serve on at least one standing committee of the church, serving as a liaison between the Board, committee, and the church. The Board of Trustees shall be the policy-making body of the church, subject to the direction of the Congregational Meeting, and shall have all authority not specifically denied it by the Constitution and By-Laws. The Board shall meet at least ten (10) times each year. Five (5) Trustees shall be considered a quorum. The Order of Business at meetings shall be:

- a. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
- b. Receive Financial Secretary's Report
- c. Receive Treasurer's Report
- d. Approval of Agenda
- e. Reports of Standing Committees
- f. Reports of Appointed Committees
- g. Pastor's Report
- h. Old Business
- i. New Business
- j. Adjournment

ARTICLE IX. STANDING COMMITTEES

The following shall be standing committees of the church: Worship, Christian Education, Properties, Ministry, Membership and Church Life, and Finance. These committees shall consist of at least a chair, co-chair, and secretary. The chair shall serve no more than 2 (two) consecutive 3 (three) year terms in that position. The chair shall develop communication with the trustee liaison of that committee. In addition, each committee shall have at least one representative from the Board of Trustees. The Trustee liaison and the Pastor shall be ex-officio members of the committees with voice and vote. Members of each committee shall be recruited by the chair and co-chair and approved by the Board of Trustees. All standing committees should meet at least quarterly!

At its first meeting prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting and after appointment of a representative from the Board of Trustees, each Standing Committee shall organize by electing a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. Each Standing Committee shall have the responsibilities assigned to it in the By-Laws, and any other duties which may be delegated by the Board of Trustees or Congregational Meeting.

1. **Worship Committee** - This committee shall be responsible for Sunday Morning Worship Services and any special services which may be held. These responsibilities include:

- (a) Assist the Pastor if necessary to establish the Order of Worship;
- (b) Appoint an Altar Guild with duties as outlined;
- (c) Maintaining a schedule of ushers, greeters, and families to present communion elements;
- (d) Presentation and distribution of flowers;
- (e) Decorations for the sanctuary;
- (f) Determining policies for the choirs, choir directors and organists in coordination with the Pastor and music director.
- (g) Serving Communion

2. **Christian Education Committee** - This committee shall be responsible for the church's education programs. These responsibilities include:

- a. Promoting Church School under the direction of a Church School Superintendent and Vacation Bible School under the direction of a VBS director
- b. Youth Fellowships;
- c. Officer Training;
- d. Assist the Pastor to facilitate a Confirmation program. When there are enough children of appropriate age, a class will be held. The Confirmation Program will be chosen by the Pastor with the assistance of the Christian Education Committee.
- e. Assisting other Standing Committees in educational programs;
- f. Promote and assist (as needed) an Adult Bible Study.

3. **Properties Committee** - The committee shall be responsible for the care of church buildings, furnishings, equipment, and the church rental property. In cooperation with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the pastor, the committee shall direct the work of the custodian. Responsibilities of the committee include:

- a. Enforcing the regulations for the use of facilities and equipment; Alcohol use (i.e., beer and wine only), shall be permitted on an individual basis. Only after review and approval by the Board of Trustees.
- b. Care and upkeep of all buildings, grounds, furnishings, and equipment;
- c. Arranging for the placement and storage of church furnishings and equipment;
- d. Supervising the kitchen coordinators who will then determine the use of the kitchen and church hall;
- e. Organizing periodic house cleaning in addition to the cleaning done by the custodian.

4. **The Ministry Committee** is made up of two independent yet interconnected sub-committees with two different focuses that are linked by their desire to better communications and relations between the pastor and the congregation and move the church forward.

Personnel sub-committee of Ministry Committee --- The Personnel Committee shall hold the responsibility and authority to monitor and advise the Board of Trustees on personnel matters, including but not limited to:

Responsibilities

- Staff salaries
- Vacation/ sick leave.
- Compliance with labor laws state and federal
- Insurance and retirement programs (when applicable)
- Dismissal

The Personnel Committee will make decisions that are in concordance with the values and beliefs of First Congregational as stated in our Mission statement.

This committee shall consist of five members including the Pastor. All members must be in good standing at First Congregational. The Assistant Pastor is allowed to sit in on the committee if the Pastor is not available.

Church And Ministry Sub-Committee--- The main focus of this 3-to-5-member sub-committee is to foster good relations between the pastor and the congregation. It also is a place where congregants may voice their concerns and complaints about the pastor and the pastor may express his/her concerns about the congregation. It begins the framework for dealing with conflict in an honest, healthy, and positive manner. It communicates confidentially with the Board of Trustees and other committees as needed. It needs to maintain neutrality and respect for both the congregation and pastor. It has no decision-making responsibility. Its sole task is to work to effectively communicate between the congregants and the pastor and report to the Board of trustees as needed. This sub-committee provides to the congregants and pastor a place to voice concerns and seek help in finding solutions.

Responsibilities:

This sub-committee should meet at least twice a year. One meeting should be as soon as possible after the Annual meeting to elect officers. This sub-committee should be available to all members of the church as well as to the pastor. This sub-committee should be prepared to meet when called by the pastor or the Board or Trustees or upon written request of twenty-five or more voting members. They should be aware of or active in:

- a. Acting with an atmosphere of confidentiality
- b. Defining areas of potential conflict between the pastor's ministry and that of the congregation and assisting in developing alternative solutions and possibilities for avoiding conflict
- c. Openly and honestly communicating reactions of the church members to the pastor and helping the church members to better understand the pastor.
- d. Being alert to the pastor's concerns about the congregation
- e. Participating and assisting the pastor and sharing the pastor's evaluation of the state of the church
- f. Calling on Western Association of the UCC or NYS Conference staff in clarification or mediation of any issues in question.
- g. Work to improve all around communications of the church.
- h. Perform a yearly review of Pastor and Assistant Pastor.

6. **Finance Committee** - This committee shall be responsible for presenting the concerns of stewardship to the church, encouraging, receiving, recognizing, and administering all contributions of monies given to the church as legacies or memorials. Responsibilities include:

- (a) Preparation of Annual budget (both benevolences and local expenses);
- (b) Organizing and directing financial campaigns;
- (c) Informing and training church members regarding financial stewardship;
- (d) Promotion of association and conference benevolences;
- (e) Overseeing the counting of church offerings and making deposits;
- (f) Promoting the church being remembered in wills and bequests;
- (g) Arranging for proper recognition for those who give special gifts to the church;
- (h) Depositing of all monies received in the designated accounts.
- (i) Approve the use of Memorial Funds as recommended by the Memorial Committee and forwarded to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Bequests: All bequests made to the church shall be announced to the congregation and presented at a Congregational Meeting. Upon the recommendation of the Memorial Committee and/or the Board of Trustees, the Congregational Meeting shall authorize how each bequest is to be used. The Bequests which are so designated will automatically be invested in the church's Invested Monies, or as otherwise designated. Other suitable uses include special projects or needs, Invested Monies, General Fund, Benevolences, etc.

The Invested Monies shall be over seen by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall recommend to the Board of Trustees how funds shall be invested. The Board of Trustees shall make all decisions regarding investment but shall have no authority to spend the principal amount of the invested monies. The Finance Committee shall report regularly to the Board of Trustees and at the Annual Congregational Meeting regarding amounts invested, interest earned, and any expenditures authorized by the Congregational Meetings or the Board of Trustees. As approved by a congregational vote at the Congregational Meeting, the yearly monitoring fees for the Fire and Burglary Alarm systems shall be paid out of interest earned on said invested monies. This shall continue until said time it is either rescinded by or cancelled at a Congregational meeting or upon dissolution of the church.

7. **Church Life and Membership Committee** - This committee shall be responsible for membership recruitment, membership orientation and membership assimilation. They shall address as its main responsibility the need to organize and equip members for effective ministry and the public relations of the church and congregation.

- (a) Plan the annual church program;
- (b) Work with church secretary to keep a church calendar;
- (c) Work with secretary to publish an annual report;
- (d) History & Archives sub-committee of Church Life: Care for the historical records of the church; educating the members and community about the church's history;
- (e) Keeping a scrapbook pertaining to the church and its activities;
- (f) Serve as a Nominating Committee for the Annual Meeting; and Make nominations to fill vacancies and suggest volunteers for church projects;
- (g) Arranging for honoring volunteers for their service;
- (h) Organize the congregation's response to social issues in the community, nation and world.
- (i) Welcoming visitors to worship services and church activities;
- (j) Receiving application for church membership;
- (k) Orientation for new members;
- (l) Assimilation of members into the life of the congregation;
- (m) Planning and implementing programs for church growth;
- (n) Increasing attendance and participation;
- (o) Recruit volunteers to serve the church.

ARTICLE X. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special Committees may be appointed at any time by a Congregational Meeting or by the Board of Trustees. Such committees shall be accountable to the Board of Trustees and subject to re-appointment at the church's Annual Meeting. The special committees shall report periodically to the Board of Trustees and/or at a Congregational Meeting. The appointment of such committees shall be made known to the congregation.

ARTICLE XI. DELEGATES

Delegates to the New York Conference and Western Association of the United Church of Christ, and such other organizations to which the church regularly sends delegates, shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee, and elected at the church's Annual Congregational Meeting. Delegates shall serve for a term of one (1) year. Alternate Delegates shall be elected in the same manner for each organization.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting in accordance with the NYS Religious Corporation Law, 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 church bulletin or newsletter two weeks immediately preceding this meeting.

ARTICLE XIII. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The constitution and by-laws shall be reviewed every five (5) years and amended as necessary at the next Annual Meeting in accordance with the NYS Religious Corporation Law.

ARTICLE XIV. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

Upon dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interest of which it shall then be possessed including any device, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be authorized by a two-thirds vote at a Board of Trustees meeting and then ratified at a meeting of Voting members, by a two-thirds vote of qualified members, may be conveyed to transferred to any religious, charitable, school or missionary purposes, or as otherwise allowed according to the NYS Religious Corporation Law.

ARTICLE XV EXTENDED TIME AWAY

Extended time away for paid positions, other than the Pastor, will be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Amended and accepted at the Annual Congregational Meeting

By Congregation vote on January 24, 2010

Amended and accepted at the Annual Congregational Meeting, Page 1, Article III; Open and Affirming by Congregation on October 18, 2015

Amended Constitution and By-Laws 9/8/16; Page 4 (c), (e); Page 7 #3, added pp; Page 10 (h), added to Article IX; Page 11 2a, d pp; Page 12 3a; Page 7 4th pp; Page 16 add Article XV

Amended and accepted at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 21, 2018, pg. 5 – 1(c) added Assistant Pastor and Board of Trustees and 2(f) added review of committee reports for the prior year, pg. 9-VIII paragraph 3 - 7 members. Members to be elected annually, to replace the number of outgoing members of the exiting class, pg. 10-VIII paragraph 1 - Five (5) Trustees

Amended and accepted at the Congregational Meeting on May 05, 2024, pg.1 – Article III. Second paragraph word government was changed to governance; Article IV. Added Holy for Holy Bible; pg. 7 added Assistant Pastor Job description and duties; pg. 9 Article VIII. First paragraph removed “They will also be responsible for a yearly review of the Pastor using a suggested method or program recommended by the denomination”, Second paragraph added “at a congregational meeting”, third paragraph added “Assistant Pastor”, fifth paragraph the word following was removed and replaced with “prior to”; Article IX. Second paragraph changed after to “prior to” and added “after” appointment of, under Worship Committee added “(g.) serving of communion”; under the Ministry Committee, second paragraph “Pastoral Relations Sub-Committee was changed to Personnel Sub-Committee of Ministry Committee, changed explanation of this committee; under Church & Ministry sub-committee responsibilities added (h) “Perform a yearly review of the Pastor and Assistant Pastor”, # 5 added “(j) Bequests: All bequests made to the church shall be announced to the congregation and presented at a Congregational Meeting. Upon the recommendation of the Memorial Committee and/or the Board of Trustees, the Congregational Meeting shall authorize how each bequest is to be used. The Bequests which are so designated will automatically be invested in the church’s Invested Monies, or as otherwise designated. Other suitable uses include special projects or needs, Invested Monies, General Fund, Benevolences, etc. The Invested Monies shall be over seen by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall recommend to the Board of Trustees how funds shall be invested. The Board of Trustees shall make all decisions regarding investment but shall have no authority to spend the principal amount of the invested monies. The Finance Committee shall report regularly to the Board of Trustees and at the Annual Congregational Meeting regarding amounts invested, interest earned, and any expenditures authorized by the Congregational Meetings or the Board of Trustees.

As approved by a congregational vote at the Congregational Meeting, the yearly monitoring fees for the Fire and Burglary Alarm systems shall be paid out of interest earned on said invested monies. This shall continue until said time it is either rescinded by or cancelled at a Congregational meeting or upon dissolution of the church.”, #6 removed “(b) publish the church newsletter”, changed “(e) to (d) History & Archives sub-committee of Church Life: Care for the historical records of the church; educating the members and community about the church’s history” and removed (g) which is maintaining a membership inventory regarding members interests and service”.

5/05/24